

# Kremlin Opens Attack On Daily Worker Editor

By Myra Tanner Weiss

SEPT. 18 — In a recent issue of *Kommunist*, "theoretical" organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin launched an attack on John Gates. This is the first time it has attacked Gates by name. According to Harry Schwartz in the Sept. 14 *New York Times*, the article in *Kommunist* labeled Gates a "revisionist" and condemned his views as expressed in an article last November in *Political Affairs*.

Gates replied that his views were "distorted" by *Kommunist*. "It doesn't surprise me that foreign Communists don't understand my views," Gates said in evident discouragement, "when so many Communists here don't either."

The Kremlin's attack on Gates follows the same pattern as its previous attacks on Joseph Clark, the former foreign editor of the *Daily Worker* who recently resigned from that paper and from the Communist Party. Clark was first attacked in the Soviet Union last February and frequently thereafter for his "revisionism." The campaign against Clark was intensified at the July meeting of the National Committee of the American CP where "the question of

Clark" became a central issue.

A similar campaign is now being mounted in the CP against Gates as evidenced by letters printed in the readers' column of the *Daily Worker*. "Well, it's one gone and one to go," said O. H. Leeds in the Sept. 13 *Daily Worker* referring to Clark and Gates respectively.

## GATES' STAND

The primary reason for the campaign against Gates — as for that against Clark before — is his advocacy of greater CP independence from the dictates of the Kremlin.

*Kommunist* declared that Gates wanted an organization that included "both supporters and opponents of Marxism-Leninism." Such a party would be based on "anarchistic principles of 'freedom' from discipline and from fulfillment of party decisions."

Actually Gates in his article last November asked for an organization that included supporters of different "interpretations" of "Marxism-Leninism." In reference to Marx and Lenin, Gates pointed out, "Those who object to the phrase in the resolution that we base ourselves on Marxist-Leninist principles 'as we interpret them' make a serious mistake on two grounds in

my opinion. First, if we do not interpret them . . . they interpret themselves and become dogma, and second, if we do not interpret them it means we become dependent on the interpretations of others."

Gates also proposed last year to "take a new look" at democratic centralism. In the past, he pointed out, this meant "maximum centralization and minimum democracy." Gates did not ask for "freedom from discipline." He said, "Certainly we must have majority rule. . ."

Gates didn't even go so far in his plea for democracy "from top to bottom" in the Communist Party as to ask for the democratic right for the formation of factions, a right that Lenin always regarded as essential to the democratic processes of a revolutionary party. He simply asked for the creation of "a truly independent American working-class organization" and "an atmosphere of respect for and consideration of each other's views on their merits. . ."

Democracy in the Communist Party is a necessary pre-condition if programmatic differences are to be clarified. But these differences have never been clearly stated, let alone settled. At the CP Convention last February

(Continued on page 2)

# ... Kremlin Opens Attack On Gates

(Continued from page 1)

resolutions were passed with unanimity. Differences were concealed, but they were not resolved.

## HOW UNANIMOUS?

As the crisis in the Communist Party breaks out into the open once more, both sides quarrel over who is for the decisions of the February Convention. When Clark resigned last week, he said, "I was among those who greeted the progress recorded at the last convention of the

## Daily Worker To Retrench

The Daily Worker announced, Sept. 18, that it is compelled to reduce its issue to half its former size, from eight to four pages, four instead of five days a week. The 12-page week-end Worker will be issued on Fridays. This retrenchment was necessitated by a "constantly falling circulation and a virtual ban on advertising has increased our deficits..." The \$100,000 Spring fund drive has so far yielded only \$45,000.

Communist Party. . ." However, "the hope and promise of that convention have not been fulfilled."

John Gates also hailed the February convention. In fact, the Gatesites contend that they are the real partisans of the convention resolution. But so do the other groupings — William Foster and the group around Eugene Dennis. The National Administration Committee of the CP, in its statement answering Clark's resignation, Sept. 12, said "The NAC will not be diverted from implementing the decisions of the 16th national convention."

