

CP National Committee Spurs Right Swing

By Tom Kerry

In its first full meeting since 1951, the national committee of the Communist Party met in New York recently, to codify the extreme right turn which has led the American Stalinists deep into the leprous swamp of capitalist party politics. With the CP national committee meeting, the Stalinists come out more openly as supporters of the "liberal" wing of the Democratic party. With the policy decided, the membership will now be "clarified." As usual, the process of clarification involves "self-critical" repudiation of the previous line.

Each Stalinist zig-zag carries its own "theoretical" justification. The current "line" was embodied in a report by CP general secretary Eugene Dennis, reviewing the past, repudiating previous policy and laying down the line for the future. "Dennis' searching examination of the last decade of the Party's work," says the May 6 Sunday Worker, "placed his principal emphasis on what he viewed as shortcomings and mistaken estimates which he characterized as 'mainly left-sectarian in character.'" The report was adopted unanimously.

Unfortunately, the full text of the Dennis report has not yet

been made public. The Daily and Sunday Worker reports of the CP confab do not cite the precise "left-sectarian" errors to which the Dennis report alludes.

This gap is filled in by Stalinist "labor expert" George Morris writing in the April 22 Daily Worker. The "leftism in the ranks of the Marxists," says Morris, contributed to the split in the CIO in which the Stalinist-controlled unions were expelled and subsequently cut to pieces. The error of the "left," according to Morris, was its "refusal to retreat and compromise some when that was imperative, especially on the presidential race and on the Marshall plan."

ERRED ON COLD WAR?

The expulsion of the Stalinist-controlled unions came as an aftermath of the 1948 CIO convention following the election of Harry Truman. The Stalinists had sponsored the Progressive Party and its candidate for president, Henry Wallace. The Marshall plan was the cornerstone of the Truman Doctrine with its policy of "containment" and cold war. The Stalinist attempt to compromise on the Marshall plan by proposing its funds be allocated through the United Nations was

summarily rejected. To say now, that the "left" should have "retreated and compromised" on these issues can only mean that the Stalinists should have supported Truman and the cold war against the Soviet Union. Is this what they have in mind now with their policy of supporting the "Fair Deal" wing of the Democratic party?

When the Stalinists begin re-writing history they always have a political motive. The current emphasis on "left-sectarian" errors is designed to screen another opportunist zig-zag. What was "left" about their previous policy? In 1948 they supported a capitalist "third" party, with a capitalist program and a capitalist candidate. It was the politics of class collaboration. They spurned the class concept of an independent labor party based on the mass organizations of the American working class, the trade unions.

Instead, they spawned a petty-bourgeois hodge-podge. The correct characterization of that policy is not "left-sectarian" but opportunist adventurism; i.e., Stalinism. Thousands of workers were victimized in the process. But that is always the by-product of Stalinist politics, whether of the "left" or "right" variety.

LENINIST PRINCIPLE

The terms "left" and "right" are meaningless unless some point of departure is fixed. The Stalinists contend they are Marxists. Not only Marxists, but Leninists to boot. In socialist thought and action, Leninism is distinguished as revolutionary Marxism in contradistinction to social-reformism. It is a fundamental Leninist principle that the crossing of class lines in politics is a betrayal of socialism. Lenin was absolutely inflexible in his adherence to principle. He combined principled intangibility with the utmost tactical flexibility. According to Lenin, tactics are always subordinated to principle and cannot be in violation thereof.

When viewed from the standpoint of Marxist-Leninist principle, the so-called "left-sectarian" policy of the American Stalinists is seen as nothing but the rankest opportunism. And the "theoretical" justifications that accompany each change in line are compounded of the flimsiest counterfeits.

According to Dennis, one of the basic causes for past "left-sectarian" errors was their "mis-

taken estimates on the imminence of war," which led to a "wrong tactical conclusion." That is, the organization of the Wallace "peace" party in 1948. In the Wallace party the illusion was assiduously sown among the workers that war could be averted through the medium of a "third" capitalist party with a pacifist program. What is involved is no mere "tactical" error but a violation of Marxist principle. Inasmuch as the Stalinists have raised the slogan: Back to Lenin, let's check Dennis against Lenin.

A STORMY EPOCH

Lenin characterized our age as the epoch of wars, revolutions and colonial uprisings. He reiterated over and over again that capitalism and socialism could not exist indefinitely side by side. One or the other must prevail. That so long as capitalism exists war is inevitable. That the only effective means of conducting the struggle against capitalist war was through the uncompromising medium of the class struggle. That the aim of the class struggle is the abolition of capitalism and the goal the victory of socialism. Only then would war vanish from the face of the earth.

The question of the imminence or non-imminence of war is not a matter of drawing up a timetable and then turning the class struggle on or off in accordance with the "estimates," mistaken or otherwise, contained therein. That is not Marxist theory but Stalinist claptrap. Dennis has a theory but it is not that of the Leninist class struggle.

As against Lenin, Dennis defends the Khrushchev-Stalin policy of "peaceful coexistence." This "theory," if it can be dignified by the name, holds that the capitalist and non-capitalist world can exist side by side for a prolonged and indefinite period of time. That war under capitalism is not inevitable. From this concept flows the class collaboration policy of world Stalinism as adapted to the national peculiarities of each country. In this country it is translated into support for the Democratic party whose main criticism of Eisenhower's foreign policy is that the Republican administration is not spending enough money for military armaments.

Lenin and Dennis can't both be right. All theories are subjected to the acid test of experience. The events of the past ten years have proven, if additional proof be necessary, that Lenin's analysis

of our epoch has been confirmed. Scarcely a single day has passed since the end of World War II in which the world has not witnessed war, revolution and colonial uprising. "Peaceful coexistence" is conspicuous by its absence.

Dennis' second "theoretical" explanation is no better than his first. Another cause for "left-sectarian" errors in the past, he says, was due to "an over-estimation of the imminence of a deep cyclical economic crisis." As with the question of war, Dennis muddies everything up.

What "tactical conclusion" does Dennis derive from the fact that prosperity in the U.S. has led to an amelioration of the class struggle? He proposes to call it off for the duration of prosperity in order to avoid the "left-sectarian" errors of the past. What is involved in the Dennis "theory" is not a matter of tempo but of fundamental prognosis. There are pundits who contend that American capitalism has solved the problem of recurring economic crisis. If that is true then socialism becomes a utopia and class struggle a figment of the imagination. Where do Dennis and Company stand?

At the very moment that signs of growing crisis appear in the American economy the Stalinists propose to declare a moratorium on the class struggle and invite the workers to support the Democratic party, one of the twin bulwarks of capitalist rule. Stalinist politics have nothing whatever to do with Marxism.

One noteworthy characteristic of these Stalinist "left" and "right" oscillations is that the pendulum never swings as far left as before and always further to the right. The theoretical revisionism of the 20th Congress in Moscow accelerated the rightward swing of world Stalinism. The opportunist leaders of the American CP, always uncomfortable in their periods of "left" pretensions have embraced the right turn with genuine enthusiasm. It suits their character and mood.

Their spurious "re-evaluation" and repudiation of their past "left-sectarian" line is, in essence, an adaptation to the opportunist politics of the American labor bureaucracy.

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Labor Statesman at Work



Joao Coulart, (left) Vice-President of Brazil, chats with AFL-CIO president George Meany at Washington luncheon in Coulart's honor. The South American capitalist government official lectured the union group on the most efficient ways to combat "communist" infiltration in the labor movement.