

Communist Party Bulletin Reveals Split in Leadership

By Harry Ring

The factional division in the leadership of the Communist Party has become so pronounced that the warring groups are now speaking of the serious danger of split in the shrunken organization.

The scope of the crisis is graphically described in the January issue of the CP bulletin, Party Affairs, which publishes a polemical exchange between national secretary Eugene Dennis and national organization secretary Sid Stein. The debate took place at the December meeting of the National Executive Committee.

DENNIS PRETENSE

When the major division in the party leadership was between the Gates and Foster wings, Dennis and Stein emerged as the co-spokesmen for a "center" grouping. In the present debate Dennis continues to present himself as waging a struggle "on two fronts," that is, against what

he labels "revisionism" and "ultra-leftism."

This claimed position is bitterly assailed by Stein who charges that in reality Dennis has aligned himself with Foster and Ben Davis in a drive to block the decisions of the past national convention. He brands Dennis as guilty of trying to achieve repudiation of the convention mandate for ideological independence from the Kremlin, of now joining Foster in his stand against the CP participating in the process of socialist regroupment and of attempting to re-establish a bureaucratic control over the party.

(The lineup in the 20-member NEC in the present struggle was indicated by an 11-to-7 vote against endorsing the November declaration of 12 Communist Parties in Moscow. Such endorsement was viewed as a repudiation of the independence mandate of the past convention. Dennis voted with the minority in favor of endorsing the declaration.)

Opening the debate, Dennis declares: "... generally speaking, the party remains in the critical state into which it has been plunged in the past two years . . . This . . . is in large measure due to the serious internal situation in our movement — especially to the sharp ideological division in our ranks . . . the polarization of views and alignments in the national leadership and in a number of state organizations have become so marked that the party is confronted with new fragmentation and dispersal of forces, including the very real threat of a split."

Dennis continues: ". . . the national leadership has reached a virtual impasse in its functioning, bordering on paralysis . . . The national leadership, quite properly, has been subjected to sharp criticism by the entire membership. This criticism is directed not only at specific individuals or groupings — such as the chief spokesman of the pre- and the post-convention factional alignments

— but at the whole leadership."

He goes on to note: "We have continued to suffer from the deep-rooted evil of bureaucracy, which is not so easily eradicated. There continues to exist strong criticism by our members that leadership and membership are still separated by a gulf, that the leadership still fails to take the membership fully into its confidence, and that arrogant attitudes to the membership persist on all levels of party organization. Such complaint is unfortunately justified."

HITS BROADER PARTY

However, he adds, these "are not the basic cause of the critical problems in the national leadership today. This lies rather in the fundamental differences that exist between us." One such major difference he says, is with those who think the party "should freely embrace within its ranks the most diverse ideological trends, including those expressed by the Fasts, Clarks, and others who

have abandoned Marxist ideology . . .

"Along with this, the right to dissent is vulgarized and distorted to such a degree as to convert the party into little more than a 'caretaker' organization, conducting a 'holding operation' pending the formation of some sort of 'broad' socialist party embracing all ideological trends."

Instead, Dennis declares, "We must . . . carry on a more effective fight for our Marxist-Leninist ideology. And this must include the waging of a consistent polemical and political struggle against the ideological positions of such elements as the Fasts and against such groups as the Trotskyites."

STEIN ON SPLIT DANGER

In a slashing reply, Stein declares ". . . the Party, as Comrade Dennis says, faces a crisis, even the danger of a split. It is necessary to be absolutely frank with ourselves and our membership in finding out how

we have arrived at this situation and why we continue to remain in it as it gets worse not better . . .

"We have the responsibility for answering this question, to explain why ten months after the Party convention we are in a worse position relative to the American people than when this convention made the overcoming of the Party's isolation its main task . . . The bitter truth is that not only is the Party isolated from the people in general at a time when the reverse should be taking place, but we are more and more isolated from the thousands of Communists who were members of this organization until quite recently but who are not members today, though they consider themselves part of the American Socialist movement."

The twin source of the crisis, Stein points out is the continuing refusal to act independently of Moscow dictate and

(Continued on page 2)

...Deep Split in CP Leadership

(Continued from page 1)

the stifling bureaucratic atmosphere within the party.

As an example of the one side of the problem, he cites an experience of the Minnesota party. It drew up an official statement on Jim-Crow housing which Stein says was privately agreed to by Negro-community leaders. But, "The next day . . . there appeared an editorial in the Negro press charging the Party with being a Soviet agent and damning it for getting into this struggle. This ex-

perience has been duplicated many times in many areas."

Turning to the problem of party bureaucracy, Stein asks: "Have we made one iota of advance in developing Marxism-Leninism, applying it, interpreting it to the needs of our country? Or have we been deluged from certain quarters since the Convention with one word and one word only; reaffirm, reaffirm, reaffirm! Don't dare think! Don't dare ask, don't dare challenge, don't dare interpret!" "Where in heaven," he asks,

"since our Resolution on Hungary, have we ever again taken an analytical approach to events in the world and in the Soviet Union, without experiencing the most bitter resistance by Comrades Foster, Davis, and Dennis?"

