

CP Convention Paves Way For Discussion of Program

By Harry Ring

The most significant feature of the recently concluded convention of the Communist Party is the fact that the delegates, by a majority of two to one, blocked the efforts of party Chairman William Z. Foster to force the organization back into its pre-20th Congress bureaucratic straightjacket. In taking this stand the delegates rejected the declared views of the bureaucrats in the Kremlin. With this act of defiance a 30-year period of political subservience to the Soviet bureaucracy is now drawing to a close.

This action of the convention was not sufficient to resolve the

political crisis which has wracked the party since the 20th Congress, but it greatly facilitates the possibility for the party membership to come to grips with the political issues causing the crisis.

DENNIS IN BETWEEN

The convention revealed a strong desire on the part of the delegates to avert a split in the party. But within that framework a majority wanted to end the political domination of the Moscow hierarchy and to prevent re-establishment of a regime of bureaucratic "monolithic unity" within the party. The convention

further demonstrated that no part of the top leadership enjoys the full confidence of the ranks.

For almost a year a fierce factional struggle for control of the party has gone on between the Foster and Gates wings of the leadership, with Dennis attempting to play a balance-of-power role between them. In the election of the 20 members-at-large to the national committee, the Foster group won the smallest number of places on the committee. The Gates forces won a larger number but did not get a majority.

Almost half of those elected have not publicly committed themselves to definitive support of either group but can be best described as more "anti-Foster" than "pro-Gates." While the failure of either wing to capture control permits Dennis to continue playing the middle of the road, there is no visible evidence of a crystalized Dennis "tendency" in either the leadership or the ranks.

DIDN'T WORK THIS TIME

The Stalinist-type efforts to influence the convention's outcome from abroad undoubtedly helped tip the scales against Foster. In 1945 a Moscow-inspired letter from French OP leader Duclos was sufficient to bring about the dumping of party leader Earl Browder and an abrupt shift in party line. But the Duclos letter to this convention, branding the views of the Gates group as a "dangerous departure" from Marxism-Leninism failed to accomplish the same result. Instead, the convention voted two to one in favor of the Gates stand on the issue as presented by Max Weiss, reporting for 14 of the 26-man resolutions committee.

Hitting at the Duclos letter, Weiss declared: "We cannot agree with any position which implies that some other party will interpret for us what the principles of Marxism-Leninism are while all that we are called upon to do is apply as creatively as we can their interpretation."

It is necessary, Weiss continued, "to declare clearly, unmistakably and publicly that it is our party which must interpret these principles as best we can, that no other party in the international Communist movement, no matter in what esteem we hold it, should be assumed to have any authoritarian, ex cathedra right to interpret these principles for us."

MEMBERSHIP'S DESIRE

In adopting the report, the convention rejected Foster's view that it should welcome the "sage" (Continued on page 2)

Key Steel Districts Vote Against McDonald's Rule

By Fred Halstead

FEB. 19 — The bureaucracy in the powerful United Steelworkers of America headed by David J. McDonald received a crushing blow from the rank and file steel-

workers in the union election, Feb. 12. Well over one-third of the votes for the office of international president of the union went to the candidate of the Dues Protest Committee, Donald Rarick. A majority of the votes were cast for Rarick in several major steel centers including two Pittsburgh districts.

The vote for McDonald's opponent, a 37-year-old grievance committeeman at the United States Steel Irvin Works near Pittsburgh who was unknown outside his own Local 2227 until the dues-protest began last year, was greater than had been expected by even the staunchest supporters of the protest movement.

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OFFICIALS BACK M'DONALD.

Total unofficial returns reported in Pittsburgh as of Feb. 18 gave McDonald 163,000 votes to Rarick's 84,000. The official victor will be McDonald who will retain his post, but the real victors are the rank-and-file who turned out a huge ground-swell vote in opposition to the McDonald machine in the first election for president in the history of the steelworkers union.

The large vote for the Dues Protest candidates in the major steel centers is even more impressive considering the fact that practically all the bureaucrats in the local unions and all the incumbent district directors lined up solidly behind McDonald. This gave the machine complete con-

trol of the election machinery itself as well as the local and international press and treasuries. The Big Business press, which has long hailed McDonald as a

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Members of two Pittsburgh Steelworkers Locals last fall turned thumbs down on David J. McDonald's demand for a dues increase. McDonald, the steel union's President has to scrape by on an income of only \$50,000 a year.

