

John Gates Replies to Clark

Following are the views of John Gates, editor-in-chief of the Daily Worker, on the resignation of Joseph Clark.

By JOHN GATES

It is with deep regret that I accept the resignation of Joseph Clark from the Daily Worker. Some of our readers and members of the Communist Party may feel otherwise because of their disagreement with Clark's views. To me it is an occasion for profound sadness. The paper and the Communist movement have lost a man who was associated with us for more than 28 years, was a member of the Daily Worker staff for 12 years, contributed much to the cause of peace, democracy and socialism, and who was awarded the Silver Star by our country's armed forces for heroism in World War II. Such a loss is a heavy one.

It is a cause for concern when a person like Clark, who continues to profess his intention to keep fighting for socialism, concludes he can no longer serve that cause effectively in the Communist Party and on the Daily Worker.

I tried to convince Clark it would be in the best interests of socialism if he fought for his idea within the Party and the Daily Worker. I regret to say this failed even after the right for Clark to remain as foreign editor of the Daily Worker and continue to express his ideas, was fought for and won at the last meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party.

The resignation of Clark is another sign of the continued decline of the Communist Party. Our failure to convince him to stay shows we have not yet found the means to check this decline in our ranks. It is easy to condemn Clark for his action and necessary to disagree with mistaken views that he may hold. Far more difficult is it to analyze the fundamental causes of the loss of 45 percent of our membership in the past year, of which the resignation of Clark is another symptom. One of the members of the National Committee of the Communist Party stated at our last meeting that the loss of all these members is a form of criticism of our Party. Obviously our policies, methods and leadership are not sufficient as yet to stem our losses and to lay the basis for the rebuilding of the Party as an effective force for socialism in America.

Furthermore we have not yet succeeded in creating the kind of atmosphere in the Communist movement where new ideas can freely be advanced and explored without name-calling, invective and abuse. Such an atmosphere is essential if the Communist Party is to meet its crisis and develop the program, policies, methods and forms required by the fundamentally new situation in the world and our country. Clark states the Daily Worker never directly censored his views. But the fact is that such heat was engendered around his writings, so violent the attack against him, such pressure built up, that his position as foreign editor of the Daily Worker became well nigh untenable. At least Clark saw it that way.

I disagree with Clark that the Communist Party has become a hindrance to socialism. A struggle is now going on in the Party. On one hand there are those who want to advance the ideas adopted by the recent national convention of the Party to again become an effective political movement in our country.

On the other hand there are those who opposed these new policies before the convention and who resist, obstruct and seek to reverse them now. This is a real struggle and has not yet come to a definitive conclusion. The resignation of people from the Party only weakens the

struggle of those who want to see the great hope and promise of the national convention fulfilled. In my opinion, the development of these policies has been retarded by their opponents. But they have not been destroyed or reversed as Clark seems to believe. I have not lost hope, as has Clark, that the opponents of our new policies will be decisively defeated. These new policies included the concept of helping to form a peoples anti-monopoly alliance as the next historic stage of American advance; the completion of the democratic revolution in the South as the number one democratic task of the nation; peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism in the United States; and independent, fraternal and critical attitude to the socialist countries and other Communist Parties; our duty to interpret Marxism in accordance with American reality; and the need to struggle against dogmatism, sectarianism and pressure for conformity within our ranks as the main, though not sole, danger. It is in the fulfillment of these policies that I see hope for the future.

I have a different view from Clark on some of the evidence he cites to prove that the opposite trend is dominant and winning in the Party. He cites the reply of the National Committee to the Duclos letter. In my view the reply proves the opposite of Clark's contention. The reply was a direct, explicit and unequivocal rejection of Duclos' view that the policy of the American Communist Party was opportunistic and revisionist because it was critical of some policies of the Soviet Union. This view was held by a few of the present leaders of the Party but was rejected by the convention. In fact, three of the leaders of the Party voted against the National Committee reply precisely because it rejected the views of Duclos on the ground that Duclos was right. Clark contends that we did not explicitly reject the statement of Duclos that internationalism requires solidarity with the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. But the reply to Duclos says the following:

"We are of the opinion that some of our past contributions to America have been limited by dogmatic and doctrinaire understanding and application of these principles, as well as the oft-time uncritical acceptance of views of Marxists in other countries, and often by a failure to appreciate thoroughly enough the conditions and democratic traditions of our country."

