

NM EVALUATES ITS COURSE

AN EDITORIAL

"By analyzing the errors of yesterday, we learn to avoid errors today and tomorrow."—V. I. Lenin, "From a Publicist's Diary," *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, Book 1.

RECENT developments have caused the editors of NEW MASSES to reexamine the course of world events and the outlook for the future. What happened at San Francisco and the evidences of a shift for the worse in American policy toward the Soviet Union have alarmed us, as they have many other Americans. It was not, however, till the publication in this country of an article by Jacques Duclos, one of the leaders of the French Communist Party, that we began a critical reevaluation of certain basic postulates of our thinking. This has led us to a number of conclusions, which we present here, not by any means in definitive form, but nevertheless, as substantially representing our position.

NEW MASSES is a Marxist magazine. Over the course of years we have sought to view events and the problems of mankind from the standpoint of the science of social evolution developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. This science is no more alien to America because its greatest exponents were natives of other lands than is Newton's *Principia* or Einstein's theory of relativity. In dealing with the issues of today we have, therefore, necessarily sought illumination in the work of the best Marxists, past and present, native and foreign-born. When the foremost Marxists of our own country, the leaders of the Communist Party of the United States, after the Teheran Conference projected a new theoretical and practical approach to the problems of the postwar world, we accepted it because it seemed to us to tally with the course of history and the imperatives of our time. But social scientists are no more infallible than natural scientists. After reading Duclos' article in the May 24 issue of the *Daily Worker*, the resolution of the National Board of the Communist Political Association (*Daily Worker*, June 4), and other published material, and after discussing the questions involved among those working editors present in New York,

we have become convinced that the theories adopted by the American Communists in January 1944 were profoundly mistaken, and that NEW MASSES itself must accept its share of responsibility for giving currency to those ideas.

The roots of these errors run back into a period long before January 1944. But there is no space for exhaustive analysis at this time and we will concentrate on the period when these false, non-Marxist conceptions burst, so to speak, into full bloom.

The key mistake was made in appraising the Teheran Conference. No one can deny the tremendous historic significance of Teheran. The fact that it made the military decisions which resulted in the defeat of Nazi Germany would alone suffice to give it an importance beyond that of any earlier war conference. But these decisions themselves were profoundly meaningful politically since they ended the crisis that threatened to rip the coalition apart, and made possible the consolidation of the Big Three alliance and the adoption of joint policies on major problems of the war and the postwar. All of which created more favorable opportunities for shaping a democratic and durable peace.

FROM all this, however, the American Communist leadership and the editors of NEW MASSES drew the erroneous conclusion that as a result of the Teheran declaration, which was an agreement among states, capitalism as a system had entered into long-term cooperation with socialism as a system. It was therefore argued that to fulfill the Teheran perspective it was necessary for capital and labor in the United States to join in similar long-term cooperation. And to facilitate this cooperation, particularly in view of the approaching 1944 election, the Communists decided to dissolve their party and to reconstitute themselves as the Communist Political Association.

One must admit that the case for this interpretation of Teheran, as presented for the National Committee of the Communist Party by Earl Browder in his pamphlet, *Teheran and America*, and his book, *Teheran: Our Path in War and Peace*, had from the standpoint of formal logic a glittering plausi-

bility. But it was a logic without roots in reality and without the light of Marxist science. The course adopted was vigorously opposed at the time by William Z. Foster, CPA vice-chairman, whose ideas have been proved to have been in accord with the basic facts.

The proponents of this theory—and we cannot deny that we were among its ardent partisans—forgot that Roosevelt's and Churchill's signatures on the Teheran accord could not dissolve the dynamics of the class relations in the monopoly capitalist countries for which they spoke. The attempt to substitute for these class relations "the collective intelligence of mankind," which Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill were said to represent, and to make this the motive force of history, led to a number of fallacies. Among these was the assumption that the compulsions holding the Big Three together would be equally as strong in the peace as in the war because, as Mr. Browder put it, "the alternative is the spread of civil wars over vast areas, culminating finally and inevitably in a new world war between nations." The fact is, however, that even before the war in Europe was over, the events in Greece showed that British imperialism, far from fearing civil war in much the same way that it had feared a Hitler-dominated world, was not averse to fomenting civil strife where it suited its purposes, regardless of solemn declarations about the right to national self-determination. And the recent growth of anti-Soviet influences in business and government circles in the United States and Britain further point up the illusory nature of the assumption that, once the threat of German imperialism is removed, its imperialist rivals, the United States and Britain, would inevitably be moved to continue working in the wartime spirit with the Soviet Union.

