

# PRINCIPLE OF THE NEW PARTY

## BOTH CENTRALISM AND DEMOCRACY

According to the Draft Constitution of the new Communist Party (M-L), "the organizational principle of the Party is democratic-centralism."

**What is democratic-centralism? Why is it the "organizational principle" for the vanguard Party of the working class?**

Democratic-centralism combines the freedom to engage in broad discussion and criticism within the Party with the disciplined carrying out of every decision of the central leadership.

This combination welds the Party into a united whole. It enables the Party leadership to practice the "mass line," taking the ideas of the rank-and-file members, concentrating them in the form of directives and other guidance, and then learning the experiences and suggestions of the masses once the line is put into practice.

In contrast to the individualism and lack of discipline that characterizes the petty-bourgeoisie, the proletariat has no fear of unified, collective action. The democratic-centralist method is firmly rooted in the outlook and experiences of the working class.

Once the struggle has been carried out over a particular question, unity can be reached. Thus decisions can be made quickly and then put into practice with the collective strength of the entire Party. In this way, as the Draft Constitution points out, democratic-centralism "creates the conditions for both unity of will and action."

In cases where complete agreement is not reached, Party unity is assured according to democratic-centralist procedures which hold that "the individual is subordinate to the Party and its organizations, the minority is subordinate to the majority, the lower levels are subordinate to the higher levels, and the entire Party is subordinate to the Central Committee and the decisions of the most recent Congress."

Democratic-centralism also ensures

the basically secret nature of the Party, enabling it to function even under the most brutal repression of the bourgeois state.

Finally, the Draft Constitution points out that democratic-centralism is "essential for preventing revisionism." Opportunism can be defeated only in an organization which assures that each member participates fully in the two-line struggle and, at the same time, is under discipline to carry out the Party's revolutionary line.

Opportunists and revisionists invariably violate democratic-centralism because to do otherwise would mean submitting their bankrupt political line to the scrutiny of the rank and file. For example, when the revisionist Earl Browder began his efforts to destroy the Communist Party in the 1940s, his first step was to attack democratic-centralism.

William Z. Foster described Browder's attacks: "There was a virtual abolition of self-criticism," he wrote in his his-

tory of the CPUSA. "Bureaucratic methods of work [flourished]... and [there was an] almost complete abandonment of the fight against right tendencies in the Party."

Liquidating the Party's factory concentrations, breaking up the chain of command, promoting factions and careerists—these were the tools Browder used to set the stage for liquidating the Party itself in 1945 and promoting his revisionist thesis that U.S. imperialism had become a "progressive force" in the world.

To prevent future Browders from winning a victory in the ranks of our new Party, the consistent implementation of democratic-centralism is crucial. Through this proletarian method of organization, the masses of Party members can be mobilized not only against the capitalist enemy outside the Party, but also against the poison of revisionism inside the Party.

