

# 'We Have Come Home!'

"WE HAVE come home," said Alfred Wagenknecht, snowy-haired, veteran Communist leader, co-worker of Charles E. Ruthenberg and Eugene V. Debs, and one of the founders of the Communist Party in 1919. (It was while Ruthenberg and Wagenknecht were in jail in Canton, Ohio, during the imperialist war of 1917, that Debs made his famous speech in their defense in the nearby public square, which resulted in his imprisonment in Atlanta.) These simple four words of Wagenknecht, as he moved the adoption of the final, much-revised main resolution, stirred all the delegates profoundly to their very depths. Tears stood in the eyes of other old-timers who like "Wag" have suffered greatly during the past period. Stern faces lighted up all over the hall, as the 92 delegates unanimously adopted the resolution. A turning point had been passed a little while earlier in the unanimous adoption of a new constitution which reorganized the Communist Party and reaffirmed our adherence to our ultimate goal of socialism.

The delegates, whose number was rigidly limited under Office of Defense Transportation regulations on conventions, came from all over the country, to an emergency convention—to put our Communist movement in America



## By Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

back on the right track of its basic principles. Present were many old-timers, including William Z. Foster, Mother Bloor, Alexander Trachtenberg, "Pop" Mindel, Israel Amter. War veterans, some fresh from battle, were Saul Wellman, Ralph Shaw, John Stanhan, Martin Mackie and L. Wofsy, and "vets" who fought Franco—Steve Nelson, Joe Dougher and our double vet, Bob Thompson. Trade union leaders were Ben Gold, Irving Potash, "Blackie" Meyers, Louis Weinstock, Josh Lawrence, Nat Ganley, William Sentner, Dave Davis. Negro delegates included Ben Davis, Bill Patterson, Doxey Wilkerson, Claudia Jones, Charlie Loman, Rose Gauden and Roy Hansborough. Women delegates included Barbara Hartle from Seattle, Dorothy Healy from California, Ann Burlak, Bella Dodd, Rose Wortis. A large number of delegates were workers on farms, in shops and in mines—G. Kane, Ted Russell, H. Smith, A. Kovich, Nat Cohen, Hal Simons, Micki La Marr, C. Sharp and others. Among the delegates were several Puerto Rican residents in New York City. State Party officials elected as delegates included William Schneiderman, Arnold Johnson, Gil Green, William Norman, Morris Childs, A. Onda, Sam Donchin, Mac Weiss, Al Lannon and others. New York Councilman Ben Davis and Peter V. Cacchione were also delegates. It was a thoroughly representative

cross-section of the C.P. membership.

The outstanding characteristics of this convention were deliberation and determination to pull out of the swamp of revisionism. The delegates were in deadly earnest. Paragraph by paragraph they moved slowly and carefully through the new constitution and the resolution. Discussion was full and free. The resolutions committee had 3,000 amendments, which shows the tremendous initiative, political alertness and devotion of the members of our organization, once the floodgates of self-criticism were opened up. As the resolution stands in its final form it is immeasurably stronger and sharper, especially in its analysis of the war against Japan, the role of monopoly capital, the estimate of the Truman administration, the struggle for Negro rights, the sections on labor, farmers, women, youth, Puerto Rico and especially the section on socialism and the self-critical section. This is much more detailed than in the draft, as only Communists are able and willing to do. It is more searching, more humble in spirit, and is a stinging indictment of bureaucracy and revisionism. It is unsparing in its condemnation of both, and the need to dig them out of our minds and our work—to the very smallest roots. To this we must dedicate ourselves.

William Z. Foster, whose record as a fighter for the working class for the past half century

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is known national and international-ly, was unanimously elected national chairman. The old business of a president and a flock of vice-presidents is out under the new constitution. The new National Committee of 55 is a carefully selected combination of all the elements represented in the convention, plus a group of soldier members now in service. The new National Board is a resident board, and has six of the old members. Seven of the old board of 13 were not reelected. Some are to be assigned to districts other than N. Y. James W. Ford was

elected to the Cadre Review Committee. The strengthening and refreshing process is under way. This is a very important committee for this purpose.

A spirit of comradeship, of fellowship not fellowship, pervaded even the sharpest discussion. "Collective leadership and democracy are not easy," chairman Foster said in his summary, but we reject the easiest way. We adjourned as dawn was breaking on Sunday morning, over a sleeping city. A new dawn it was for us too. We were wide awake. We American Communists "have come home."