

## JOSEPH CLARK'S LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Editor, Daily Worker:

Regretfully, this will be the last time I speak my piece as an editor of the Daily Worker and member of the Communist Party. After 28 years of association I am resigning from both because I find it is no longer possible to serve the cause of American socialism through them.

I continue to adhere as strongly as ever to the ideal which brought me into the Communist movement—a world free from poverty, racism, injustice and war. This has become a categorical imperative in the atomic age. Unless the exploitation of man by man is ended it is impossible to conceive of humanity living in both peace and freedom.

It is a grievous comment on the situation in our country, as well as in the Communist Party, that I am the first to resign from the party by making it known through the Daily Worker. The most recent meeting of the party's National Committee was told that at least 7,000 of the 17,000 reported members last year, have left the organization. About 60,000 quit in the previous decade. However, the great majority could not resign publicly because they were never able to declare their affiliation in the first place. This is because freedom of thought and association in our country has been infringed by legislation such as the Smith and McCarran acts.

Furthermore, many who resigned were concerned, as I am, lest opponents of democracy and socialism utilize their resignations to defame the high ideals for which they joined the Communist Party and to which we have devoted some of the best years of our lives. It is a source of pride to me that I have never concealed my views and aims. This includes that very first classification interview when I joined the ranks of the United States Army and served my country together with 15,000 other Communists in the armed forces.

Among those who left the party before me were the great majority of its workingclass and Negro members, active trade unionists, as well as writers, scientists, professional and also party organizers, Smith Act prisoners, Daily Worker editors and reporters.

Loss of membership is only one indication of the complete isolation of the Communist Party from the struggles of American labor. Having once been the major organization—in 1935-1945—to continue the century-old socialist tradition in this country, the reason for such total isolation today must go far deeper than the mistakes we made. Many of those mistakes have been catalogued by the self-criticism of the party during the past year. But fundamentally, the demise of the party is related to that of every other socialist movement in our country since the days of the first Marxists here. Not content with growing directly out of the struggles of the American people, and basing themselves on the specific conditions of American life, these movements have unwittingly tried to impose their dogmas on the struggles.

The party became a sect primarily because history rode roughshod over dogma. Since the trend is toward aggravation of this process the party has become a hindrance rather than a means for advancing socialism.

I was among those who greeted the progress recorded at the last convention of the Communist Party. It affirmed its American character and its dedication

to constitutional democracy. It proclaimed its independence and came out against dogmatism and sectarianism. The convention promised a search for new paths and new organizational means through which the American people would arrive at socialism. This was a natural result of the crisis in our movement following the revelations about the evil degeneration caused by Stalinist communism.

The hope and promise of that convention have not fulfilled. Sad confirmation is found in the record of the last National Committee meeting held July 27-28. A summary of the proceedings has been published in Party Affairs, Vol. 1, No. 1. Readers will notice that instead of a search for more effective means to advance socialism the meeting took up the most incredibly irrelevant questions. For example, dozens of speakers discussed at great length what one of them quaintly called "the question of Joe Clark." One after another condemned my views. A grand climax was reached with full unanimity; "that the National Committee register its disagreement with the line of the Daily Worker foreign editor."

Their judgment could be perfectly correct. I am only too keenly aware of my own fallibility. But while my views and my "line" were condemned no one could detect what my views and "line" were. The Party Affairs bulletin reveals not a single reason, no argument, not one idea for that condemnation. As in the days of Stalin something is declared "right" or "wrong" with no obligation to tell why, what or how. One must accept on faith. Such debate may resemble medieval scholasticism, but bears no kinship to the probing, analytical method of Marxism which fears no ideas or theories but subjects them all to calm analysis.

Though the National Committee voted against removing me as foreign editor it explained this was because of "its relations to outside forces at the present time, when we are still in this difficult, weak stage." At a different stage, other steps, presumably, will be in order. The fact is that I find it difficult to write as I please in the Daily Worker. Not that my writing is directly censored. But within the framework of harassment in the party and an obligation to those who share many of my views, but are concerned with proper "tactics" in the inner-party struggle, I simply do not express my views as I would like to.

