

Speak Your Piece

Disagree with

Statement on Gates

Editor, Daily Worker:

We regret the statement by the National Administrative Committee of the Communist Party concerning a newspaper query to our editor, John Gates, which was included in a N. Y. Times story of Dec. 26.

The Administrative Committee says that Gates' response to the query constituted a "violation of the most elementary organizational principles common to all working-class organizations."

In the first place, the committee's statement implies that the N. Y. Times story consisted entirely of an interview with Gates. This was not the case, as a reading of the story shows. Moreover the facts of the matter, as related by Gates to a Daily Worker staff meeting and which there is not the slightest reason to doubt, are these:

The Times phoned Gates on Christmas Day and read him a story obtained from sources which it did not name and which concerned a meeting of the National Executive Committee and a reported vote regarding suspension of the Daily Worker. Gates refused to comment and the Times informed him it was publishing the story anyway. Later Gates came to the conclusion that publication of such a story without any comment by the editor of the Daily Worker could work incalculable mischief politically and financially not only for the Daily Worker but for the future of the weekend Worker as well. He therefore phoned the Times back and authorized publication of three sentences by himself in which he indicated that the question was not yet finally settled, that he wanted to see the paper continue and that, in any case, any decision would be announced by the paper itself. The three sentences were:

"In the thirty-four-year his-

tory of the Daily Worker there have been many predictions of its death, but it has proved to have more lives than the proverbial cat. I am opposed to the secrecy is impossible and only results in left-wingers getting their information on major developments in the Communist Party from the big money press.

Moreover, in criticizing Gates, the Administrative Committee seems to forget that he is not suspension of the Daily Worker and intend to fight for its continued existence. In any case, the Daily Worker will cease to exist only when it alone says so."

Whether Gates' comment could have been improved upon or even whether he should have commented at all, is certainly open to discussion. But the Administrative Committee's characterization of his comment as "a violation of the most elementary organizational principles common to all working-class organizations," in our opinion is groundless, uncalled for, and too reminiscent of previous harmful practices which the Communist movement has criticized itself for and which it is trying to shed.

We urge an end to the practice which delays publication of important discussions and decisions. Secrecy is not only wrong—in these days of bugging, stool pigeonry and loose discussion, only a member of the committee but also editor of the Daily Worker. It is absurd to expect him to remain silent to a query about the fate of the paper which he edits.

We would urge the Administrative Committee to take a second look at its statement and give serious consideration to the above points.

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