The Communist Party Discussion on Regroupment in the Socialist Movement

By H. W. BENSON

In the bitter discussion of irreconcilable views that is slowly shaping up inside the Communist Party as its national convention approaches, the most heated discussion is the question of a “new united party of socialism” in the United States.

No one tries to define its nature with precision, a task that would doubtless prove fruitless and unnecessary at this stage of the discussion. But there is little doubt that Communists join together with “other Left groups” in a new broad organization which would combine all “socialist currents” and afford for the coexistence of divergent views within the framework of a united organization.

In the debate, all comers pay at least lip-service to the idea for reasons and with different aims. There’s the rub.

The slogan “For a Mass Party of Socialism” was advanced by Eugene Dennis in his 1912 appeal to the CP National Committee. The draft resolution adopted for the February 1937 convention speaks of “the perspective of a united party of socialism in this country.”

William Z. Foster, who changed its very meaning after his return from the rebirth of the CP in Russia, still endorses the call for a new movement. But it is a movement of an entirely different sort than that he led before as nothing: fundamental had been changed.

For the CP, it was a movement of all-around liberal impulses: it meant talking about the Russian Revolution and the nation’s new tenure; it meant talking about unity of socialism while apologizing for the crumbling of the Comintern’s task in Hungary.

For the Foster-Franklin leadership, the only way to foster and Dennis.

On the other hand, the perspective of a new, broad socialist movement can and does serve those who are honestly and deeply disturbed by the Khrushchev revelations and are horrified by the realization that these party officials were as unconscionable as any, and unapologetically so, as evilly as evil could be.

In the past they claim to do what they now call “campaigns”; they were disinterested in collaboration and discussion among all currents of the “Left.”

SEEN SEEKING ANOTHER WAY

For Foster it is the question of filling up every crack with plaster; plugging together the holes in the fabric of the CP, integrating workers with marxist zealotry, all into a reasonable faction of the old. For other leftists, it is the height of the socialist, empathy with the elitist, new socialists or the idea of a “new socialist movement” of the “workers’ party.”

They have a long way to go; one cannot deny the energies of a whole generation; but the idea of a new socialist movement must be based on the conviction of socialism and toward putting it into practice, and not by plugging a socialist hole with unscrupled, wise and crystal-clear in program and principle. But the tendency is there: they are not as cut-clear as defined here for economy of space but nevertheless the basic bearings are clear.

Foster and Dennis are in the unenviable position of men who must admit to their own party that they are against socialism and then request that we not forget what they have said. In effect they announce:

"We are true to what we denounce as false socialism; it is a true doctrine of the American people. We are true democrats, agents of imperialism; we applaud when red sores are poked; but we also have red truth and those who hated socialism; we understand socialism and dislike its false eloquence by equating it with the blackletter; all rights. We have adjusted our position to the demands and the office of a mass party, we recognize our crimes and errors. Having broken the smallest commonwealth in its post, we call upon all workers to support us in the bright future."

"Just a moment," comes the inevitability question. "How can we have confidence in the party which has been constantly in the public eye for the last months?"

"The party has been examined in the light of your shameful role? What fundamental role did you play in the making of the party and principles? And above all, how are your officers and prominent figures reflected in the position you take on the questions of the day? What about Hungary? Are you in favor of a new party for Hungary?"

A way with talk—"that is the essence of the new party." Foster and Dennis are the only one to rejineer. "We haven’t explained that we can do anything for the new party."

No, not content and let us talk of unity. It is enough that we new we once what you have done. We want to make a fundamental change behind.

That is in the Comintern, in Leninism, in the Socialists. It is the fulfillment of the biggest hit. It viciously murdered in the face of William Z. Foster as he put a paper in reply. Yet this unity is the underlying content of the Foster position. Fortunately for his efforts, the question of the animal kingdom, dissenting voices are among those who are in the Foster Coalition, are many among people.