The parallel assumptions concerning the relations between capital and labor at home were no less illusory. These tended to rely on big business, or at least its decisive sections, to recognize that its own best interests lie in cooperating with labor on concrete measures to assure an expanding economy and 60,000,000 jobs. But this assumed a unity and social intelligence in the capitalist class which is denied by its whole past

record and by its essential nature. If the bourgeoisie as a class, or any major section of it, could be counted on to act "intelligently," it could have prevented, or at least greatly mitigated, the economic crash of 1929, the prewar appeasement of German fascism, and the present war. Nor do such diverse phenomena as the Anglo-American policy in Italy or War Production Board Chairman J. A. Krug's recent report on reconversion, with its faith in the "natural resilience" of our economy, afford much proof of such "intelligence." Moreover, this emphasis on appealing to the "intelligence" of the major monopolists led to the conception, explicit in *Teheran and America*, that economic proposals must be limited to what the monopolists themselves—with the social backwardness that is particularly characteristic of the American breed—would be willing to accept. Thus *NEW MASSES*, in an editorial on the Baruch report (March 7, 1944 issue) wrote: "Any proposal, no matter how sensible, which would arouse the sharp resistance of that dominant section of big business that supports the war and can become an active supporter of the program of postwar collaboration and stability envisaged in the Teheran declaration, ought not to be pressed."

If literally applied in practice—fortunately, for the most part it wasn't—this conception would lead to the stunting of workingclass initiative and the subordination of labor to capital, economically and politically.

ALL this, despite the many positive achievements in practical work, does add up to what Duclos called "a notorious revision of Marxism." Those of us who advocated this approach converted a tactic, growing out of a given set of historical circumstances, into a universal principle. The tactic was correct: cooperation with all, including the leading circles of big business, who, for whatever reasons, supported the war against the Axis. The principle, however, according to which the fundamental drives of big business had become so amenable to modification that even after the defeat of Germany big business would necessarily continue to see its own interests in taking a progressive course—this principle was false.

It may be argued that the Teheran road was merely projected as a possibility with the injunction that it had to be converted into reality through the

Get Out Your Pen!

OPA: The OPA extension measure passed by the Senate with the crippling Wherry amendment virtually nullifying price controls over direct and processed farm products is now in the House Banking and Currency Committee for hearings. The issue is simply OPA vs. Inflation. Congressmen must be informed that the people want the OPA without amendments.

ANTI-POLL TAX: The anti-poll tax bill for the third time passed the House by a vote of two to one. Twice before the poll-tax Senators killed it through filibuster. The cloture rule must be invoked, limiting debate by majority vote. Senators should be informed that the great majority of the people resent the sabotage of this bill and demand its enactment.

FEPC: The House Appropriations Committee, through a flank attack, refused to approve funds for the Fair Employment Practices Committee and thus passed a death sentence upon it effective June 30. The Senate has power to extend the FEPC and supply it with funds. This is an urgent request to all Senators. In the meantime House members must be called upon to enact a bill for a permanent FEPC.

RECIPROCAL TRADE: Affecting postwar foreign trade, the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act is before the Senate, whose finance Committee turned down its most vital feature, the reduction of tariffs by fifty percent. Senators should support this bill rejecting the Finance Committee recommendation.

efforts of this and other nations. Technically, this is true. But careful examination will reveal that the action of the workingclass and the people was not an integral part of the theoretical pattern which was first fully elaborated a year and a half ago; the necessity of

such action was merely iterated from time to time as a ritualistic formula. The fact is that both in the original formulation and in later interpretations the possibility was transformed into a virtual certainty. For example, in a series of questions and answers in *NEW MASSES* of Jan. 25, 1944 we wrote: "Teheran, following the Moscow Conference, was the guarantee that the coalition would survive and grow. . . . Teheran also meant that the freedom and independence of nations—for which this war is being fought—was no longer in doubt." And: "Teheran signifies that at last capitalism and socialism are determined to live side by side, with the proponents of neither system fearful of the other."

What is more fundamental is that the possibility of realizing Teheran was presented in a way which, if pursued, would in fact make it impossible. This seems to us to be the most serious criticism of Mr. Browder's position, which he alone among the thirteen members of the CPA National Board continues to defend. In *The Worker* of June 10 he develops an extended argument to show that it is "to the class interest of the American bourgeoisie, which is an imperialist bourgeoisie, to take the course of Teheran and Yalta." Mr. Browder states that the only two other alternatives open to the bourgeoisie are "immediate transition of the war against Germany and Japan into a new war against the Soviet Union," or "an armed peace within which the main policy would be diplomatic and economic war against the Soviet Union, with military hostilities postponed to some indefinite future time. . . ." Mr. Browder's mistake does not consist merely in placing his chips on the possibility that the bourgeoisie would reject these two alternatives and show "enough intelligence" to choose the Teheran-Yalta path. His mistake also lies in believing that unless the bourgeoisie can be induced to act "intelligently," all is lost and mankind is foredoomed to suffer economic catastrophe or a new world war or both.

