

Foster Says Don't Tear Stalin to "Political Shreds"

By Tom Kerry

Members of the American Communist Party, along with their co-thinkers throughout the world, are suffering from acute shock. They are literally reeling from the effects of the pronouncements coming out of the 20th Congress in Moscow throwing overboard everything they had been taught to believe for a whole generation. The cherished myth of Stalin's infallibility has been shattered.

For 30 years members of the Communist Party have been taught to accept every devious twist and turn in Stalinist policy. Despite their misgivings, they were taught to accept because Stalin said it was right and good and necessary for the defense of the Soviet Union. His disciples in the leadership of the various sections ruled by right of their unquestioning adherence to the Stalin myth and obedience to his command. The essence of the Stalin myth was to accept without thinking, or in violence to one's own thought, in deference to the court of last resort — Stalin, the infallible. What now?

"JOLTED"

The leaders of the American Communist Party confess they are at a complete loss. Their contradictory explanations explain nothing. They say they are shaken, bewildered and dismayed — that much we can accept and understand. Alan Max, managing editor of the Daily Worker, says he was "jolted" and any Stalinist who says otherwise is either a crook or a fool.

Joseph Clark, foreign expert for the same paper, is confused and disturbed. To Walter Ulbricht, leader of the East German Stalinist party, and 20th Congress critic of the Stalin cult, Clark directs the pointed comment: "Ulbricht would have been a lot more candid if he had only admitted that he himself had contributed to sponsoring the 'cult of the individual.'"

Clark's barb, aimed at Ulbricht, sounded an ominous note as it whistled by the ear of William Z. Foster, titular head of the American Communist Party. Foster rushed into print in the Daily Worker of March 16, to admonish Stalin's critics, that "our task is neither to rush indignantly to the defense of Stal-

(Continued on page 3)

... Foster's Explanation

(Continued from page 1)

in nor to tear him to political shreds, as some in our ranks seem inclined to do." Words which he may soon regret having uttered.

STALIN'S DISCIPLE

Foster owes a great deal to Stalin. For approximately 30 years he has been a faithful disciple and "sponsor of the Stalin cult" in the American CP. He never failed "to rush indignantly to the defense of Stalin," since that day in October 1928 when he joined with Lovestone and Browder to illegally expel from the Communist Party the Trotskyist left opposition group led by James P. Cannon.

The Cannon group asked only that they be allowed to discuss within the party Trotsky's criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist Party, adopted in 1928 as the Stalinist world program at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International. Foster knew that Stalin was intent upon suppressing Trotsky's criticism as he was informed that the document in question had to be smuggled out of the Soviet Union in order to get it before the CP members here.

He made his decision then, and has never deviated since, to become part and parcel of the Stalin cult, whose hallmark was the destruction of internal party democracy, suppression and murder of intransigent communist leaders and members who dared oppose his views, and the creation of the cult of infallibility.

And what does Foster say now?

On the occasion of Foster's recent 75th birthday he was eulogized by other Stalinist leaders in tones reminiscent of the sickening idolatry showered on Stalin before his death. So much so, that a prominent fellow-traveler, Ring Lardner, Jr., was constrained to demur in a letter to the editor published in the Daily Worker of March 18. "I wonder," said Lardner, "if some of the rather maudlin testaments to William Z. Foster on his recent birthday are really the most mature and effective way of acknowledging the respect due America's outstanding working-class leader." Lardner does not seem to understand that the cult of Stalin in Russia required the cult of Foster here and the leader cult everywhere in the world Stalinist movement.

In the Daily Worker of March 19 Foster was eulogized by Eugene Dennis in the unrestrained language of a cultist. Among

other things he lauded Foster for "his noteworthy contributions to Marxist theory and practice, on his creative work as a Marxist educator and historian." Dennis waxed lyrical over "our National Chairman (who) is a true scientist: having mastered the social science of the working class." And more in the same vein.

FOSTER'S 'EXPLANATION'

Now for a Marxist "theoretician, educator and historian," and a "true scientist," to boot, it should be a simple matter to explain the origin, meaning and development of the Stalin cult, especially after 30 pregnant years of deep immersion in its womb. Let's listen!

"Very probably," pontificates Foster in the Daily Worker, March 16, "all this will be made clear in the review of this past period now getting under way in the Soviet Union." And if this doesn't satisfy your hunger for a scientific Marxist explanation, Foster adds: "We may be confident, that from this situation, the Communist Party of the USSR will draw valuable and constructive political and organizational lessons." How consoling!

What Foster is here preaching is what he has been practicing for 30 years and what is still the poisonous source of the Stalin cult. Wait, he says, in his truest scientific manner, wait until Moscow has told us what to say and do and then that will be passed along as the distilled essence of Marxist wisdom. Foster stands ready to accept the word and deed of Stalin's closest collaborators in Moscow now, as he did before. For Foster nothing basic has changed. The Stalin

cult is dead—long live the Khrushchev cult!

But the workers of Moscow and throughout Russia are dissatisfied with explanations that do not explain. They are raising the same point that Clark directs at Ulbricht. A New York Times dispatch, March 19, reports that workers in the Soviet Union are seeking an answer to the question: "What were the present leaders of the Communist Party doing during the years of Stalin's misrule and crimes?" A pertinent question and one that will have to be answered.

For nigh onto 30 years the members of the American Communist Party have been taught to accept without thinking. Now they are told that this method was the result of a cult of infallibility deliberately fostered by Stalin and his henchmen which has visited infinite harm upon the working class movement and endangered the defense of the Soviet Union. If serious about fighting cultism, CP members will have to begin to learn to think. And in this connection there is no better way to close than to quote a statement by Lenin which appeared on the masthead of the very first issue of The Militant, November 15, 1928:

"It is necessary that every member of the Party should study calmly and with the greatest objectivity, first the substance of the differences of opinion, and then the development of the struggles within the Party. Neither the one nor the other can be done unless the documents of both sides are published. He who takes somebody's word for it is a hopeless idiot, who can be disposed of with a simple gesture of the hand."

... Stalin Cult

(Continued from page 2)

his disciples, is being demonstrated in life as true. And we, who have fought long years under his banner, salute his glorious name again today. We are surer than ever that we have been right. We have more reason than ever to fight without compromise for the full program of Trotskyism. And we have more reason than ever for confidence in victory.

Our victory will be more than the victory of a faction or a party — for the factional and party struggle is and has been the expression of the international struggle of classes. The vindication and victory of Trotskyism will coincide with, and fully express, the victory of the international working class, in the struggle against the capitalist exploiters and the Stalinist traitors, for the socialist reorganization of the world.