

Foster Renews Warfare On Daily Worker Editor

By Harry Ring

William Z. Foster has launched a renewal of open factional warfare against the wing of the Communist Party leadership headed by Daily Worker editor John Gates. Foster's battle cry is the need to "liquidate . . . the revisionism which has almost wrecked the Party. At the same time party secretary Eugene Dennis who has tried to play a balance-of-power role in the fight, is branded by Foster as having "done much to deepen and prolong the Party crisis. . . . Dennis has never taken a firm stand against Revisionism, a course which has tended to appease and conciliate it."

Foster's attack is contained in a lengthy document written last October and now being generally circulated among the members of the Communist Party. Its first section also appears in the December issue of Political Affairs, with the balance slated for publication next month.

Some of the material is identical with that contained in a recent article by Foster in the Soviet publication Kommunist and reported in the Dec. 9 N.Y. Times. There Foster also assails Gates for "revisionism." The present article is fashioned as a polemic against Alexander Bittleman, a Dennis supporter, who wrote a twelve-installment tract in the Daily Worker last October entitled, "I Take a Fresh Look."

Aiming beyond Bittleman, Foster charges the Gates group with responsibility for the crisis that has gripped the CP for the past year and a half. He writes: "The Revisionist campaign of liquidationism . . . is what immediately precipitated the Party into crisis . . . Veteran Party members . . . collapsed un-

der the destructive ideological offensive from the Right. Various Party and other Left institutions . . . crumbled under the liquidationism of the Revisionists. . . . There was the tragic fate of the splendid Jefferson School, the California Labor School, the Daily People's World and the Labor Youth League—all of which perished under the Right offensive. . . . The substance of the present crisis is that the Party is deeply sick with a heavy attack of Right Revisionism."

Charges of such scope and character leave little ground for the type of "unity" compromises patched together at the party's national convention last February and at the "Reconstruction" meeting of the national committee last July. The charges assume particular significance in that they coincide with Kremlin declarations on the need to stamp out "revisionism" in the world Communist parties—that is to end any criticism of the Moscow line and to re-establish unquestioning subservience to it.

Demagogically presenting himself as the champion of a "class-struggle perspective," Foster flays Bittleman's "fresh look" at "peaceful co-existence" and the "welfare state" as devoid of any real socialist perspective. And he certainly is on safe ground in making the charge. For example, Bittleman asserted: "The emerging period of peaceful co-existence . . . does not call for the abolition of capitalism

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in the U.S. . . . the social and political nature of the struggle will be generally democratic, not socialist."

The Foster document is replete with left-wing phraseology designed to capitalize on the sentiments of those who want to rebuild the CP as an effective instrument for participation in the class struggle. But a careful reading of the document shows that, as before, Foster has no real differences with Bittleman (or Gates) over "co-existence" or the "anti-monopoly coalition." His "difference" on the anti-monopoly coalition reduces itself to the statement that "monopoly capitalism must be compelled to accept peaceful co-existence. It will never do so voluntarily." Put aside for now is his October, 1955, prediction of a U.S. "peace movement" that would embrace "important sections of the bourgeoisie and even of monopoly capital itself."

DOUBLE-TALK.

His call for revival of the slogan of a "Labor-Farmer party" is also left-wing window dressing. In the section of his document scheduled to appear in the January Political Affairs, Foster hastens to add on this point, "In this agitation, however, we must, as the main resolution states, realize that the Labor-Farmer party is 'not the only form' of mass political action." This means giving lip

service to a labor party, but continuing support to the Democrats.

But if Foster is in basic agreement with Gates on these programmatic points, then what's the shooting about? An important clue to what is really at issue is found in Foster's restatement of his opposition to the CP participating in the present "regroupment" discussions among radicals as expressed in such bodies as the American Forum-For Socialist Education.

Foster is opposed to such discussion because it necessarily sparks a continuation of discussion within the CP itself. It is this that he is fighting to stamp out. In line with Moscow, he wants to drive every dissenting voice out of the Party. Even if it means reducing it to a totally isolated sect, Foster is determined to return the CP to its previous status as an ideological echo of the Soviet Party.

He will not even settle for such capitulation as was made by Gates at the national convention with the disgraceful "compromise" agreement that the party neither "condemn nor condone" the Soviet intervention in Hungary.

Foster now writes: "The Party must eliminate from its work the recently developed Right tendency to snipe at the USSR. . . . A special task for our Party is to realize that the intervention in Hungary was imperative. . . . The CPUSA is the only Communist Party in

the world which does not take this realistic stand."

Nevertheless, Foster's drive to recast the CP into its pre-20th Congress mold will take a lot of doing. The source of the CP crisis lies in the fact that the Khrushchev revelations served, among other things, to smash the monolithic structure of the American CP. And when the floodgates of rank-and-file criticism opened it became clear that a big majority of the membership including many opposed to Gates, above all else want an end to ideological domination from abroad.

At the last convention, a letter from Duclos, similar to the one that dumped Browder in 1945, was rejected by the delegates out of hand. Prior to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, an attack in *Kommunist* on the *Daily Worker* editor would have been synonymous with his finish. Today Foster must try to rally the ranks to do the job.

Meanwhile, the Gates wing is faced with the question of its future. Its main source of strength within the CP today lies with those who are in revolt against Stalinism and who want the free discussion necessary for arriving at socialist answers. But the failure of Gates and his associates in the leadership to break with the class-collaborationist politics developed under Stalinism impairs their capacity to resist the revival of Stalinist monolithism.