

Kremlin Policy Favors Foster Faction in CP

By Harry Ring

NEW YORK, Feb. 5 — Communist Party Chairman William Z. Foster has received another major assist from the Kremlin in his drive for control of the CP convention which convenes here this weekend. Moscow's move came in the form of a Feb. 3 article in the paper Soviet Russia, which deals a special blast at what it and Foster has branded as the "right wing" of the American CP — the Gates tendency.

Charging the Gates wing with revision of Marxist-Leninist theory under the pressure of "bourgeois ideology," the Kremlin organ utilizes a typical old-fashioned Stalinist frame-up of lumping the Gates wing with John Foster Dulles, since both allegedly advocate "national communism."

Singled out for special attack is Daily Worker foreign editor Joseph Clark, a leading figure in the Gates faction. Included in the same broadside are Polish

and Yugoslav CP'ers who are charged with favoring "national communism" and attempting to "split the international Communist movement into two opposing groups; Stalinists and anti-Stalinists."

Coming after the Kremlin attack of last November on the Daily Worker for daring to question its role in Hungary, the present crude Kremlin intervention on behalf of Foster underscores the fact that despite Khrushchev's promises at the 20th Congress the prospect remains bleak for Moscow establishing a relationship of independent and equal relations between itself and the Communist parties in the rest of the world. The move to whip the Gates tendency back into line is not an isolated development but part of the campaign of the Kremlin high command to shut off the wave of criticism that broke out in the Communist parties internationally following the 20th Congress.

Answering the attack by

Soviet Russia, the Feb. 5 Daily Worker declared that "American Communists will make up their own minds" and that the DW would not be prevented from thinking independently. Such a declaration surely echoes the sentiment of a large body of CP members. But they will have to firmly insist that this time the Gates-wing leaders on the DW staff live up to their promise.

The DW editors raised the banner of independence from the Kremlin bureaucrats last April following admissions in Hungary that the trial and execution of Laszlo Rajk, CP leader purged for "Titoism" in 1949, had been a frame-up. They did so again last June, when the New York Times published the Khrushchev "secret-session" speech at the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

Again, in the middle of November, several CP leaders associated with the Gates tendency denounced the war waged by the Kadar government and the

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Soviet troops against the Hungarian Workers Councils.

That was the furthest advance to independence from the politics of the Soviet bureaucratic caste reached by any Gates-tendency leaders. Since then, the Gatesites have beat a retreat all along the line on this question. Under a combined Foster-Kremlin attack, the Gates leaders caved in with a new "compromise" statement that brought to an end their initial efforts at an independent evaluation of the events. As a result, the DW has not uttered a word against the death-penalty for strikers decreed by Kadar.

The ability of the Gates group to win independence from Kremlin dictation and the "stand-pat" Stalinism of Foster was further crippled by its political line as expressed in the proposal for a Browder-type "political association." This served only to alienate many worker-members who wanted a new deal in the party but were not ready to pay the price of liquidation for it.

The ill-disguised opportunist politics of Gates, combined with

the efforts to conciliate all differences with Foster, served only as grist for Foster's mill. Although in full agreement with Gates on the basic programmatic premises from which stem the proposal on "name and form" (co-existence, anti-monopoly coalition, support to the Democrats), Foster has been able to present himself as the "defender" of "Leninism." He has capitalized on the issue of opportunism in his drive to choke off criticism of party bureaucracy and in his attempts to re-establish the old monolithic practices.

To bludgeon his opponents completely into line and to put an end to the stormy discussion in the ranks, Foster is now using the threat of split. A recent step in this direction is contained in his speech to the December National Committee meeting, published in National Discussion Bulletin No. 5, dated Jan. 15.

The split threat is presented in the form of a "unity perspective" and opens with the declaration that "many good Party comrades . . . fear that a serious split is developing." But, Foster assures them, while "obviously there is a danger of a split, I believe that our Party will emerge from the coming convention essentially united."

Then follows a statement of a series of developments which, according to Foster, have reduced the danger of split. Curiously enough, each development is one in which the Gates wing has yielded to him. Or as he puts it: "The unifying trend in the Party . . . has been running very strongly lately against the Right tendency."

Where then is the remaining danger of split? Foster explains: "At the convention the main task in overcoming this Right weakness will be to reject decisively the proposal to turn the Party into a political action association

and to correct current watered-down conceptions of Marxism-Leninism. Such action does not by any means imply the inevitability of a split. That there is a split danger is obvious, but it can and must be avoided."

Stripped of diplomatic double-talk, all of this boils down to a warning to the Gates group: You have retreated on a number of issues on which I oppose you. To that degree the danger of split has been reduced. You have not yet done so on other issues. To that degree the danger of split is still "obvious."

That unquestioned support for the Kremlin, over which Foster hurls "split" threats, is the cardinal issue is indicated by the fact that the very latest retreat of the Gates faction has not brought peace. At the recent New York State convention George B. Charney, a Gatesite, co-sponsored a resolution with Ben Davis, a Fosterite, which gave Foster everything he could want on the question of "name and form of the party."

But hard on the heels of this major "unity" offering came the attack in Soviet Russia. It declared in effect that agreement on such issues as "name and form" are of little consequence. What has got to be ended is the talk of Stalinism and anti-Stalinism. There must be no more critical and independent appraisals of what goes on in the Soviet orbit. Those who do so will be framed as allies of John Foster Dulles.

Thus the issue is posed before the convention delegates: Either a fight for internal democracy — that is, for the right of the membership to decide all issues without ultimatums and split threats. Or blind obedience to Khrushchev and Co. — that is, a return to the days of Stalinist bureaucratic rule over the party.

Bulletin

FEB. 8 — Today's Daily Worker reports a statement of the CP National Board which "takes note of a regrettable story at large that some purported basis exists for a challenge . . . regarding the delegates elected at the New York State Convention. . . . We view any rumor or act to challenge the delegates election outcome in New York as a serious and utterly illegal procedure which could only have a disruptive and all-sidedly damaging consequence to the unity, work and good conduct of the coming National convention."