

Is Gates Handing The CP to Foster?

By Harry Ring

The New York State Communist Party — until recently the major stronghold of the Gates wing of the CP leadership — is now being handed on a silver platter to the group led by William Z. Foster. This new gain will be used by Foster and his associates to further their aim of re-Stalinizing the party.

Foster's newest victory came when on June 7, the N.Y. State Committee announced the election of Benjamin Davis as state chairman, George Blake Charney as state secretary and William Weinstone as educational director. Davis is Foster's chief lieutenant, Charney is a Gates supporter and Weinstone is a Dennis man.

This "equal" three-way split of key posts, for all practical purposes, leaves the Gates forces hamstrung. Yet the decision flows from the insistence of the Gatesites at the recent state convention, where they had a majority, that all three tendencies be equally represented on the newly-elected state committee. The strategy was motivated by the truly utopian conception that such organizational concessions to Foster would bring "unity" to the factionally-torn party.

FOSTERITES TAKE OVER

That such strategy can only serve to hand control to the Fosterites was demonstrated at the recent Kings County convention in New York. There, after a hassle on the issue of personnel for the new joint leadership, the local Foster people simply elected their own county leadership. This brushing aside of the agreed-upon three-way leadership division was later protested to the state committee where the Foster-Dennis combination refused to act in the matter.

The increasing Fosterite control of the party apparatus has been paralleled, and even aided, by a steady exodus of members from the party in the post-convention period. The membership loss has been accompanied by a continuing decline in the circulation of the Daily Worker and an increasing lack of ability to raise funds to keep it going. At the two-third mark in the \$100,000 fund drive for the paper, less than \$16,000 has been contributed.

These heavy losses spell out the inability of any section of the party leadership to cope with the political crisis which wracks the organization. Unanimous statements by the party leadership have proclaimed that the national convention hammered out a draft resolution that provided the party with a "new look" and the basis for moving forward. But the decline and isolation grow more precipitous. Why?

SILENCE ON ISSUES

For the sake of illusory "unity" with Foster, the Gates faction decided not to pursue its differences with the Fosterites. This course serves to stifle programmatic discussion throughout the ranks. Thus the Gatesites agreed to "neither condemn nor condone" the Kremlin's crushing of the Hungary revolution, thereby further compromising the party and at the same time choking off the possibility of any further internal discussion of this vital issue.

Since the national convention, which resolved none of the problems confronting the party, the Gates wing of the leadership have shouted themselves hoarse about the need to "get down to work to bring our program to the people" and have vainly appealed for an end to "factionalism" in the party. The logical climax to the "anti-faction" campaign came with the reported declaration by a prominent Gatesite that the Gates group itself was responsible for the present factional situation in New York.

Meanwhile, it becomes increasingly apparent that Foster's per-

spective of stifling all discussion or criticism of the Kremlin bureaucracy coincides with an international drive to re-monolithize the Communist parties, as testified to by the French, Italian, British and Canadian conventions.

The character of this international campaign is made clear in Alan Max's open letter of protest in the June 4 Daily Worker against the report on the CP convention in the March issue of International Affairs, the English-language magazine published in Moscow. Taking issue with its assertion that "the convention consisted of a rejection of 'revisionist' attempts to derail the party," Max points out that a number of CP organs abroad have sung this same tune and he comments sarcastically, "How these publications happen to carry such similar reports, I do not know."

DW ALSO AT FAULT

He then warns International Affairs that such reporting can "only tend to shake the confidence of your readers in the ability of your journal to give sound political estimates."

As managing editor of the Daily Worker, Max could well heed his own sound advice. While such publications as International Affairs have not hesitated to make political estimates with a fine disregard for facts, the Daily Worker, ever since it threw in the towel on Hungary, has been guilty of a variation of the same defect. Despite an ample supply of facts, the Daily Worker editors have never presented any political conclusions that might bring them into further collision with Foster.

This, of course, is all right with Foster. He is determined, regardless of cost or consequence, that the party must be reduced to its previous state of blind apologist for the Moscow bureaucrats. Such a goal can not be realized by a process of free discussion. And that's why he doesn't want any—either inside or outside the party.

Foster's attitude toward discussion is perhaps most clearly revealed by his attitude toward the American Forum for Socialist Education. Lack of Fosterite participation in the American Forum has made it an open secret throughout the radical movement that he wants no part of it.

But on what reasonable grounds can the Fosterites object to the American Forum or to CP participation in it? Composed of every shading of socialist thought, its sole function is well-expressed in its recent statement, "A time for questions—A search for socialist answers."

A PRIME NECESSITY

Such a discussion is the number one need of the entire American radical movement today. Who would argue that it is any less the need of the Communist Party? Even if convinced of the correctness of its own particular viewpoint, no section of the radical movement can expect to influence today's socialist-minded workers and youth unless it is ready to put its views to the test of confrontation with all those contending with it. And for the members of the CP there is a special urgency to the discussion of conflicting views for which the American Forum is now providing a vehicle. Failure to clarify and to arrive at correct positions on precisely the great issues now under debate throughout the radical movement is what led the members of the CP into their present impasse. Only a thoroughgoing, democratic discussion can provide the way out.