

# The Proposed C. P. Changes

By Robert Minor

*"How can the labor movement function if not as class against class?"*

*"Does the line of the Party signify giving up the class struggle?"*

The answer to the first of the questions above is that the labor movement can function—and is functioning—as the strongest support of our country and its national unity in this war; and this is the only way it can function without betraying everything that is sacred to the labor movement and truly to its interests.

The second question, although it may at first glance appear to have the same content as the first, is an entirely different question, and must be given a different answer.

The first thing to remember is that as a nation we are struggling. Yes? The strength of the strongest nation that the world has ever seen is being applied, and is getting under way to be more widely and intensively applied in the greatest struggle of all time. This nation of most advanced mechanical and scientific achievement is doing a bombing job on Nazi war plants of which we are proud, and our forces in the Pacific are scoring very fine victories on water and land. Americans by the million will soon land in the heart of Europe with English, Canadian and French allies—and we will be prouder still of the magnificent achievements of this America of ours. We know the source of our country's strength, the reason why we can do these things. It is because of 1776, and 1861, and also because this, our country, the world's first land of democracy, has energetically built up—in the logic of its democracy—a magnificent labor movement of 13,000,000 men and women who are making our good machines of war without interruption, upholding unity, supporting our 10,000,000 brothers now under arms.

We, the American labor movement, are a large and important part of the national war effort. We, the American labor movement, are engaged in struggle. Against whom? you ask. Against whom do you think we should struggle?

The second thing we have to remember is that the national policy of our United States is in accord with the interests of its people, including its 50,000,000 workers, of whom 13,000,000 are members of our trade unions, and all of its farmers and all of its middle class—its national policy is in the interests of the entire nation.

We say this in full consciousness of the fact that this is the most advanced of all the nations of the world in the development of the capitalist system. It is capitalism in its highest stage. We know that our country more than any other in the world is the one in which the most gigantic concentration and centralization of capital has taken place. There is no other place in the world in which such large corporations exist, monopolies exceeding any that have ever been known before, the fusion of banking capital together with the capital of these huge monopolies, the colossal structure of finance capital.

Labor is maintaining a national unity, including this finance capital. We say this so that there can be

no doubt that we know what we are talking about: support of the war of our country which is the country of highest-developed monopoly capitalism.

Yet the fact is that this country, with this capitalism, with this degree of development into the extreme of capitalist centralization, is now engaged in fighting a national war of liberation which is fully justified from the point of view of the national interest of the people as a whole, and also fully justified from the point of view of progress of the general democratic world movement.

It is this capital, and this labor that are fighting together in national unity for the victory.

Some very good and honest people worry about this, feeling that the strange turn of history that places labor in the position of national unity with such a powerful capital is contrary to what they understood as the principles of the labor movement. We would suggest to these good and honest friends that they go back to the magnificent literature that our movement has created in the past hundred years, and study these books more closely, keeping in mind every minute what Engels and Lenin always said—that Marxism is not a dogma, but a scientific method, a guide to action in a real world.

You will find that what we are doing violates every conception of Marxism as a dogma. But you will also find that it is in true accord with the true Marxism which, as a scientific guide to action, is more fully validated by history today than ever before.

A basic precept of Marxism, constantly used by Lenin, is: "There is no such thing as abstract truth; truth is always concrete."

To be concrete. Everyone knows that if the labor movement "functioned as class against class" at the present time, there would be enormous struggles over the entire country, the gigantic forces of labor would be pitted against the gigantic forces of capital, reducing the war effort almost to impotency. Hardly anyone commanding any respect in the labor movement would even dare in the present war to suggest a policy of "class against class." Only the enemies of the country suggest such a course. But it is necessary not only to be correct in policy, but also to be clear in our understanding why the policy is correct.

And the reason why the policy is correct is that it alone will bring victory to the cause of democracy.

So the answer to the first question is that in a just war, in this war of national liberation of our country and all liberty-loving peoples of the world, the labor movement and the whole working class functions as the strong backbone of the nation's unity to win the war, that the organized labor movement is the absolutely indispensable force which sets aside and overrules the policy of "class against class," taking the most important share of the duty of turning the united strength of the nation into all-out war.

And this is the heaviest and sharpest struggle that the American workers as a class have ever engaged in.

The second question, seeming at first glance to have the same content, proves to be an entirely different kind of question. For al-

though the term "class struggle" is often used as meaning the same thing as "class against class"—to describe a policy—nevertheless "Class struggle" is really a scientific term that is used to designate a basic law of motion that is always present in capitalist society. To the question "does the line of the Party signify giving up the class struggle?" you could not answer "Yes" without being understood to mean that the historical law of motion which underlies capitalist society, which is called "class struggle," is banished from existence by a change of policy.

But class struggle, in modern society, is, in effect, **capitalism itself**. In the full sense it is inseparable from capitalism. And it is already thoroughly understood that the abolition of capitalism will not take place in our country at the present time. And the abolishment of the class struggle would in fact be the abolition of capitalism.

The very system that is being so lovingly described as "free enterprise" is exactly the "free" operation of private capital, in control of industry, to bargain for the "specific commodity labor power," the value of which is "determined like that of any other commodity." The difference of interest and the bargaining of employers and workers over the price of labor power is a manifestation of the operation of class contradictions, of class struggle. It is the heart and soul of capitalism, and cannot but be present where capitalism exists. In the national unity we insist upon reaching decisions by agreement without interrupting production—without a policy of "class against class." But of this "free enterprise," the class struggle is the essence.

It is not a matter of ill will on our part. So elemental is it that, so far as the capitalist system is concerned, Lenin compared the class struggle (as a basic law in social science) with the plus and minus in mathematics, or the differential and integral; or action and reaction in mechanics; with positive and negative electricity in physics; or with the combination and dissociation of atoms in chemistry. Obviously a change of policy, without a change of the social system, cannot abolish a basic law of capitalism. Marx and Engels showed that class struggle is, in the capitalist system, "the immediate driving force of history." The foremost authorities supporting capitalism said this before Marx did, and they thought the class struggle was an eternal law of all human society of all time. Marx differed from them in showing that the law of class struggle is not eternal, but will give way to the other laws of development when the division of society into classes of buyers and sellers of labor power (capitalism) is done away with, and it was Marx who showed that it can be done away with and how.

But there is before us now no question of abolishing a social system. It is a question of winning the war and extending the national unity for reconstruction after the war.

And exactly this task for national unity is what would be brought to ruinous failure if we allowed ourselves to be deceived about the basic laws of development of the society we live in or, as Lenin said, ignoring "the whole real content of the social-political life of that society."

I've used up my space for today and will continue the answer to these two questions in tomorrow's Daily Worker.

## Answers to Questions