

# CPer Disputes View of Convention

Editor, the Militant:

I have been following with undiminished attention the series of weekly articles by your staff writer, Harry Ring, devoted to the crisis in the Communist Party of the United States alongside of his analysis of the recently concluded CP convention.

At the outset, let me say, I am now and have been a member of the Communist Party. I appreciate the fraternal interest displayed by the Socialist Workers Party and the Militant in the recent developments in our party. I view the SWP as an indispensable segment of the Socialist Left in America and I look toward the day of unqualified collaboration between our parties leading toward eventual unification in a real vanguard party of revolutionary American socialism.

## DISPUTES POSITION

It is with the above perspective in mind, that I must—albeit with profound regret—dispute the spirit and direction expressed in the Ring articles in the Feb. 18 and 25 issues of the Militant. In absence of any visible editorial evidence to the contrary, I can only conclude that the approach reflects the line of the Militant and the SWP.

The main contention of the Ring evaluation is that: "The most significant feature of the recently concluded convention of the CP is the fact that the delegates, by a majority of two to one, blocked the efforts of Party Chairman William Z. Foster to force the organization back into its pre-20th Congress bureaucratic straitjacket."

This conclusion of Ring's is pursued relentlessly in the two articles (Feb. 18, 25 Militant). I am obliged to state that his evaluation is without foundation in fact, unsupported by the developments which took place in my party prior to, and at the convention sessions.

I will now attempt to counterpose to Ring's position my own opinion, which is shared by many Party militants. Let me reaffirm my party association since 1935, when I was a standard bearer in the Assembly elections (1935) while a member of the YCL. Later, active in the unemployed, union and youth movements. I was a delegate to

our section convention, served on the section resolutions committee and remained a faithful observer of all developments, conflicts and participants in the preliminary county and New York state conventions. Finally, I have interviewed members who attended or whose close associates attended the national convention. This biographical summary is an effort to "qualify" as a participant as distinct from the limiting factors of an editorial office.

## NO FOSTER FACTION

Now, to the bloody business:

(1) There was no Foster faction. While it is true at the 12th hour some effort was made in the anti-Gates ranks to give an organized direction to the fight it lacked the conscious organization, planning, program of the



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Gates faction which had developed over a period of months. At the county, state and national conventions, a Gates faction was in evidence—no semblance of a Foster faction.

(2) The delegates from industry, concerned with the retention of shop clubs and a critical attitude to the trade union bureaucracy contributed as well, to the ranks of the anti-Gates forces. One of the most devoted UIE militants, who was contemptuously referred to as "that friend of the workers" by the Gates forces in our county, fought a bitter, uncompromising fight against the Foster-Wein-

stone capitulation at the convention.

Our own Section Organizer, the sole delegate from our region, was very reserved in his relief at the patch-work unity affected at the convention, and harbors mingled feelings of regret and chagrin at the failure of the Foster leadership to offer resistance to the Dennis-Gates program.

(3) Ring gloats that the convention frustrated Foster's attempt to impose on the National Committee a 21st member-at-large who had lost to Charney by 1/3 of a single vote. Mind you, Charney is a state leader of the Party, a compromiser. Who then is this number 21? We must know it is a beloved militant Puerto Rican leader from the ranks of lower Harlem, A. R., respected by the Party members in New York. He will yet be placed on the National Committee by the rank and file he serves.

## FOSTER ABDICATES RESPONSIBILITY

(4) The basic healthy core of the working class elements fought a determined rear-guard action to save the Party throughout the preliminary stages. Their final effort which was capable of winning, was frustrated when the Foster group in the national leadership abdicated their responsibility to organize and lead a counter-struggle to the mighty wave of revisionism and liquidation spearheaded by the Daily Worker staff and the New York State party and its allies in the National Committee.

(5) The Dennis diplomacy succeeded because the anti-Gates forces failed to provide the membership with a real program for revolutionary American socialism counterposed to the basic social-democratic conceptions of the draft and its supporters (Gates, Dennis, Foster). Lacking essentially was the leadership to organize and direct that section of the membership which had withstood the pressure of public opinion and American imperialism.

(6) The course charted by Ring, and supported in silence by the SWP leadership, can forfeit the greatest potentialities for healing the breach between the CP and the SWP.

