

The Proposed C. P. Changes

By Robert Minor

"Would civil wars in Europe bring about the collapse of the capitalist system and the establishment of socialism?"

"Why should it be our duty to prevent civil war?"

"Didn't you, yourself, Mr. Minor, quote Lenin as saying: 'Great affairs in the life of nations are settled only by force?'"

Look at it concretely. "Civil wars in Europe" today and this summer mean armed uprisings against the German conquerors and Quisling governments, by the people of Yugoslavia, Greece, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark and other countries in support of, and to be supported by, the landing of the American and British armies on the European continent, the establishment of the second front. There is nothing more inevitable or more necessary than such a civil war, which is, more correctly, national war of liberation.

Under the circumstances, "why speak of 'civil wars' in the abstract?"

The peoples of occupied Europe are engaged in actions ranging from sporadic violence to full-fledged civil war conducted by many divisions, as in Yugoslavia. The purpose of these mass movements is to drive out or destroy the German armies and to destroy the Quisling governments established by the Germans. United in this purpose are all classes and parties opposed to the foreign invader.

The masses of people are drawn into this movement as they are, with no conditions imposed except that of patriotism. The best illustration is that of Yugoslavia, where masses of the small business classes, bankers, the largest capitalists, professional classes, peasants, Catholic priests, trade union leaders and masses of workers—men and women of all parties including bourgeois democrats, Communists and monarchists—are united in a life-and-death struggle for the fatherland. They are united as well in their support of the leadership of their best military commander, Marshal Tito, who is trusted all the more because he is a Communist.

What is the motive that actuates these people? If we are not dreaming we know that the purpose of these masses is not to "bring about the collapse of the capitalist system." Their concern is not "the establishment of socialism," but to drive out or destroy the German armies and the Quislings. The Communist parties of France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Czechoslovakia, and of all the countries of Europe are united with all other patriotic parties in this purpose and bear a heavy share of the responsibility of all such parties to carry through the war as a war of national liberation.

And what will be the effect of the victory? These countries are living in an economy of capitalism. The national economy of each of these countries has "collapsed"—it is the national economy that has "collapsed," not capitalism. These peoples are not looking for a "collapse" of anything except the Hitler-Quisling states. When that is accomplished, they look forward to the rebuilding of their national economies and not the "collapse" of anything. Governments established by the peoples of these countries by their own free choice will, beyond the slightest doubt, include all political parties that have fought against fascism and the Nazi invaders; and by popular choice there will doubtless be many far-reaching reforms. If in the case of any country socialism is introduced, it will, beyond question, be by majority decision through non-violent procedure. We are sufficiently acquainted with European countries and the stage of their economic development to assume that generally speaking, governments composed of all parties will not undertake to abolish capitalism in the reconstruction period.

The second questioner seemingly wishes to include in his question the proposition of civil war after the victory over the Germans; and doubtless he is having trouble with his conscience over it is a matter of principle. As a cure for his trouble I would prescribe a studious reading of the third chapter of Engels' *Anti-Duehring*. He must learn not to make the mistake of Dr. Duehring who, as Engels said, was trying to settle questions on the basis of "formal principles derived from thought" ("derived by thought out of itself")—"and not from the external world." For scientific results—and Marxism is the only science of this field—"the principles are only valid insofar as they are in conformity with . . . history."

And in "conformity with history" in Europe today—who would make civil war against whom? Where? In Yugoslavia the peoples' government will in all likelihood include Marshal Tito; it will also include other sincere patriots of other parties that have fought to drive the invader out and have agreed that all questions concerning the type of state and all else in the future of Yugoslavia shall be determined by the majority of Yugoslavs. The governments of all the continent freed from the invader will be in a like character, and the French provisional government of deGaulle already indicates it. Who will make civil war against whom? The Nazis have succeeded, it is true, in bringing about civil war between Yugoslavians through their agent Mikhailovitch; and something similar in Greece; but this will go down with the overthrow of Hitler.

Obviously it will be the duty of all sincere people "to prevent civil war" when Europe and Asia shall have been freed of the "filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions." To use an expression that Marx applied to the states of con-

tinental Europe in the last century. Marx said, and Engels and Lenin and Stalin repeated, that the inevitability of civil wars on the continent of Europe arose out of the fact that such a "morass" existed and made the next stage of social progress impossible without the "smashing" of such states.

Such states exist now on the European Continent only as Hitler states. We are "smashing" them. The democratic states that will be set up by the peoples of Europe will be supported by all enlightened mankind. It will be "our duty to prevent civil war." The Spanish Communists understood this matter fully when in 1937 at Barcelona they took effective part in suppressing the insurrection against the Spanish Republican government by the Trotskyites instigated by the Italian general staff, on the ground that it was "capitalist." We can't be fooled.

To the third questioner I would reply:

It is true that Lenin said, and said correctly: "Great questions in the life of nations are settled only by force." But Lenin was asserting a great deal more than the inevitability of force in the great affairs of nations. He was also asserting the effectiveness of force in such affairs. The sentence quoted here states that by the employment of such force the great affairs in the life of nations can be and are "settled."

Let us not be pacifists, who think that "force settles nothing." When huge military victories are won by force in the hands of the progressive democratic elements of history, "great affairs in the life of nations are settled." That is, they are moved irrevocably to a higher plane of development.

Concretely, what is being "settled" in this war? By the organized application of the most colossal force ever assembled, and "only by force" in the sense and degree that Lenin meant it, what is the change that is being brought about? What is being won?

By the force employed in this war we are winning the right to settle future affairs in the life of nations without force.

What we are "settling by force" in this war is the capacity of the peoples of the world for a long period to proceed along the path of social progress by orderly, non-violent measures. I am not sure that is what we meant by the Marxist Stalin, as well as by the non-Marxist heads of the two great capitalist states, when they said they believe it will be a peace "for many generations."

Or do you disagree with the Marxist (and general democratic) view that force settle things?

The next question, to be answered in tomorrow's *Daily Worker* will be: "Why not answer Mike Gold's question: 'As for pledging to aid capitalism to stabilize itself, this is a pill fit only for a horse. Where is the human who can swallow it?'"

Answers to Questions