Behind common declarations of support for the convention decisions is the fact that Gates wants a "break" from Kremlin domination. That is why he has drawn the attack of the Kremlin bureaucrats. His opponents — both of the Foster and Dennis groupings in the leadership — are determined to continue the CP as an obedient servant of the Soviet bureaucracy. That has been the role the CP has played ever since its Stalinization in the 1920's.

But Gates has not yet broken with the essence of the Stalinist program. He wants organizational independence from the Kremlin without thinking through the programmatic nature of Stalinism.

For Stalinism is the very opposite of revolutionary socialism. It is a variety of class-collaboration. In the U.S. it leads to "coalition" politics — that is, support for the Democratic Party.

Because Gates could never couple his demand for greater CP independence from Moscow's control with a class-struggle program in the U.S., he found himself in isolation from the revolutionary-minded sections of the CP rank and file. They associated Gates and his wing with the worst manifestation of "coalition" politics in the U.S.

## SOURCE OF CP CRISIS

But the Daily Worker editor is not the only one to feel a growing isolation. The CP apparatus' base is narrowing. As the National Organization Secretary, Sid Stein, pointed out in his report to the July National Committee meeting, "Our hopes that the convention [last February] would mark a change from decline to growth have not yet

materialized. Losses have continued both among leading personnel as well as in the ranks."

The source of the crisis, Stein said, is commonly understood to be the "weakening of what some of us call our moorings or our ideological foundations." However, the convention failed to answer the many unanswered questions of Communist workers. And the National Committee did no better. The NC in fact acted on the premise that the party could be unified without tackling the root-cause of the ideological crisis — namely, the revelation of the crimes of Stalinism.

Instead the NC sought to consolidate its hold on the party on the basis of advancing such questions as the banning of nuclear tests. A grouping around Eugene Dennis and Sid Stein took the helm of the party on the basis of such a "program." This development is only an expression of their ideological bankruptcy — a bankruptcy that flows from their subservience to the Soviet oligarchy.

"Two extreme tendencies have emerged to contest the basic line adopted by our 16th National convention," said Stein. On the one hand are those who "question the concept of peaceful transition" to socialism. But Foster was gently reminded of his contribution to this idea "in its initial stages." On the other side are those who "were completely disoriented . . . and have magnified every mistake."

## STAND ON HUNGARY

No event had a more profound effect on the world, the Soviet orbit as well as the capitalist world, in the past year than the revolution in Hungary. Yet here is what Stein had to say of this event in his report which was adopted by the NC in its "totality." "And while there has been both criticism and praise of Comrade Aptheker's book on Hungary," Stein said, "no one can deny that this work gets into the facts, presents ideas and is very much worth our attention and study."

The crisis in the Communist Party can only deepen with such programmatic dodges. Stein says, "Ideology is, of course, related to organization in that it demonstrates the need for our party. The big events of the past year in the international and domestic arena are current evidence of this need for a party with a Marxist-Leninist understanding of the class struggle."

Ideology more than "demonstrates the need for a party." It is the party — if that party belongs to the working class. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union doesn't have to worry about an "ideology" very much. It holds power by police-state methods.

The American Communist Party is a part of the working class. Those it would seek to attract have only their hope for a socialist future. Necessary to that hope is a party that is honest, democratic and scientific. Dash that hope to the ground and what is left? Can one face struggle, hard work and even persecution without that?

The National Committee hasn't explained how the admitted crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy were possible. It hasn't probed the bureaucracy's crimes in the field of a program of struggle for the working class in the capitalist countries. Can any serious socialist think for a moment that this monstrous repressive apparatus could commit its crimes against the Soviet working class and at the same time yield a revolutionary ideology based on Marx and Lenin — Stalin's exact opposites? Before one talks of Gates' "revisionism" shouldn't one explore how Stalin, and with him the American Communist Party, overthrew Lenin?

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