The anti-Gates forces are not committed to any section of the leadership. Frankly, they look

to a refreshment of the national and state leadership.

(7) True, many militants who support Foster believe he is a Leninist, an internationalist, a working-class revolutionist. They do not yet realize he and Gates are only the left and right leg of the same body nourished by the social-democratic policy expressed in the draft resolution adopted by the national convention. The education of the militants as to the role of the Soviet bureaucracy, its origins and historical foundation, has still to be completed. Their ideological rearmament is the key to the whole solution.

Notwithstanding this—the potential reservoir for transforming the CP into a revolutionary party of American socialism merging into a broad regroupment of the left on a principled program of Marxism-Leninism that will include the SWP and others, resides in the anti-Gates forces who question the basic conception of "peaceful co-existence," "peaceful transition," the amorphous "anti-monopoly coalition," the kowtowing to the trade-union bureaucrats, ADA, etc.

## NO CONFIDENCE IN EITHER SIDE

It is to this section of the Party and its leadership at all levels that assistance must be offered, guidance proffered, to hasten the day for the realization of a firm solution to the basic problem of creating a revolutionary working class vanguard in America.

The anti-Gates elements throughout the country did not subscribe to any section of the leadership, although some hoped that Foster might wage open war against Gates in a showdown battle on the Party, Marxism-Leninism, Democratic Centralism, etc.

The disappointment of the anti-Gates forces in Foster and Dennis was the most characteristic expression of sentiment as the convention closed. "Why didn't he (Foster) fight?"

(8) The anti-Gates forces reflected the best working class elements in the Party and encompassed most of the Negro delegations and leadership.

## STAND OF NEGRO MILITANTS

The young Negro woman dele-



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gate from California who received the highest vote at the convention for the National Committee did not receive the support of her own delegation because of her forthright anti-Gates stand.

Charles Loman, Kings County Negro of the Party, elected to the National Committee, in spite of the determination of the New York State Committee and the Shrank-Gates partisans to unseat him in his own backyard.

The militant Negro delegations from Bedford-Stuyvesant and Lower Harlem waged a noble fight to condemn Party policy with respect to the Negro freedom struggle as "right opportunist."

In the coming state and regional conventions these elements will be the instrument for placing fresh industrial and Negro forces in the leadership.

It is these forces who want proletarian norms of democracy in the Party, a feeling shared by the bulk of the Party membership of all tendencies. We will brook no curbs and resist bureaucratism at all levels, including the flagrant "bureaucratic" tendencies displayed in our own New York Party by the "democratic socialism" of Shrank, etc., who feel the convention has given them the O.K. to proceed along their "New York State" path to socialism, with the liquidation of the Jefferson School and Labor Youth League in the spirit of the bureaucratic liquidation of the American Labor Party and their contemptuous disre-

gard for the moods of our Bedford-Stuyvesant comrades.

## "LEFT SECTARIANISM"

Oh yes, the Gates forces view a return to militancy as a manifestation of left sectarianism. To anticipate that members under their influence, who conceive of Dubinsky and Reuther rather than the SWP as their future associates in a mass party of Socialism, as the healthy base and avenue for realignment and regroupment is to disorient the SWP and CP militants in the developments that lie ahead.

## PARTY DISCUSSION IS TASK OF DAY

Conclusion: The most significant fact that derives from the proceedings at the National Convention is the failure of the militants to forge and advance a program that could have swept the Gates forces into the dust bin of Party history and shaken the perennial custodians of Party policy from the top—a program that would have elevated to the leadership new fresh forces to help chart a new course along the lines determined by the international experience of the working class embodied in the teachings of Marx and Engels and enriched in our epoch by Lenin.

The most significant fact of the immediate future must be the revival of the turbulent discussion in our ranks on the deficiencies and inadequacies of Party Program and leadership and the effort on a local and national scale to bring about the earliest correction of our defeatist and revisionist line.

In this period the SWP and the Militant can make an historic contribution if you do not lose sight of the main forces for progress in our Party and strive to effect the necessary re-approachment along the difficult, thorny road of working-class politics.

Argus

(Readers of the Militant are invited to comment on Argus' letter, Harry Ring's articles, or any other aspect of the evaluation of the CP convention—Ed.)