STALINIST VIEW

In 30 expansive pages entitled "On the Stalinist Line" (Political Affairs, September 1924), Foster outlines exactly three major "errors" of the party during the old Comintern period as the basic "causes." Catalogue no less than 15 headings or principles which must be clarified, ending his list with "evo,"

he points the finger at no less an 36 fundamental errors of the "right wing" and division and discussion. All they do is to work out a familiar and often effectual device for solving a dilemma. To prevent the debate from freezing on the key, deciding on what is understood is to fragmentize it into an encyclopedia of problems, big and small, before someone begins thinking.

Yet, despite this exhaustive detail, he dismisses each one of the crucial questions in an off-hand comment.

Whatever the situation created by the Stalin regime of present-day problems, no doubt the party could overcome it without coming into crisis or absorbing the immediate lessons from the CC. In background and studying the long-range implications of this important role.

For Foster, the crisis in the CP is created by not the 20th Congress bombshells. They are just the latest of a series of shocks which are change is necessary and who are grasping for a new role. If only one could say "Yes, we committed unfortunate mistakes," and then go on with business as usual, we would have quite content.

DOUGING ISSUES

He finds it hardly necessary to "waste" time on the most serious questions. Let us discuss in his 20 pages dismissing the whole matter as follies:

"These limitations, in connection with the Stalin cult of the individual, are the latest manifestation of the inability of the leadership to make a critical attitude toward developments in the USSR. These mistakes, however, are institutional in scope, not merely those of the CPUSA. They spread out from their source in China or the USSR, and have been made during the years of the Cold War."

"An accusation of this nature is dismissed in our party, there is no need for us to dwell upon them here."

"The list of criticisms of party opponents is what he calls "the fighting for a new party," directed toward the Soviet Union."

For him, the Communist Party must remain basically what it has been and he looks upon it as the "fight against the forces of socialism."

The new mass party is put forward and is the object of discussion.

And so he writes:

"The resolution should also state the importance of a new perspective for socialism from its present implications of the CP, and to the people. It is the political perspective of the long-range objective."

But the point that is now is not "im- medicada" versus "long-range" but diverging conceptions of the role of the Stalinist perspective of the CP.

Foster attacks everyone who looks up on the "new party" as a real possibility, as a new understanding.

"Almost certainly," he writes, "in the United States, the fight for socialism will be made not by the Communist Party alone, but by a combination of economic and political groups among which the Communist Party must be a decisive factor, in the sense of a leadership, the workers proceed to the building of a mass socialist movement in this country, therefore, it is the essential element of the Communist Party upon the basis of this movement is the development of broad united-front mass struggles."

To Foster, the Communist Party must be the "leader" and he seeks to strengthen

it and the doge the issues by talking about the "new mass party.""

WELCOMING ISSUES

But that is Foster. On the other side, for example, is John Gates who re- verts to him in the November issue of Political Affairs.

A different estimate of the state of the CP:

"The group of American workers today to socialism is impossible without a co- concerned and organized vanguard. In all cases, the Communist Party is the people to present the basic issues."

"But is it not true that if we are going to be the exclusive channel through which such a leadership will come into existence, but I do in fact we are an important and essential part of this process and can make a decisive step to help the situation face to face up to our present crisis and make the necessary changes to saturate it."

He adds:

"To achieve this, we need to create an atmosphere which will move groups and individuals to the new ideas... We are not talking about some other group, but quite without regret to name-calling as a substitute."

The CP, then, is not the "vanguard" but it can make a "contribution" but only if the group is prepared to open its mind to consider all new ideas. This is a far cry from the Foster position and an obvious conclusion of the evidence for a genuinely new road in the ranks of the CP.

Gates repeats in conclusion:

"The test as to whether we shall suc- cessfully in their own right, American working-class organization will be the result of the American people and socialism really advancing into the kind of atmosphere we develop in the development of our membership, of course in the policies we adopt."

AGAINST MONOLITHISM

In the same issue of Political Affairs, in an article entitled "A New Party of Socialism," Steve Nelson argues against the "left" opposition as those who have raised the question.

