

The Plan to Reconstruct the CPUSA

By C. R. Hubbard

The Crisis in the Communist Party that followed the Khrushchev revelations of Stalin's crimes at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is now in its second year.

Sid Stein, National Organization Secretary of the CP, in his report to the July meeting of the National Committee, stated that the Communist Party has been reduced from 17,000 members in early 1956 to 10,000. "Among these comrades," said Stein, "are hundreds, if not thousands who are as they say, 'sitting on the fence,' passive, inactive. And this passivity and inactivity is not confined to rank and file comrades."



DENNIS



KHRUSHCHEV



FOSTER

"It is no secret that some comrades would like to see Comrade Clark removed as foreign editor. If there were no other problems, this might be a contribution to the paper. . . ." What are these "other problems" that compelled the NC to an attitude of tolerance for Clark, however temporary? The Publications Report explained, "Some of us feel that organizational measures would have serious consequences with regard to the struggle for the Party, for its line, and its relation to outside forces at the present time, when we are still in this difficult, weak stage." (Emphasis added.)

Undoubtedly, people like John Gates found some hope of democratic tolerance for differences in the Communist Party at the convention last February. But in the National Committee, a body more removed from the rank-and-file of the Party, Gates was decidedly put on the defensive. His primary contribution to the discussion of the National Committee meeting was a plea for more comradely discussion of differences.

"People are leaving the Party," Gates replied to his opponents, "and the only thing that some of us can think about is how to tighten the screws even more. They aren't leaving fast enough. Drive them out! Accelerate the process!"

"The problem of thousands of

Copies of the Sid Stein report to the July 27-28 National Committee Meeting of the Communist Party as well as of the issue of Party Affairs containing discussion on the report can be obtained from Party Affairs, 23 W. 26th St., New York 10, N. Y.

people is precisely that they want to leave our Party," Gates said. "No one of us has proved to be so good a Marxist that we can just say smugly and complacently, 'We're Marxists. Joe Clark is no Marxist. . . . We will win nobody, and only alienate more people, if our approach is organizational, and not political and ideological.'"

But the Dennis-Stein and the Foster groups for all their plans about "ideological rebuilding," are not capable of resolving the party crisis on an ideological basis. The ways of democracy are not familiar to those who have functioned bureaucratically in the past. "Indoctrination" and suppression of opponents rather than discussion is what they know best. Suffice it to say that no one on the National Committee Gatesites included, has yet proposed to legitimize the right of members to form factions to fight for a programmatic point of view.

World Events

MIDEAST CRISIS took on more ominous character as U.S. Marines landed at Saros Bay in Thrace under simulated atomic bombing, backed by 96 U.S. Navy ships in the Mediterranean Sea. Meanwhile, King Hussein has placed Jordan under martial law.

DYNAMITE WAS THROWN at a building housing the United States Daily Star in Beirut, Lebanon. Damage was

WIDE GENERAL STRIKE was threatened if the 45,000 telephone and telegraph strikers' demands were not met. The government had decreed that the unions on strike had lost their legal status. This decree and the use of troops as scabs aroused Argentine labor. Two hundred strike leaders were arrested Sept. 24, while 62 unions announced plans to strike in sympathy on Sept. 27. Supporting the embattled workers are 200,000 metal workers, 200,

structing the very foundations of our movement"

LITERATURE KITS

This, according to Stein, is supposed to include ideological rebuilding, complete with "literature kits" to be issued to party members in the near future. There is no doubt that there will be a stream of new political material forthcoming from the CP in the next period. However, as the Stein report made clear, there will be no fundamental change in the Stalinist policies of the party, even though they led to the crisis in the first place.

As debate at the July National Committee meeting indicated, the dominant groups in the party leadership also seek to resolve the ideological crisis by pressing an organizational attack on critics of the Stalinist policies. William Z. Foster is the zealous advocate of beginning the pounding right now.

Any attempt to restore a full-fledged bureaucratic regime must be a cautious one at this point, however. The old apparatus that once ran the Communist Party was thoroughly

shaken. Rank-and-file demand for full democracy acts as a restraint.

This, at any rate, is the calculation of a grouping that appeared at the July meeting around Eugene Dennis and Sid Stein. This group is essentially in agreement with Foster but would moderate the struggle against the "rightists" in the Gates' group.

The real differences in the National Committee were expressed in the fight over the "question of Joseph Clark," former foreign editor of the Daily Worker who has since resigned from the staff of that paper and from the Communist Party.

The Stein report was accepted unanimously. But Foster and some of his supporters (such as Benjamin Davis, Jr., William Weinstone, Charles Lohman) voted "with reservations." They wanted a harder line against Gates and Clark.

The Fosterites argued against a "dual center," referring to differences between the Daily Worker and the National Committee. They insisted on the application of "democratic central-

ism," (the Leninist term they use to cover the Stalinist practice of bureaucratic centralism of the Communist Party) in the desire to force Gates and Clark to toe the line or be removed. Foster said the question was "whether or not we should rebuild the Communist Party or head towards the creation of a new organization."

CONTROL OF WORKER

In the report of the Committee on Publications, excerpts of which were published in the August issue of Party Affairs, the National Committee attempted to reassert its control over the press where the Gates influence is strongest. But it did not dare extend this control so far as to remove Clark from his post as foreign editor. This task was postponed for a more propitious moment.

According to Benjamin Davis, Jr., the Daily Worker editor, John Gates, "stated to the National Committee that if any change was taken in the status of Comrade Clark as foreign editor of the Paper, he would resign."

The Publications Report said,