

# Another Overseas Reaction to the U. S. Communist Party Convention

By ALAN MAX

A NUMBER of Marxist publications abroad have given accounts of the American Communist Party convention. These include Pravda, L'Humanite, various Latin American publications, and the account by our correspondent in Great Britain, John Williamson, in World News.

Now we have still another

report, this time in the March issue of International Affairs, published in English in Moscow and currently on sale here.

All these accounts seem to have one thing in common—a lack of familiarity with the proceedings of the convention. How these publications happened to carry such similar reports, I do not know. But in an effort to help rectify an unfortunate situation, I would like to devote this space today to an Open Letter to the editors of International Affairs:

Dear Friends:

I have read the article in your March issue by T. Timofeyev on the American Communist Party convention.

No convention which follows on the heels of a year's sharp discussion and differences of opinion is easy to analyze. Nevertheless, the proceedings of the convention have now been published and when they reach you, you will find that they read like an entirely different convention from the one discussed by your correspondent.

According to T. Timofeyev, the convention consisted of a rejection of "revisionist" attempts to derail the Party. It is true that the convention reaffirmed many principles and rejected proposals to change the form of the organization. It is true that a one-sidedness in many new approaches as developed during the year preceding the convention, were corrected at the convention itself. But what was new was just these new approaches, the "new course"

which the convention resolution called for and of which T. Timofeyev seems to be completely

So that you will not think that I am interpreting the convention merely from my own standpoint, let me quote to you from an editorial on the convention published in the April issue of Political Affairs and unanimously endorsed at the time by the National Administrative Committee of the Party:

"The heart of the Convention's analysis as to the causes for the 'serious crisis of a political, ideological and organizational nature' that which constitutes the basis for the 'new course' and without which the crisis could not have been met, is contained in the following passage of the (convention) resolution:

"The roots of these errors are not to be found in the events of the past 10 years alone.

"The Marxist movement in our country has suffered historically from dogmatic application of Marxist theory to the American scene. The Communist Party inherited these weaknesses. Insufficient development of the independent theoretical work of the Party over the past decades has contributed towards our doctrinaire acceptance and mechanical application of many theoretical propositions.

"Our Party also suffered from an oversimplified approach to and uncritical acceptance of many views of Marxists and Marxist parties in other countries.

"Bureaucratic methods of leadership, failure to develop inner-Party democracy and a frequent intolerant attitude to the people we worked with have been in large measure responsible for our inability to correct mistakes in time as well as for much of our sectarianism. All these factors are inter-related; each helped to reinforce the other."

The editorial also quotes the following section of the resolution:

"To end its isolation and expand its mass work, the main task of the Party is to overcome completely the influence of Left-sectarian estimates, policies and tactics in all fields of work. In

the process of carrying out the main task, the Party must struggle against Right-opportunist tendencies, combatting them at all times. This is especially necessary in view of the extremely sharp turn which the Party is now making in many of its basic policies. The necessary struggle against Right-opportunist errors must be carried on in such a way as not to weaken the main task."

But where in T. Timofeyev's article is there a single word about "the extremely sharp turn which the Party is now making." Where is there the slightest indication of any "new course" or of what the Political Affairs editorial calls "this new, creative approach and broader understanding of theory"? Or the Political Affairs estimate that "in abandoning the earlier idealistic and uncritical attitude towards the lands of socialism, while recognizing their historic role and achievements, the Party has strengthened its ability to promote true proletarian internationalism"?

Where is there the smallest hint of the Party's new approach to Social-Democracy, or of the convention reply to Jacques Duclos of France?

Some people may feel the convention went too far. Others, like myself, feel that it is unfortunate that the convention was unable for various reasons to dig deeper into the new questions which it did tackle. But however one feels about the convention, what it did do or did not do is a matter of fact and is all on the record. I am sure that when the printed proceedings reach you, along with the estimate of the proceedings in the Political Affairs editorial, you will want to correct the impression which your readers have gotten from the account of T. Timofeyev.

Such an account, especially if it remained uncorrected, could only tend to shake the confidence of your readers in the ability of your journal to give sound political estimates. I am confident that now that the official documents become available to you, you will correct this unfortunate mistake.

Fraternally

ALAN MAX.