

The Proposed C. P. Changes

"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?'"

By Robert Minor

When Heywood Broun said that Michael Gold was the best columnist in America, he didn't say that Mike was the most objective among Marxists. And Broun was interested at that time in Marxism for columnists, for that was about the same time when Broun railed with the Party the question of his joining it; he desired them to join the Catholic Church and the Communist Party simultaneously, but ended by joining the Church, and not joining the Party, although he remained its fast friend to his death.

Answers to Questions

But about Mike and his question. The art of columnist as developed in America is the art of "it seems to me"—as Broun aptly entitled his own column—that is, the art of expressing to the public one's personal reactions to the events of current life.

George Plekhanov once, in discussing a play written by Maxim Gorky, said "such an artist must necessarily be a psychologist. . . . The liberation struggle of the working class is a mass movement. For this reason the psychology also of this movement is a psychology of the mass."

Columnists too, in a somewhat different way, work in the field of psychology. And the best of them are best because in these days of enormous movements of masses, they catch and begin to reflect the light of the psychology of the mass. Without measuring any of our columnists by the gigantic stature of Gorky in the world of art, we can say of Gold as of Broun and of any others worthy of their company, that they are at their best when they are under the pull of the psychology of the mass. It was Mike Gold's sense of mass psychology that made Broun feel as he did about Mike, and to want to be like that—and to say so. He discerned that Mike got it through the Communist Party. It was in the stormy '30's when the mass of Americans was finding its initiative and becoming partly decisive in determining events, and Broun felt that the psychology of the mass corresponded to the objective reality of the big world and its events.

But columnists, like other people, have their difficulties in storms like the present one, and tend to steer away from the open sea of mass psychology, into the easier water of individual psychology. But accounting for events in the lives of nations in terms of individual psychology is like measuring miles with a bushel basket. Then we get such results as "he took them by surprise—yes, he did"—the language Mike used to account for the rise of Hitler. If someone says the distance from New York to Denver is 280 bushels, there is no way to disprove it in the same terms.

The more sensitively one feels the great mass movement of labor—both the Party and the now gigantic trade unions of our country—the more accurately one can get the picture of the great events that have the world in their grip. And the

more objective the picture, the more impossible it becomes to see the present movement of history as "the bottom dropping out of the world." Colonial military victories, there are, which can never be undone, and the forming and consolidation of a world-alliance that includes the democracy of a great new socialist state and the democracy of the Americans, of the Englishmen, the Frenchmen, the Chinese and the Latin Americans—for war and for a peace of many generations—and the enlargement of the reach and strength of the markets of our America is proposed in order to be able to perform our larger share of duty to our country. Closeness to the masses makes it impossible, I say, to see this vast majestic forward movement of mankind as a sort of necessary evil.

Look across the world, and also around home, and see how absurdly subjective it would be—how little it corresponds to the realities of the external world—to think of the Communist Party's proposal as liquidation, as "giving up the old dreams," the "Communist ideals of Shelley, Marx, Babeuf and Lenin."

As Virgil conducted Dante through Hell, let us conduct Mike on a tour through the mountains of Yugoslavia and Greece and the valley of the Po and down the rivers Rhone, Rhine, Seine and Vistula. If there were no effective Communist political organizations in these countries—then it would be: "leave all hope behind, ye who enter here." How was it possible for an army of liberation of fifteen divisions to spring up out of caverns of death in Yugoslavia? The very Catholic priests who march with Marshal Tito at the head of the Army of Liberation would curse you if you were to suggest that life were possible without the great Communist organization and the love of the people for it.

In Spain in May, 1937, only such a Communist organization made it possible to consolidate the workers against the provocations of the Trotskyites and Italian government provocateurs. It is because of the strength and prestige of the Communist Party of Italy that the Italian workers and peasants are united to fight savagely and singly against Hitler and against all adventurers and provocateurs, knowing that when the Italian Communist Party says it is sound policy to build an all-party national front and not a dictatorship of the proletariat—this is the voice of the only entity in Italy that can speak with the ideals of Shelley and Babeuf and the science of Marx and Lenin.

As for our own front yard of America, there is no-one out in the open air of mass psychology who does not know that a weakening of the Communist organization, or a hampering of the right of political association in the labor movement—which is partly the same thing—would be the heaviest blow that could be struck against war production, against the unity of labor

in political support of the war, and against the firm policy of labor's participation in national unity in that support of the war. For nowhere other than in the labor movement is it so true that "man shall not live by bread alone." And without the ideals of Shelley and Babeuf and the science of Marx and Lenin in the labor movement, in our country and in all others, the labor movement would drift without a star. We would be helpless in the hands of the John L. Lewis, the Reuthers, the Norman Thomases; and thereby the great, shining center of the bull's-eye for the fascists of the world which cannot but be this land of greatest wealth, would move more easily within their range.

That is why we started out last Saturday to get 25,000 new members of our Communist organization—to fight for the good of our country and of all mankind and for all the dreams of mankind that, as the Russian literary critic Pissarev said, "run ahead of the natural progress of events" and "support and strengthen the efforts of toiling humanity."

So, when anyone speaks of dissolving the political organization of the Communists or the weakening of its adherence to the Marxist program, as a "contribution" to the cause of this war and our country's victory—it is as though he were to say: "We will save this burning house even if we have to throw gallons of gasoline upon it."

But to be fair to Mike, he swung back into his mass psychology before he reached the end of his piece. He said: "A new world is being born . . . As for the socialist dream: it is not something that dwells in the mystic clouds. It is of the earth, and its home remains in the people." And when the former personal representative and literary agent of Leon Trotsky in this country, Max Eastman, offered Mike his sympathy, the smirking compliments were as impossible for Mike to swallow as the *plâte de segunda* (second-hand beans) of which Mike wrote so shattering a story not long ago.

You help us best to understand the world and how to change it when you are wet with the spray of that psychology that Heywood Broun found you in, Mike—out in the open with the millions of the labor movement. To fight for our country when it is truly the country's war is worthwhile, it is Marxian, and it moves forward with history. To stabilize the economy of the world, to stabilize the bread and meat and the houses and the clothing of the people—is not to aid the age-old tyrannies; it is to stabilize world economy that is no longer solely capitalist economy, but also a part of it socialist economy; and it is because the socialist part is so strong and the people and state who made it so brave and powerful, that it is possible to stabilize anything at all.

The next question, to be answered in tomorrow's *Daily Worker*, will be: "On the basis of the proposed changes of the Communist Party, will we still demand of a person that he believe in Socialism as a qualification for membership? Or, would we recruit anyone in this period if he agrees on winning the war and the peace but does not believe that Socialism is the ultimate goal?"

**4th WAR
★
LOAN**
Let's All Back The Attack