

Gates Group Ducks Issue of Hungary

By Harry Ring

One of the results of the Hungarian revolution has been a sharpening of the struggle within the Communist Party in this country. The faction in the CP leadership headed by Party Chairman William Z. Foster defends the Soviet intervention in Hungary while the opposing faction, led by Daily Worker editor John Gates, is critical of Soviet policy in the situation, although it, too, opposes the legitimate struggle of the Hungarian workers. National Secretary Eugene Dennis who had been trying to function as a balance of power between the two conflicting tendencies has lined up on the Hungarian question with Foster.

Writing on the issue in the Nov. 21 Daily Worker, Foster concedes that it is a "world tragedy" that it has been "necessary to conduct an armed struggle against a mass movement which undoubtedly had the backing of the bulk of the Hungarian people."

However, he asserts, "Fascist-like reaction . . . was able to seize upon the just grievances of the people, especially their militant demonstrative demand for national independence, and to misdirect them into reactionary and fascist channels."

'HOW DO YOU KNOW'

"It was in this situation," Foster continues. "Upon the request of the Hungarian Kadar government, that the Soviet Union . . . stepped in to restore order in Hungary and to prevent a potentially highly dangerous victory for ultra-reaction."

Max Gordon takes issue with the Fosterites in the Nov. 23 Daily Worker and defends its editorial line. He correctly characterizes the Fosterite stand as a "platform of the old, blind apologetics" for the Kremlin and disputes the thesis that the Hungarian revolution was fascist-inspired or fascist-led.

"Unquestionably counter-revolutionary elements were extremely active in the rebellion," Gordon writes. "But how can anyone here be so certain that they had taken over the rebellion and could have imposed their own regime?"

"Even today," he continues, "the reports from Hungary emphasize that it is the organized workers who are in the lead of the struggle. And London Daily Worker correspondent Peter Fryer, who was on the spot, reported in a dispatch, which his paper did not print, that at all times the Hungarian workers could have checked the counter-revolutionary elements."

Thus Gordon agrees that the working class has been the decisive force in the situation, and he sees merit in Fryer's report that the workers were fully capable of dealing with the counterrevolutionists. One would therefore assume that Gordon is opposed to the Kremlin intervention, the sole justification for which has been the claimed imminent danger of capitalist restoration. But there is a limit to Gordon's criticism of the Kremlin's actions. His stand on the intervention boils down to a weaseling "yes, no, maybe."

"I believe," says Gordon despite the very facts he has just cited, that, "the verdict of history will be that this intervention was necessary." But, he hastily adds, "I do not think it impossible that history may record it as a great blunder."

Since Gordon is quite willing to leave the crucial issue of

Soviet intervention to the verdict of history, why then his aggressive attack on the Fosterites? He explains, "If we succumb to this again [i.e., to blind apologetics for the Kremlin] we are finished as an effective organization among the American people, for now and for the future."

Flinching at the charge leveled at the Gates tendency that it is trying to cultivate "respectability" with the American ruling class, Gordon declares, "This is false. But we do have a real problem fundamental to our existence, in cultivating 'respectability,' or legitimacy among the American workers. Without this, we have no reason for existence."

In short, Gordon's difference with the Foster tendency is not concern for the fate of the Hungarian working class but solely whether the Kremlin intervention should be defended or "criticized" before the American workers.

This is the rankest opportunism. Gordon is not concerned with the truth. His only concern is with what is "respectable" in America.

It is true that servile apologists for the Kremlin bureaucracy cannot win a following for socialism among the American workers. But neither can opportunists who seek "legitimacy" without concern for socialist principles. The highest obligation of genuine Marxists is to first ascertain and then to tell the truth. Failing this, they assuredly "have no reason for existence."

For example, if in fact, the Soviet Army had intervened against a fascist counter-revolution that was overwhelming the Hungarian workers — then it would be the duty of revolutionary socialists in all lands to defend that action, no matter how much the capitalist class lied about the action and how unpopular such a stand might be until the lies were dispelled.

But the crushing weight of evidence shows that the Hungarian working class is leading a revolutionary movement for national independence against the Kremlin overlords. This, and not considerations of expediency, dictates to genuine Marxists that they support the Hungarian workers against their oppressors.

Gordon expresses concern over the efforts of the State Department to exploit the Hungarian revolution for Wall Street's reactionary ends. This is a valid concern. But anybody who equivocates on the character of this revolution and refuses to defend it against the Kremlin is in no position to aid it against Wall Street's machinations, either.

The American workers are sympathetic to the Hungarian revolution. There is only one effective way to prevent that entirely legitimate sympathy from being exploited by the State Department and the labor fakers. That is to help the American workers to understand the decisive fact that the aims of the Hungarian workers are in direct conflict with those of the State Department.

The State Department works for the restoration of capitalist reaction in Hungary. The Hungarian workers fight for a national freedom based on socialist foundations. To rally support for Hungarian labor explicitly on the basis of their wholly progressive aspirations is the only way to mobilize opposition to the reactionary schemes of U.S. imperialism. For this task, the full truth is indispensable.

To dodge the facts and wind up with shamefaced "critical" endorsement of the Kremlin intervention, as Gordon does, contributes no more to the struggle against Wall Street's aims in Hungary than does the "blind apologetics" of the Fosterites.

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