Though the reader won't find it in the record of the National Committee meeting my view is that socialism can be served only by a complete break with Stalinism. The latter perverted socialism by substituting autocracy for democracy. But Marxists have always advocated socialist democracy, which they uphold as more libertarian than any yet attained.

It is my view that to advance the all-important goal of American-Soviet friendship one must win the people for strong opposition to the cold war diplomacy of John Foster Dulles. But to do this one must also take a critical view of what is wrong in the Soviet Union.

Are we helping socialism and the Soviet people if we seem to go along with Khrushchev when he proclaimed that Malenkov was responsible for the evil that Stalin wrought? I have no doubt that Malenkov, as well as Khrushchev, was implicated in those evils. But the roots of the evil require a better explanation than the "character" of Stalin or Khrushchev's latest gloss: "Malenkov not only did not restrain Stalin, he very skillfully took advantage of Stalin's weaknesses and habits in the last year of his life."

To support Khrushchev

against Molotov and Malenkov, as the party and Daily Worker have done, is no service to socialism or the Soviet Union. Wrong though Molotov has been, the Soviet people face the perspective, and I think will succeed, in producing a new leadership, one which is not responsible for the crimes of Stalin as both Molotov and Khrushchev are. American socialists should be partisans of socialism everywhere.

But one cannot have an independent stance, or a scrupulous regard for truth, and support the "unity" of the Soviet Communist party behind Khrushchev, as the Daily Worker did editorially. Since there is no prospect that a common sense, Marxist view will prevail in this regard, party membership has become incompatible with a truly socialist position.

The only effective posture from which American Marxists can work for American-Soviet friendship—necessary if mankind is to survive in a time of hydrogen-headed ICBM weapons—is that of independence. The issue was posed directly at the last convention of the party by the letter of Jacques Duclos, who, for a second time, meddled in the affairs of the American Communist movement. The essence of the Duclos letter was rejected by the convention. But, unfortunately, it was not argued or specifically refuted in a way which would establish beyond a shadow of a doubt the independence of the American Communist Party and demolish the slanders of J. Edgar Hoover. I refer particularly to Duclos' declaration that proletarian internationalism "implies solidarity with the foreign policy of the Soviet Union."

History is replete with instances where the opposite is true. In 1939 internationalism required support for the anti-Nazi war, not the shameful neutrality of both the French and American Communist parties. And in 1956 proletarian internationalism required solidarity with the Hungarian workers opposing Soviet intervention. It demanded support for the Hungarian workers who formed a solid phalanx of workers councils and for their 100 percent solid general strike. It meant solidarity with the views expressed by Janos Kadar in his Nov. 1 radio address, when he was still with the Hungarian masses, and said:

**"Our people have proved with their blood their intention to support unflinchingly the Government's (Nagy's) efforts for the complete withdrawal of Soviet forces."**

There is no prospect that party leaders will rebuff the Duclos argument quoted above, not in generalities, but with specific reference to the Duclos letter. All efforts that I made to get a specific refutation of the Duclos statement were rebuffed. Therefore to remain in the party tends to lend support to the disastrously un-Marxist policy which has time and again isolated us from the American workers, as in 1939.

Communism on a world scale has been the major current in our time through which socialist transformations have taken place. The successful revolutions in Russia, China and Yugoslavia, and the socialist transformation in Poland last October, have advanced socialism as an issue for our time. But these revolutions have created no guides or patterns for socialism in most Western countries, and certainly not for ours. Marxism realized its greatest triumph in the Russian and Chinese revolutions. It also reached its most serious crisis as a result of Stalinist perversion of the Communist movement. Within the Communist countries

there is great hope for socialism in the complete elimination of Stalinism which deprived socialism of its humanism and high moral principles and which replaced scientific method with a religious-type dogma.