Describing how Dennis, Robert Thompson and Davis tried to put the CP on record for the 12-party declaration by ramming a motion through the national administrative committee, Stein says, "Comrade Dennis comes in and presents

the National Administrative Committee with a statement. 'We are not endorsing, comrades. All we are doing is hailing,' he says. 'All we are doing is greeting.'

"All we are doing," Stein continues, "is indirectly endorsing the view that revisionism is the main danger. All we are doing is endorsing the view that this and the other are certain universal truths, etcetra, binding on all, otherwise you are revisionists."

Assailing a proposal by Dennis for a Resident Board, Stein declares, "Well, let's take the vagueness out of it, Comrade Dennis! Put it on the table! You want a Secretariat to be re-established . . . a political secretariat. And maybe the same people that used to be the political secretariat before . . . That's what you want . . . a re-establishment of the bureaucracy as of old."

Extending the attack to Foster and Davis, Stein charges that as far as they are concerned, "Minority or majority doesn't matter. The minority can drive the majority out of the Party, and is doing it. Has been doing it for ten months."

Hammering at this basic issue, Stein continues: "The source of bureaucracy in the Communist Party is the idea that someone can do your thinking for you. That there is a Pope, that there are Cardinals — that's the source of bureaucracy. Once you accept that idea there can be no democracy! There can be no majority rule."

Stein then challenges Dennis on regroupment: "What do you mean by a holding operation? The differences here are between those of us who believe that this Party as it is, is for ever and more, the organization that will lead the American working class to Socialism, and those of us who believe that this party . . . can rebuild itself and become a powerful force in the struggles of today and in bringing about a Socialist regroupment in the United States, capable of leading American workers toward Socialism. It just so happens that the latter approach is the one we adopted at our Convention and at the July meeting of the National Committee."

...Venezuelan People Oust Dictator

(Continued from page 1)

add two civilian members to the junta. The second step was the setting up of a 13-man cabinet. This was composed entirely of civilians save for one military man, Col. Castro Leon, who had led the unsuccessful New Year's day air force revolt against Jimenez. The junta is now composed of three military officers and two civilians.

In attempts to placate the masses, the junta has promised prosecutions of the hated secret police for the torture and murder of political and trade union prisoners; the firing of the entire police force of the federal district of Caracas; and the holding of elections this year.

HUNT DOWN POLICE

As in the Hungarian Revolution, a feature of the Venezuelan uprising has been the hatred of the police, particularly the secret agents. Summary vengeance was taken during the fighting and in the several days following on all known informers and members of the secret police that were caught. In one case a mob even invaded the Nicaraguan embassy and shot a secret police lieutenant who had sought asylum there. Adding to the crowd's fury was the fact that, before they were overwhelmed, the police killed sixty prisoners in their cells in the central police headquarters. Also found there were the chemically preserved and labeled limbs of former prisoners, some of them well-known opposition and union figures who had simply disappeared during

the nine years of Jimenez' dictatorship.

WALL STREET WORRIED

U.S. imperialism, which has more capital invested in Venezuela than in any other country except Canada, is extremely worried over Jimenez' downfall. This dictator was the joint creation of the U.S. oil companies and the State Department, both of whom backed the army coup of 1948 which overthrew political democracy in Venezuela. Jimenez has received unusually high honors from Washington, including the pinning of a U.S. medal on him by President Eisenhower. It is probably more than wishful thinking that makes the Wall Street Journal headline its main story (Jan. 28): "A Swing to the Left in Venezuela Could Bring Military Coup — Army Sulks in Background as Leftists' Power Rises."

The fact is that by Wall Street standards the civilian Patriotic Junta is dangerously anti-imperialistic. It is a united front of four parties for the purpose of obtaining civilian government, elections and civil liberties. One of these is the Communist Party. Though it is the smallest of the four, its inclusion in the junta is for Washington like a red cloth to a bull. The largest party, Accion Democratica, is the party which won 80 percent of the votes in the 1948 elections and which was shortly thereafter overthrown with U.S. connivance.

Even the moderate or center

party, Republican Democratic Union (URD) is speaking out against U.S. imperialism's role in Venezuela. Upon his arrival from exile in New York, URD leader Jovito Villalba told a welcoming crowd of thousands at the Caracas airport that the U.S. favors tyrants and that "we have many matters to settle with it." He laid down as a condition of security for U.S. capital that it "respect our national sovereignty and the rights of our workers."

GUATEMALA

Elsewhere in Latin America U.S. imperialism was suffering setbacks. The recent Guatemalan elections showed a definite defeat for Colonel Cruz Salazar, known as "Washington's candidate." It is believed that Salazar will combine his votes with those of rightist candidate Ydigoras, who throughout the campaign denounced him as a U.S. stooge. This move in the election, in which none of the three candidates received a majority, will prevent the Congress from choosing the candidate of the Revolutionary Party. That party's last elected president was Arbenz, who was overthrown by a U.S.-sponsored "revolt" headed by its late stooge Castillo Armas. Indicative of the widespread resentment against U.S. manipulation of Guatemalan politics is the fact that the anti-Communist newspaper La Hora recently referred to the Latin American Division of the U.S. State Department as the "Colonial Office."