The editors of *NEW MASSES* are deeply convinced that the perspective presented by Mr. Browder is dangerously false. Our experience particularly argues against it. For example, the dominant business groups did not support the National Labor Relations Act and most of the Roosevelt social reforms, yet they were enacted. They were enacted not by depending on the

"intelligence" of the business tycoons—though there were a few who actually were enlightened enough to support these reforms—but by organizing the people and especially the workers to fight for them. Mr. Browder himself made important contributions to those struggles. Yet today the one possibility he is unable to see is that the *people* under labor leadership can act to prevent chaos and war. A broad national coalition of anti-fascist and democratic forces, including those individuals or groups from the ranks of big business who support President Roosevelt's anti-Axis policies, can assure continued cooperation with the USSR and can "banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations." The defeat of Nazi Germany and the impending defeat of fascist Japan, the strength and enhanced role of the Soviet Union, the unleashing of the democratic energies of the peoples of Europe, the liberating currents in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the advances made in our own land by the labor movement, the Negro people and other sections of the population—all these create exceptionally favorable opportunities for putting bone and muscle on the image of the future that was held up to mankind at Teheran. But the one sure way of making this impossible is to hinge national policy on the supposed "intelligence" of monopoly capital or any section of it.

The resolution of the CPA National Board presents the essential structure of policy and program for attaining this goal. The resolution is not a perfect document and no doubt will be improved in the course of the discussion now



Greetings to our well loved General Ike! under way in the Communist Political Association. Among the changes we would ourselves suggest is some statement to make clear that the coalition should be broad enough to include, besides workers, farmers, professionals and small businessmen, those bourgeois individuals or groups that back the Roosevelt policies.

Contrary to the fanciful reports in the commercial press, the resolution does not call for world revolution, nor does it indicate any radical departure from established Communist practice. We particularly want to emphasize that it calls for vigorous prosecution of the war till total victory over Japan; the upholding of the no-strike pledge for the duration; the cementing of "American-Soviet friendship and unity to guarantee the fulfilment of the Teheran and Yalta accords"; the implementation of the

Roosevelt bill of economic rights; the support of President Truman's proposals for federal legislation "to extend and supplement present unemployment insurance benefits"; the utilization of "the Labor-Management Charter to press for the organization of the unorganized, to strengthen collective bargaining, to defend the trade unions from all attacks by the open-shoppers, to raise living standards, and to promote the fight for sixty million jobs"; the guaranteeing of "jobs and security for all returning veterans regardless of race, creed or color"; the ending of Jim-Crowism, the outlawing of anti-Semitism, and the elimination of anti-Communist legislation; the curbing of "the powers and policies of the monopolies and trusts which jeopardize the national welfare and world peace." Certainly this is a program around which a preponderant majority of our people can unite.

In making these criticisms the last thing we want to do is deny the achievements of either ourselves or the Communist Political Association during the recent period. Even though NM's work lacked the full vigor and clarity which it should have had—a fact which several of our readers pointed out in letters to us—on the whole it constituted a formidable plus. It is for the period which opened with the end of the European phase of the war that the non-Marxist conceptions we had adopted would have proved most damaging. We feel we are back on the highroad again. We seek the advice and cooperation of our readers in making NM strong and keen, a bold and trustworthy guide in these challenging times.

NM SPOTLIGHT

Pacific Roundup

As we write, the battle of Okinawa has reached the mop-up stage. With tanks leading, our infantry and marines captured three hills dominating the Yaeju-Dake escarpment which barred the way to the southern tip of the island where the enemy is hopelessly compressed. The rest now is a matter of several bloody days. Our troops on Luzon are successfully and swiftly driving through the Cagayan Valley in the north and have captured the Ipil air-

drome. Australian troops on Borneo took the city of Brunei and are driving toward the big oil fields of the British protectorate and domination of the straight and long northwestern coast line of the great island which faces Singapore and Saigon across 400 and 700 miles of the South China Sea, respectively. Away behind our island-sea front facing the Continent of Asia, the British Fleet is reported to be attacking the Japanese stronghold of Truk which

we had by-passed long ago. The fleet must have either sailed around Australia, or have forced a passage through the maze of Japanese positions between Sumatra and New Guinea. This is interesting, both strategically and operationally.

If we imagine that Luzon with Manila and the Cavite naval base is a sort of "round-house" for our forces getting ready to attack the Japanese domain south of the thirtieth degree, latitude north (that is, south of the line of the Yangtze River and the Satsunan