

ANSWER to Vronsky by Earl Browder

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New York City, May 3, 1948.

Editor, "For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy",
Ulitsa Iovana Risticha, No. 21
Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

Dear Editor:

Your journal, under date of April 15, published a review of my booklet "World Communism and U.S. Foreign Policy", written by B. Vronsky, republished in the New York Worker of April 25. May I be permitted a few remarks about this review?

Presumably the Vronsky review was printed in pursuing your journal's task to combat the revision of Marxism. I would call your attention to the fact that Vronsky fails in this task, because he ignores entirely the main content of my booklet, with the result that, whether the booklet is correct or incorrect, the reader of the review obtains no guidance whatever on the problems with which it deals. Yet Vronsky himself writes that "Browder writes about a number of extremely important postwar international political problems." If the booklet merited any attention at all, therefore, the review had to give some judgment on these "extremely important" problems. Such a judgment was not given.

I pass by, as irrelevant, Vronsky's assertion that I "can lay no claim whatsoever" to the "role of Marxist theoretician." Of course! That is self-understood. In this regard I stand on the same level as hundreds of thousands of other modest students of Marxism (including, may I assume, also Vronsky?) who merely strive to understand the postwar world in the light of Marxism. Even as "a cat may look at a king", so may such modest students legitimately strive to discuss these problems, without being judged as candidates to inherit the boots of Marx and his great successors. Let my booklet, if worthy of any attention at all, be judged entirely for what it is, the essay of a modest student of Marxism from a country notorious for its theoretical backwardness!

What are some of the "extremely important" problems dealt with in my booklet? Perhaps the chief one is an estimation of the historical significance of the "new democracies". My booklet gives an estimate: That the new democracies have placed the nations they lead definitely on the road to socialism. Is that correct? Vronsky does not say. My booklet says: The new democracies are not soviets, and not the dictatorship of the proletariat. Is that correct? Vronsky does not say. My booklet says: The path of the new democracies was chosen, not from motives of weakness but of strength. Is that correct? Vronsky does not say.

But of what use is the review of my booklet, if the reviewer is to keep silent on these central questions? Is the reader to presume that, since these "extremely important" affirmations are not challenged in the review, this means they are accepted by the reviewer as correct? The same question arises as to a whole series of other "extremely important" questions dealt with in the booklet and ignored by the reviewer.

If Vronsky is silent on the main questions dealt with in my booklet, he nevertheless does not hesitate to ascribe to it certain ideas which are simply not there, ideas which, on the contrary, the booklet distinctly and emphatically combats. Thus Vronsky says:

"Browder gets involved in his characterization of World War II by lumping together all countries in the anti-Hitler coalition. He fails to perceive the differences in the aims pursued by participants in the war."

This is simply false. Most readers of the review, however, will not read the booklet, and will therefore be at the mercy of Vronsky's falsehood. Vronsky presumably read the booklet, however, and could not have failed to note that

the whole booklet is an examination of the differences in the aims of the anti-Hitler allies. He could not have failed to read, in its opening pages, the following statements:

"Marxists were, of course, always sharply conscious of the deep contradictions and antagonisms inherent in the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition." (page 3).

"Establishment of the character of the war as being one for national survival and liberation on the side of the United Nations did not, of course, resolve the contradictions within the Anglo-Soviet-American alliance." (page 4).

"The reactionary circles of finance capital were always against Roosevelt and were doubly against his policy of full coalition with the Soviet Union." (p.5).

"Stalin was guided by the single aim of preserving the Soviet socialist system, of making it invincible, and of advancing the democratic forces of the whole world; Roosevelt was guided by the single aim of preserving American capitalism from revolutionary change in a generally disintegrating capitalist world, the aim of survival." (page 7).

Vronsky read the above sentences in my booklet, and could not fail to know they gave the keynote of the whole work. What purpose does he serve, then, by the falsehood that I was guilty of "lumping together all countries in the anti-Hitler coalition"? Does he think the booklet can be proved wrong by misrepresenting it? Or is his aim merely to prevent the booklet from being read?

Vronsky sets up another straw-man, to be easily demolished by a stroke of his pen, when he writes:

"Since, according to Browder, the progressive character of the war consisted in victory over Hitlerism, securing victory was 'the dominant aim of Marxist strategy during the war'. But the victory cannot be an aim in itself."

