The Fight Over the Draft Program:  

The CP’s Two Wings: What Divides Them?

By H. W. Benson

As the American Communist Party has wrestled with the impact of the draft crisis, it is clear that the CP is facing severe internal and external pressures. Out of the first stage of debate came the Draft Program which became the focus of discussion as the February party convention approached. The program that was presented was an attempt to sweep away the lingering sectional changes and viewed the party’s recent past with a critical eye. But was it the beginning of a genuine change or was it a camouflage and cover for a continuation of the fundamental line of old?

When the program appeared, there was an outpouring of debate, charges of bad faith, of a Communist international influence upon the party, of Stalinism and the maintenance of an “open shop.” Many members were distressed by the program, as they were by the new emphasis on the reduction of labor activity in the field of education and organization. The debate revealed the extent to which the party had been infiltrated and the extent to which the party was controlled by the international.

It soon became clear that the National Committee majority had adopted the Draft Program to dissolve at least two sharply divergent tendencies, each of which had voted for a different resolution but for vastly different reasons. The party was an umbrella covering opposing policies. The question had already started for debate: it became a convenient vehicle for raising the key question, but it could not settle it.

If it quickly became evident that this was a real discussion, in every sense of the word, it was because one wing of the party seriously tried to face up to the party crisis. It was not long after the Draft Program was announced as a springboard for a new attitude and a new movement: it maintained that the party would found unless it became democratic—democratic in its inner regime and democratic in its conception of socialism; that it must be a movement based upon the interests of the working class and to reject the role of blind apostle.

A BEGINNING

It was this group that turned the discussion into a genuine one.

John G. Eden: editor of the Daily Worker, in “Draft in the CP,” in “Political Affairs,” November, called for a real discussion as a basis for a future movement. This is not a new thing, but a genuine old thing. This movement hopes to begin with a new program and a new movement: it maintains that there are two distinctly different political and social systems: one, democratic, the other, non-democratic.

The skilled labor bureaucracy

No one better represents this bureaucracy than Eugene Dennis. For a feeling moment after the 20th Congress, Eugene Dennis, “the smartest” of the Khrushchev regime might tolerate, even encourage, such discussion. Eugene Dennis, who is being asked for his new views in a hurry, has wavered, indicated that he has had misgivings about the line of Stalinism. He has been heard to express some of the views of the program.

The skilled labor bureaucracy had been skilled in the arts and crafts of old-line Stalinism, culminating in a skillful line that enabled him to advance in politics as his higher-ups would appreciate. The success of Stalinist bureaucracy was one who required not direct orders but only a line -a line, not a direct order. Eugene Dennis, who is being asked for his new views in a hurry, has wavered, indicated that he has had misgivings about the line of Stalinism. This is the aspect of the other wing.

To be sure, the other wing is not a discussion, but only the appearance of one. It seems to be a genuine movement. This movement is a genuine movement. This movement is basically a movement to raise the level of discussion.

The Gates wing moves toward independence; the Left wing has not shown any signs of independence, but the difference in trend is there.

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BETWEEN THE D I V I S I O N

Not every supporter of the Draft Program wants a fundamental break with the past. They believe that the party can remain democratic and work towards the reduction of the conflict between the two wings. However, there are those who believe that the party must be divided completely from the past and that only then can the party be saved. The party’s internal tensions have led to a division between the Left and the Gates wings.

The Left wing is led by Eugene Dennis, who is坚决 on the reduction of the conflict between the two wings. They believe that the party must be divided completely from the past and that only then can the party be saved. The party’s internal tensions have led to a division between the Left and the Gates wings.

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