"That is a point of view which refuses to epi- cize that there were any serious mis- takes committed by the old CP and could have been anything wrong with the organizational systems. Those who take that line are the ones who since the refusal of any discussion in the world Communist move- ment, to oppose the leadership of the CP.

They apparently draw the conclu- sion that no fundamental problems are to be found outside "the CP" and the past is taken for granted as if nothing had happened. They are there in our party who are afraid to discuss their ideas and stand on their errors in the most fundamental way. They tend to treat them superficially and therefore will not provide answers to our problems.

"We can only go on to quote none other than Rosa Luxemburg for free elections, free trade unionism and the 8-hour day in Russia of 1918, and continue, "Unless we change the monolithic concept, we are not going to get anywhere."

The Daily Worker can face the issue of the question of the new party from a broad united-front basis.

To Foster, Nelson and their co-thinkers, the "new party" is a long way off, it will shake off their ideological ties to the CP and is a new way to re-examine the old party. Needless to say, they think socialism exists in Russia.

The crisis is deepened by the re-making of the whole scene in Hungary where the tanks and planes of the Russian Einsatz group now work to eliminate individualism, to destroy the CP.

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How They Killed Aid to Hungary

There were ways to come to the aid of the Hungarian Revolution other than in appeals to the West. The movement was carried out with a view to start the third world war. There was a political answer. The U.S. authorities had to speculate it.

This is the damning charge made against the West by the new leader of the U.S.S.R., Rainer Ilindenbrand, the well-known author of The Explosion, an account of how the West has evaded its great responsibility.

The basic question is what the West Ger- man, particularly Western Berlin, workers would have done if the German workers to actively support the Hungarian Revolution.

The ground was fertile, says Ilinden- brand, who maintained organized contact across the border. On October 29 there was a movement in East Germany toward a solidarity strike with Hungary which was prevented by the author- ities.

In any case, in Berlin the workers were striations at the lash imposed on them by their own authorities. On Novem- ber 8 at a mass torchlight demonstration more than 100,000 demanded "action" and "some of the Propaganda" to the Bradenburg Gate only in the Berlin water board workers.

But Ilindenbrand does not mention this great adventure in Western intervention by Western armies, as do some desperate people. He condemns the fact that "the West Berlin government, supported by the Russians, was not able to stop the retro- spective active movement" to help the freedom fight across the Iron Curtain.

This proposal was made by the members of the Western German government for a peaceful "general strike" of solidarity.

Ilindenbrand, he was able to produce the West Berlin radio stations, including IBIS (Re- publican American Sector), only because the West German workers to actively support the Hungarian Revolution. But that was the radio station, he maintains, that was "forced to retransmit it." The West Berlin radio, that potentially powerful weapon, "remained abso-lutely silent" while the Hungarian Revolution was fought two weeks for solidarity strikes in other satellites.

"I personally believe," adds Ilinden- brand, "that if at the end of October there had been all-out strikes in Ger- many, the Soviet system would not have been able to withstand this blow..." The Soviet military forces are not homogeneous, the Soviet military could not have been attacked from the right.

Ilindenbrand is for the first time a political answer. He came to the aid of the Hungarians and they were not able to defend their country... We would have been able to defeat the totalitarianism in Hungary...

Ilindenbrand, for his part, is not a political newsman. He was able to give the news to the world on his own.

He concludes the statement by saying that the Russian official publication can now be read in the world.

Ilindenbrand, for his part, is not a political newsman. He was able to give the news to the world on his own. But he was right to do so, and he was right to be right.

The question is: What does this mean for the future of socialism in Hungary? It means that the Hungarian Revolution was a success, and that the Hungarian Revolution was a success because of the solidarity of the workers of the world. The solidarity of the workers of the world is the key to the future of socialism in Hungary. The solidarity of the workers of the world is the key to the future of socialism in Hungary.

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