In the same vein, the main political resolution of the convention states: "The Party also viewed uncritically developments in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. It mistakenly thought that any public criticism of the views or policies of the Marxist parties of these countries would weaken the bonds of international working-class solidarity or bring comfort to the enemies of peace and socialism. The incorrectness of this view was highlighted by the revelations in Khrushchev's special report to the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Because it held this view, the Communist Party of our country was entirely unprepared for and deeply shocked by the admissions of crimes, violations of socialist justice, mistreatment of certain national minorities, and the basis for the rupture of relations with Yugoslavia—all at variance with the truly liberating character of socialism. The courage shown in making these disclosures and the profound process of self-correction, begun some years ago and sharply accelerated since the 20th Congress, are irrefutable evidence of the historic role and vitality of the so-

cialist system. Socialism is strengthened, not weakened, by the fraternal and constructive criticism of Marxists of many lands."

I am afraid Clark draws the mistaken conclusion from the friendly, calm and fraternal tone of our reply that we did not explicitly reject the arguments of Duclos.

Furthermore, it is not true the Daily Worker endorsed Khrushchev. We give no blank check to any individual, party, government per se. We define our attitude on the basis of their policy, by whether these are in the interests of peace, democracy and socialism. We supported the recent changes in leadership in the Soviet Union because we were for the policies enunciated by the 20th Congress of the CPSU. We believed the changes were in basic agreement with those policies. We did not endorse the changes without qualification, but criticized the method by which they were effected, while warning that the basic progressive character of the changes should not be obscured by our legitimate concern with the methods. I wrote in the Daily Worker of July 24: "We are not Titoists, Gomulkaists, Maoists or Khrushchevists. We are American Communists who think for ourselves, stand on our own feet and make our own decisions based on the interests of the American working class, nation and humanity."

Clark's undifferentiated criticism of the leadership of the USSR, his lumping everybody in the same pot, does not help the process of democratic socialist advance in the Soviet Union. Every advance should be supported just as every retreat should be criticized.

The total evidence about our party and its 16th National Convention smashes the Hoover-Brownell myth that our party is a foreign agency—a myth which Harry Schwartz of the New Times sought to perpetuate in his handling of the Clark resignation story yesterday.

Clark quotes "Party Affairs" that a motion was unanimously passed at the National Committee meeting disagreeing with his views. I do not recall such a motion and neither do several other members to whom I have spoken. In any case the nature of my disagreement with Clark is totally different from that of some others.

The real issue in my opinion is not Clark. It is whether the Party will move decisively to fulfill the new policies of the national convention and rout those who are trying to reverse them. Only such a course will solve the crisis in the Party.

In the farewell the Daily Worker staff gave Clark a few days ago, I expressed the thought that in saying farewell to Joe, we were not bidding farewell to his and our mutual fight for socialism. Clark replied in kind. We parted in sorrow and not in anger, as friends, not enemies. I hope we will be able to discuss our disagreements in such a way as to be able to march to socialism, each in our own way at the present time, but unitedly sometime in the future.

West, East Germany In China Same Time

TOKYO, Sept. 9.—The Chinese capital of Peking played host today to delegations from both West and East Germany.

A West German trade delegation arrived there from Canton yesterday, led by Otto Wolff Von Amerongen, president of the Eastern Committee of the West German economy. At the same time Chinese military leaders were honoring an East German military delegation led by East German Defense Minister Willi Stoph.