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advice" of the Duclos letter. It also refused his demand for a purge of the leadership contained in his declaration that the party was suffering from "a grave crisis of leadership" which "has done more to disorient the party than the government attack on us."

Thus the convention gave expression to the deep-seated desire of the membership to win the right to chart the political course of the party without external dictation or internal bureaucratic repression. At the same time the delegates would not give control of the party to any section of the leadership. The convention closed with unity declarations by all of the top leaders, but the division among them continues. The newly-elected members-at-large of the National Committee established an eleven-member secretariat based solely on New York residence and did not even attempt to elect party officers. In the election of the remaining 40 members of the national committee by the state conventions, the same pattern of division will probably prevail.

The convention outcome means that the discussion in the party will continue. At the same time the prospects for the continuing exchange of views with other radical tendencies remain good. The party membership wants such a discussion and those in the leadership who would block such discussion are not in a position to do so.

ISSUES UNRESOLVED

The primary impetus for a deepening of the discussion stems from the fact that all of the basic political issues confronting the party remain unresolved, including those issues which the convention tried to resolve and those it avoided.

The adopted draft resolution will fare badly against the test of events. Its central thesis has already been shaken by world developments. The Suez crisis and the declaration of the Eisenhower doctrine underscore the fact that the resolution's prognosis of a

"durable" era of peaceful co-existence has little relation to reality. The party membership will have to reconsider the draft resolution's rejection of the Leninist thesis as "obsolete." That thesis maintains that the war-makers will be restrained and defeated only by the revolutionary class struggle of the workers and colonial peoples of the world.

Convention endorsement of support to the Democratic party and to the official leaders of the labor, liberal and Negro movement cannot serve the declared intention of ending the party's isolation from the advanced sections of the ranks of labor or the Negro people.

The stunning setback suffered by McDonald in the steel union elections dramatically reveals the strong opposition in the union ranks to his bureaucratic machine. In the days ahead, the Reuthers and Dubinskys, who stand on the same basic program as McDonald, will encounter similar opposition. The CP convention resolution which pledges them "cooperation" will not alter this inevitable process.

PROBLEM OF STALINISM

The convention declared for a major campaign to win support in the ranks of the Negro movement. The recent presidential election demonstrates that CP support of the Democrats will be greeted with little sympathy by militant fighters against Jim Crow.

Equally decisive in the period ahead will be the great issues which the convention did not even attempt to cope with. The equilibrium of the Communist Party was shattered from top to bottom by Khrushchev's destruction of the Stalinist myth. But the party leadership has avoided any serious analysis of the real meaning and the social roots of Stalinism.

This question cannot be postponed. In whose interests did Stalin smash Soviet democracy? Why did he abandon Lenin's political program? These are not matters of academic historical interest. Stalin is dead but Khrush-

chev is very much alive, and reeking of anti-Semitism and Great-Russian chauvinism.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

The Hungarian revolution for national independence and workers' democracy was the flash-lighting of mass opposition to continuing Stalinist policies. Polish working-class struggle and resistiveness among Soviet workers and students, substantiate the fact of a rising revolutionary opposition to the privileged bureaucracy. Stalinist oppression has given rise to the political revolution of the masses of the Soviet Union and East Europe—a revolution that will restore Soviet democracy.

This irrepressible historic development will have its repercussions in the Communist parties of the world as already demonstrated by the Hungarian revolution. The convention's assertion of political independence paves the road for a thoroughgoing discussion of these issues. Such a discussion will strengthen those forces within the party which seek a revolutionary socialist solution to the present crisis.

Three Indicted On Gov't Charges Of Soviet Espionage

The three persons arrested in the government's latest "Soviet spy" case were imprisoned without bail, Feb. 13, after pleading not guilty to charges of conspiracy to violate the espionage law. They are Jack Soble, his wife Myra and Jacob Albam. Arrested by FBI agents Jan. 25, they have been indicted under the peacetime espionage act of 1954 which provides a maximum penalty of death.

Presiding Federal Judge Noonan agreed to a defense request that no bail be set at this time. U.S. Attorney Williams requested that bail be set at \$100,000 each. Defense characterized the proposed bail as excessive and asked that it be given further time to