Within our own country communism has made an important contribution to the welfare of the people. A high-point was reached in the decade of 1935-1945. We were to some degree in the mainstream of American labor and of the country. Social security, the industrial organization of labor, the development of a popular folk culture, integration of the Negro people, were important achievements of American democracy to which we contributed. But that is past and no movement can live in the past. Even during the period of our greatest success we were never a mass party and we were never able to bring socialism into the arena of American political thought and action.

It therefore seems to me that we are entering a period when all questions relating to socialism and America are up for reconsideration. Certainly no organization exists today as a proper vehicle for socialism. No fixed dogma can guide our study. Our starting point must be American reality, as it is today, not as it was a century ago when Marx studied it. We must begin from facts. This is a virtue of

Marxism we have often forgotten. And we must above all maintain the moral and humanist essence of socialism.

The very best friends I have, some of whom are still in the party, may justly ask why I take this step now. Why didn't I resign at the time of the Khrushchev revelations on Stalin, or during the Hungarian uprising? The reason is that I had hopes for the cause of those opposing Stalinism within the party. The Daily Worker opened its pages to free debate unparalleled in any other American newspaper. But nevertheless, the hope I had for the party died. The hope I have for socialism remains as it has for 28 years. The discussion, the ferment and debate about these questions will bear fruit. And out of the struggles and ranks of the American working-class will come the new organizations that will help us find a path to a free commonwealth of all who labor.

The striving for freedom, equality and justice has motivated and continues to motivate the majority of Communists everywhere. All can therefore find a way better to serve the American people in their quest for greater freedom, abundance and peaceful coexistence. I, for one, shall try to do so.

JOSEPH CLARK

## Arkansas Parents

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timidation, against officials or teachers, the school board got injunctions against them in Federal District Court here.

When the Rev. Dunbar H. Ogden, Jr., of the Central Presbyterian Church, located this morning, was told that the Negro fathers seemed to think some of the white ministers were about to catch up with the best of the colored ministers, he said gravely, "That is our aim."

He spoke, he said, not for the Greater Little Rock Ministers Association, of which he is president, although he was convinced most of them felt as he did but did not feel like speaking out publicly. He had had "the privilege" of calling together the first 16 who issued a public statement last week, however, condemning the use of the National Guard.

Another 10 ministers from over Arkansas, including four from Faubus' home district around Huntsville, released another statement yesterday, he said.

He commended the remarks of Dr. Marion Boggs from the Second Presbyterian pulpit, and last Sunday's sermon by Rev. Dale Cowling, of the Second Baptist Church, as "the finest." Rev. Cowling, reached before church services today, said Rep. Brooks Hays was occupying the pulpit of his church this morning.

He said he would not impugn any man's motives but termed Faubus' course "a mistake."

"Now we must calmly await the outcome of the courts," he said.

"It is no longer a question of segregation or desegregation. The

issue is cast in a new light—with local authority playing outlaw against national authority," he declared.

By local did he mean the state of Arkansas, not Little Rock itself? Exactly, he said, the only defiance was from Gov. Faubus. Did he look for Eisenhower to act, he was asked.

"I will be sadly disappointed if our national Administration would be too timid now to take hold with this threat to its authority," he said. "I don't see how it can afford to do otherwise than act. I have every confidence they will."

The Rev. Ogden preached this morning on "liberty and justice for all." He said in part:

"We are all familiar with the quotation, 'with liberty and justice for all.' This comes from the statement of loyalty in which has been recently been inserted, at President Eisenhower's suggestion, two other words—'Under God.'"

"Now the question is, whether these words, 'with liberty and justice for all,' and 'Under God,' are simply words, and nothing but words, to our people, or whether they have meaning and reality."

"When Christ came to his own home town of Nazareth, he preached a message of 'liberty and justice for all.' He said, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach deliverance to the captives and liberty to them that are bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' (Luke IV; 18, 19.)"

"I am speaking this morning of Christ's will. Can there be true liberty and full justice in all aspects

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In Arlington County, Virginia, Dr. Harold M. Johnson leaves Washington & Lee High School with his daughters who were refused admission.