There is only one little fault in this criticism; it has no relation to my booklet, wherein there is no chatter about such a thing as "victory in itself." On the contrary, contrasting the Marxist position in the two world wars, revolutionary defeatists in the first, and for the victory of one side in the second, I wrote:

"The progressive results that came out of World War I arose, and could only arise, from a strategy

which rejected both sides...and directed itself to transforming the imperialist war into civil war...

"The chief progressive result of World War II came directly from the victory of the Allied powers, and the Marxist strategy and tactics during the war were determined by this goal of victory, which brought with it the down-fall of three of the six imperialist world powers and the release of the long-suppressed European movement toward socialism." (page 2).

How does Vronsky squeeze out of this any abstract idea of "victory in itself"? I wrote about a very concrete victory, in a specific historical moment, which brought with it a great blow against imperialism and a great impetus to socialism. What is gained for the Marxist education of the workingclass by Vronsky's deliberate falsification of the record?

Vronsky commits another literary forgery when he writes of "Browder's non-Marxist assertion about the 'progressive nature of American imperialism'."

Not in the booklet under review, nor at any other place or time, did I ever make such an assertion. It is pure forgery. What I actually did write was carefully ignored by Vronsky, who thereby side-stepped the real issue which is worthy of serious examination. I wrote:

"America under Roosevelt's leadership played on the whole a positive progressive role, in alliance with and leaning upon the Soviet Union, until the war's victorious end." (page 5).

I pointed out that this was achieved despite —

"the inherent drive of imperialism in general and American imperialism in particular toward domination and oppression of other nations."(p.33).

And despite the fact that —

"Roosevelt never went beyond the framework of bourgeois thought and motivation." (page 36).

Does Vronsky deny any of these propositions which I actually wrote? No, he evades them through the device of damning the booklet and its author for something which was never written. But these propositions are either correct or incorrect, and deserve a direct answer.

Stalin has spoken of the "anti-fascist and liberating character of the Second World War" -- before either the Soviet Union or America entered as belligerents -- which the Soviet Union "could only strengthen" by its participation (speech of Feb. 9, 1946). Does Vronsky deny that America's entry also served to strengthen the progressive character of the war? If World War II had an anti-fascist and liberating character "from the very outset" (Stalin), does this imply a "revisionist" estimate of "the progressive nature of British imperialism"? Does Vronsky maintain that America's entry into the war detracted from its anti-fascist and liberating character, that the war would have been more progressive if America had remained out of it? Does Vronsky deny that Roosevelt's leadership contributed toward strengthening the progressive character of the war? Does Vronsky maintain that Roosevelt did go beyond the framework of bourgeois thought and motivation? The review raises all these questions by implication, but it does not give an answer to any of them. But to give no answer means to invite a multitude of incorrect answers, which are already appearing in America in a flood of ideological confusion.

Vronsky makes a slanderous misrepresentation when he accuses my booklet of hiding the victories of the Red Army as the major factor that "forced Britain and the United States to carry out their belated promise to open a second front."

Vronsky's bald charge (he cites no evidence) on this question is really contemptible. My writings in 1943 and 1944, distributed throughout America in millions of copies, already then in the midst of war, exposed the reactionary anti-Soviet motives delaying the second front, and made clear that it was the Soviet victory, and the fear of not participating in it, that forced the opening of the second front at last. I did not have to wait until 1948 to learn this lesson from Vronsky.

Regarding what I actually wrote on the second front in the booklet under review, Vronsky is silent except for the cryptic remark: "Browder loses all sense of realism when he credits the late President with many things."

What does this mean? Is Vronsky thereby denying my statement that Roosevelt actively favored opening the second front in 1943, and was overruled by Churchill? Is he denying my statement that Roosevelt joined Stalin on this issue, in order to overrule Churchill, at the Teheran Conference at the end of 1943? Does Vronsky agree with such de-coding of his cryptic remark as that made by some American Communists (self-styled) who write: "Comrade Vronsky must have encountered somewhere or other those precise facts that show beyond doubt that Roosevelt did not try to 'lay the foundation for a lasting peaceful alliance' with the Soviet Union; that, on the contrary, Roosevelt manoeuvred against the Soviet Union... that Mr.

THEODORE DREISER

WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT "TEHERAN" BEFORE THE WAR ENDED.

1015 N. King's Rd.,
Hollywood, 46, Calif.,
Sept. 28, 1944.

Dear Browder:

I have just finished reading TEHERAN. It is such a clear illumination of our path in war and peace. The sanest and most honest and helpful that I have ever read. I truly and anxiously wish for it an international, as well as a national, circulation.

