

*Wm. Z. Foster:* Comrades, the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the United States is officially declared open. My remarks are going to be very brief. It seems to me that this is one of the most important conventions our Party has ever held, and I think we are all of that opinion. There is just one thing that is happening in connection with this convention that I think we'd all do well to pay attention to. And that is the extreme importance with which the bourgeois press of the country is handling this convention. Now there's a lesson in that for us and the big lesson it seems to me is that these people realize how tremendously important our Communist Party is here in the United States in spite of our recent reverses. I think in fact in this respect they have a more lively appreciation of the importance of our Party than some of us ourselves do. Comrades, you want to bear one thing in mind. The Communist Party is not just another Party. The Communist Party is a very vital institution and is part of the whole world movement which is building socialism in the world.

That's how they look upon us.

Even in this great stronghold of capitalism they know how vitally important the Communist Party is. Of course the bourgeois press is doing its best to disorganize and confuse our ranks, sort of bore from within or without, to try to disrupt us with all sorts of fantastic stories about pro-Stalin groups and anti-Moscow groups and what not. But I'm sure we're not going to be disoriented by such stuff. And another thing they're very anxious about in connection with this convention is to see that our Party is split at this convention. They're hoping for that. Nothing could please the bourgeoisie of America more than for a split to take place in the ranks of the Communist Party. That would indeed be a real victory for them. I think I can express the opinion of everybody here that there is not going to be any split at this convention (applause).

Comrades, in conclusion, let me just say this. This convention I believe is going to take long steps towards clarifying the matters we have been discussing over the past year and undoubtedly will go down in the record of our Party as a unity convention. I think this is the sense in which we should carry on our work in the convention (applause).