

'Left' Phrases and 'Right' Deeds

By Samuel Sillen

(Second of a series of three articles)

IN the mimeographed document being circulated by the bloc of renegades calling themselves "NCP," Bruce Minton and Ruth McKenney attack Comrades Foster and Dennis and the entire National Committee for finding "neither time nor space" for problems which are, specifically and in detail the subjects of National Committee reports.

It is asserted, for instance, that "The National Committee in its published reports does not even touch on the war waged by American diplomats against the people of the world." This "complaint" is as completely phony as the China issue mentioned yesterday. The size of this lie can leave little doubt as to its intention—to build the myth that the Communist Party shields American imperialism.



Actually, of course, the underlying theme of all the July Plenum reports was the imperative need to organize a broad struggle against the aggressive, expansionist policies of American imperialism, the forces which have "brought into the top councils of American diplomacy, not only the exponents of an 'American Century' but also the chief architects of Munichism, the most rabid anti-Sovieters." (Report by Eugene Dennis, "Defeat the Imperialist Drive Toward Fascism and War.")

It is asserted by Minton-McKenney that the National Committee "does not urge—it does not even mention" the need to study the economic development of present-day monopoly capitalism. Again, unqualified falsehood. The National Committee not only mentions and urges but sets tasks with respect to this very point. This is a central theme of Max Weiss' report, which stresses as an "urgent necessity" the "mastery of Marxist-Leninist political economy by our party and by broad sections of the labor movement and its leadership," and which specifically proposes the study of new data on American imperialism.

These malicious lies are coupled with the contemptibly shallow pretense that Minton and McKenney have a special insight because, they now claim, they saw through revisionism all the time. Minton fails to note, however, that the main theme on which he harped during the revisionist period was that Browder was being "misinterpreted," that Browder's line was all right but some people were carrying it "too far." This was his superior insight.

But of course the whole claim of special wisdom is cynical when one considers that the Minton-McKenney "branch report" brands Comrade Foster as anti-Marxist. What are we to say of people who try to build themselves up as critics of revisionism "all along" only in order to buttress an attack on the Marxist understanding of Comrade Foster? This disgusting tactic typifies the whole "report." It suggests that the renegades do not have a high opinion of the intelligence of Communists whom they are circularizing "at the request of Mr. Minton."

THE platform of struggle against the Communist Party is based not only on gross lies and distortions, but on a "theory." And here we are reminded that Lenin again and again linked "Left-Wing' Childishness" with the "Petty-Bourgeois Mentality." Lenin wrote: "The flaunting of high-sounding phrases is characteristic of the declassed petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. The organized proletarian Communists will certainly punish this 'habit' with nothing less than derision and expulsion from all responsible posts."

The high-sounding "left" phrases of Minton-McKenney may give innocents the impression of a revolutionary content. But any sober analysis of the concrete conditions of American life today will show that these phrases mask a program of submission to the reactionary offensive of Big Business.

The Minton-McKenney line, and the line of their whole NCP, reminds one of Lenin's exclamation in a letter to A. M. Kollontay in 1917: "What a swine that Trotzky is! Left phrases and a bloc with the Right against the aims of the Left!!"

Let us look at these "left" theorists and see if they do not in fact serve the aims of reaction in America today.

The most reactionary sections of American capitalism today are hammering away at the "inevitability" of World War III. They insist that it is imminent or already on. They use this propaganda in order to advance their whole program. For if war is on top of us, they argue, then we must have huge armaments, we must put the labor movement in its "place," we must "get tougher" with Russia, we must not supply our "enemies" with food and relief, etc., etc.

This propaganda is designed to cripple the struggle against the would-be warmakers. Stalin made a profound contribution to world peace, and to the struggle to maintain world peace, when he exposed this tactic and categorically denied the imminent danger of war.

But Minton-McKenney, in their infinite wisdom, launch a "revolutionary" attack on the National Committee because it speaks of the "fight to maintain world peace." We are told that this phrase is "lighthearted," "opportunist." Why? Because "there is no peace." "The American Communist leadership assumes that peace is real and therefore our task is to preserve the peace. But peace is not real. American imperialism makes war now."

It is of course true that the policies and actions of American imperialism will lead to war, unless these policies and actions are stubbornly fought by a united front of every peace-seeking element in the country. But World War III is not on. We are fighting to prevent such a war by uniting people to check the imperialist offensive. This is the main struggle in the country today and it affects every phase of American political and social life. The Mintons and McKenneys tell us that the people have already lost this fight.

Thus the struggle against the warmongers is immobilized by the "left" thesis that the war is already on or unavoidably imminent. The corollaries of this defeatist thesis as developed by Minton-McKenney will be examined in tomorrow's column.

(To be concluded tomorrow.)