And yet I see you so bitterly assailed as an ex-convict! What an unintentional confession of the tactics of an evil money laden crew! Send me six copies with a bill and I will remit.

Luck. Also the hope that the American people read this very brilliant outline of our economic and social position, and profit by the same.

Dreiser

ANDRE' MARTY, representing the French Communist Party in the Provisional Cabinet of the French Republic headed by de Gaulle, and Acting Secretary of the Party, wrote from Algiers on April 2, 1944 his approval of Browder's speech "Teheran and America" of January. He said:

"I read in the I.P.C. of London your beautiful speech of January 1944. We are now publishing it in our theoretical magazine."

THEODORE DREISER, noted author whose act in joining the CP in 1945 was hailed with such great enthusiasm, wrote a letter of rather extreme praise of the book TEHERAN, under date of Sept. 28, 1944. The letter is reproduced herewith.

These are samples of a large file of similar expressions.

There was no voice raised in criticism of the speech of January 1944, until fifteen months later when the war was almost over and an entirely new international situation had emerged.

ASSEMBLEE CONSULTATIVE
PROVISOIRE

LIBERTÉ - ÉGALITÉ - FRATERNITÉ
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

2 April 1944
ALGER, LE

Mr. Earl BROWDER

NEW-YORK

Dear Earl,

We are sending our old friend Lucien MIDOL député de Seine-et-Oise to the meeting of the International Labour ~~Office~~ ^{Bureau}

Lucien MIDOL is the National Chairman of the Railroad Union of which STEWART was the General Secretary. He is a member of our CC, So he will inform you on all the main questions you want.

Our friend cannot speak English. He is alone amidst the other people. For that we think that it would be very useful if you can give to him a good friend as a Secretary for helping him during his trip in the USA.

I read in the I.P.C. of London your beautiful speech of January 1944. We are now publishing it in our theoretical magazine.

The situation here is pretty difficult. But we have good hope in the future against Hitler's gang and his friends.

All our friends greet you; will you please don't forget me to Reisse.

Yours

André
André

-I would be very interested in receiving several copies of "L'ACCUSE" (André Simone 1940) in french if possible and "A Hundred must die" and all good books of which we are entirely deprived
Thanks,

André
André

Roosevelt was directly implicated in...the attempts at a separate peace negotiated behind the back of the Soviet Union." (NCP REPORT, No. 80, May 3, 1948 -- opposition faction in CPUSA which attacks leadership as "Browderite").

All these are questions of historical fact, not of Marxist theory. If Vronsky is denying the truth of my statements of fact regarding the war-role of Roosevelt, and supporting another version of the facts tending in the direction of the NCP version, this should be done openly, directly, not by innuendo, not by cryptic remarks. If there is any question to be raised of a double-role by Roosevelt in the war, let it be discussed openly and settled.

Vronsky says my booklet "in part correctly characterizes the role of the Soviet Union in World War II" -- "but along with this the book contains clearly incorrect statements which belittle the role of the Soviet Union."

The most elementary decency in public discussion would seem to require that Vronsky should cite some evidence in support of such a charge. But he cites no evidence. He merely makes the unsupported accusation. What I wrote, however, leaves no room for even a hint or suspicion of such a thought. The following quotations sum up all my writings and spoken words:

"The Axis Powers became so swollen with conquest that nothing stood between them and world rule except the Soviet Union and its fighting forces. For all other nations the issue had become the question of their very survival, with the decision resting in Soviet hands." (page 3).

"Marxists never doubted the ability of the Soviet Union, under Stalin's leadership, to emerge victorious from the war even if deserted by her great Allies." (p. 5).

"World War II, however, was dominated by that same Soviet Union which in 1918 was a young and daring experiment. Between the two wars, in sharp contrast to the rest of the world, the new socialist system had proved itself by transforming a backward and wrecked country into the most powerful modern industrialized land outside the U.S.A. It was now to prove its capacity for survival in the most cruel of all wars. It bore by far the main burden of the war, and emerged stronger than ever. Only because the Soviet Union was strong in its own right, able to win the war if necessary alone, was she able to gain and hold the alliance with Britain and the U.S.A. until victory was achieved.

Without Soviet strength as its foundation, Roosevelt's policy could not have dominated and guided America, it could not have been more than a brilliant aspiration." (page 9).

"Today the Soviet Union and the new democratic states allied with her have a decisive voice in the making of peace. No world settlement is possible without their agreement and cooperation. They cannot be coerced into accepting any new world order that violates their fundamental interests." (page 11).

Vronsky takes note of what I actually write about the Soviet Union, however, only to label my words as "admissions" and "acknowledgments", presumably forced from me unwillingly after I had long maintained the opposite. That has the same validity as though he says "Browder admits it was wrong to beat his wife." Since I never did beat my wife, that would be slander. Vronsky's actual words are a worse slander, since I proclaimed those facts about the Soviet Union, not only after the war, but during its entire course, at a time when I had to fight against the defeatism of not a few self-styled "American Marxists" who today find it so easy -- for reasons of unprincipled factionalism -- to accuse me as a "renegade".

What workingclass purpose can be served by this laboriously built-up falsehood about my book, and about my views in general? I do not know. I can see none whatever. But I do know that, objectively, it is serving the spread of ideological chaos in the American working class. It is covering up a sharp political and organizational decline of the American Communist movement, that flows directly out of this ideological chaos. It covers up such flagrant revisionism as the present teachings by the Party, that imperialism and capitalism are distinct and separable categories in America, land of the highest finance-imperialist development! -- that the current "Wallace for President" movement is "anti-imperialist" even though it is frankly and vehemently pro-capitalist -- that the "strength of the Communist Party" was a factor contributing to the rise of Hitler to power in Germany, while America escaped fascism because "it was not yet faced with a workingclass strongly influenced by socialist ideas." (see article by National Education Director, Daily Worker, New York, Jan. 2, 1948).

In conclusion, may I suggest that if a booklet such as mine is worthy of any attention at all, it should be reviewed honestly, on the basis of evaluating the ideas it contains, not on the basis of ideas falsely attributed to it. That rule has not been followed in Vronsky's review of my booklet. The strength of Marxism, of the Communists, lies in strict adherence to principle and truth.

Sincerely yours,
EARL BROWDER.

ON THE SECOND FRONT
and
THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION

(Evidence from hostile sources.)

WALTER LIPPMAN, writing in the Herald Tribune,
New York, Sept. 4, 1943.

"Mr. Earl Browder's views on 'the second front' -- by which he means an invasion of northern Europe across the English channel -- are interesting only because he has put into bitterly provocative words a view which has had the support not only of many laymen but of some professional soldiers and sailors. Indeed, it is quite evident from a close reading of his speech that, while recklessly exploiting his knowledge to further his political views, he is by no means altogether uninformed about matters which have been earnestly debated for some eighteen months... Mr. Browder says that 'the failure to realize the second front even during the beginning of the third year of coalition... poses the alternative: either Britain and the United States are unwilling to carry any proportionate share of the fighting or they are unable to do so.' This grave charge, which if believed would have such lamentable consequences, calls for an answer."

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ON THE SECOND FRONT and THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION
(Evidence from hostile sources.)

GEORGE SOKOLSKY, writing in the Sun, New York, Oct. 8, 1943.

"Earl Browder, leader of American Communism, has been so closely associated with the international policy of Soviet Russia that it is utterly childish to ignore or ridicule what he says...Browder's Chicago speech was not misquoted...As I read his speech I was certain that he was issuing a signal warning to the effect that Soviet Russia would act independently on the peace front because the United States and Great Britain acted independently of Russia in the war strategy... First of all, Browder sets the premise:

'It (the war on the eastern front) was won without the intervention of Anglo-American forces in the West of Europe, without the second front.'

Then he says:

'That argument (for the second front) is the steady advance of the Red Army on the eastern front, the prospect that it opens up of a decisive Soviet victory in which Anglo-American arms will have won no major share.'

...Then he adds:

'The cold, hard truth is this: that unless we get down off our high horse, unless we, the United States, consolidate the alliance with Britain and the Soviet Union on the basis of equality all around, which means every one doing something like his part in fighting the war, and treating each other with full respect in reorganizing the world after the war, there is not the slightest prospect for us to emerge from this war with anything that can properly be called victory.'

Browder's argument then is that Russia is winning the war, that the United States and Great Britain have not done their share because they have chosen as their fighting fronts areas other than those designated for them by Soviet Russia, and that therefore they will be deprived of victory... Browder, of course, gives us a way out of this dilemma. It is to reject Churchill and obey Stalin. We're not taking orders, yet."

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