

Letters from Readers On Stalin Revaluation

FOLLOWING are some of the letters from our readers participating in the discussion on the revaluation of Stalin and other important issues raised by news dispatches on the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. We invite more letters or questions on the meaning of these problems for the American Left. The more letters the better, but in order that as many points of view as possible may be expressed, we ask our readers to keep them brief, preferably not more than 200 words. Letters should be signed but names will be withheld upon request.—The Editors.

Carl Marzani Says Lack of Democracy Curbs Initiative

Dear Editor:

May I congratulate you on the healthy discussion taking place in the Daily about current Soviet events. It seems to me that we need to keep in mind what is important in this discussion to the American scene. The most pressing problem in our country is how the American left, Communist and non-Communist re-evaluates its mutual relationships in the light of present trends. It seems clear to me that there is in our country as in other countries a gathering unity of all sections of the peoples in defense of their true national interests as contrasted to the interests of General Motors, Standard Oil, et al.

I have always taken for granted that Marxists in this country should be very interested, concerned, stimulated and indeed guided by the development of the Soviet Union. I have never accepted, nor indeed have I ever seen evidence, that the American Communist Party was, as the saying goes, "run by Moscow." What I have seen, and deplored, has been an unreflecting acceptance of Soviet political techniques and theoretical formulations.

The effects have been unfortunate in two important, and I believe crucial areas. There has been a great intolerance toward those who did not completely agree with the party at any given time, and often, a substantial lack of inner party democracy. The first has weakened the fight against reaction, but the second in the long run has been even more serious.

The uneven and sometime very low level of inner party democracy led to a stifling of initiative in action and in thinking. Too many Marxists in too many instances have not studied reality in their field with the same independence of spirit that Marx exhibited and that the best non-Marxist scholars exhibit. American Marxists must go into the concrete reality of American life to apply and extract anew those principles and laws which other peoples have extracted from THEIR realities. The application of dialectical materialism is itself a dialectical application, NOT a mechanical one and NOT one to be learned by rote.

In the second place, the shortcomings of inner party democracy have resulted in bureaucratic methods of work. "This lesson," says Mr. Foster, "could well be taken to heart." So it could, for the result of bureaucracy is to lose touch with the real conditions of American life.

Together with the isolation due to persecution this led to an undervaluation of the resilience of American democracy and the strength of the American people, which, together with the strength of peoples in other capitalist countries and with the developing power of the socialist world has succeeded in braking the warmongers.

Finally, the shortcomings in inner party democracy made possible the rise of individual domination, such as that of Browder. When Browder was exposed (quite justifiably in my opinion) the members of the then national committee wrote letters blaming themselves for insufficient vigilance. But this was not a personal psychological question. It was an institutional question, reflecting an institutional fault—the substantial lack of democracy, varying in degree, throughout the party organizations.

I say this with no antagonism toward anyone. Communist leaders need no defense from me. The devotion, self-sacrifice and courage of Foster, Dennis, Davis, Curley Flynn and all, speak for themselves. They are proud records, and this letter is in no way an attack upon them. It is an attack on the doctrine of infallibility whether in theory or in politics, whether by one person or by a group. This doctrine, however prettied up, should be fought ruthlessly. Marxism rejects it: the working class has no need of it.

The coming days are luminous for humanity. In our own country great stirring tasks are at hand. The worst thing that could happen to American Marxists would be to pay lip service to self-criticisms and let things stand as they were.

With warm regards for the party.

CARL MARZANI.

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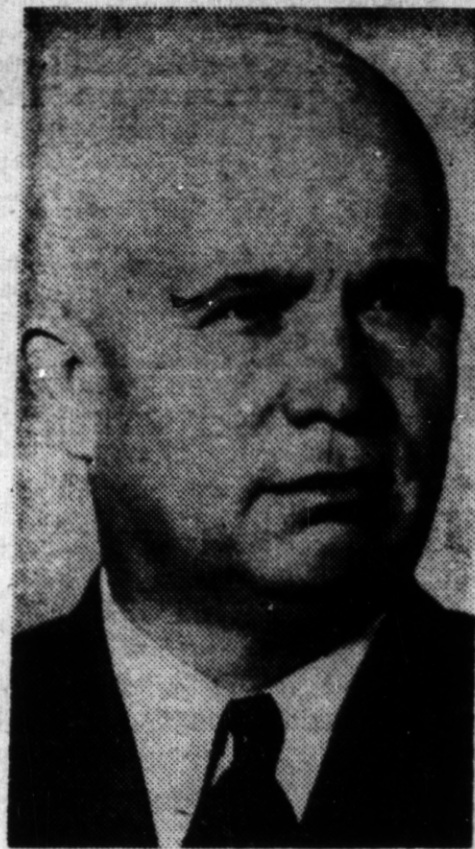
A Leader Is Neither Deity Nor Demon

NEW YORK.

Dear Editor:

I read with approval and agreement Ring Lardner's letter in The Worker of March 18. I think it is a fine and splendid thing to publish this and other letters on the question. It is in response to the editorial invitation to make more comments that I offer consideration of the following points:

When it comes to regarding any leader as either deity or demon, I choose neither. I never like seeing Stalin or anybody else deified. Neither do I like seeing the way some people here and elsewhere are now prepared to turn on Stalin and de-



Nikita Khrushchev whose re-20th Congress of Communist Party of the Soviet Union has stirred wide discussion here and abroad.

nounce him for anything and everything. . . .

That there was a lack of collective leadership in the CPSU, yes. But when any series of mistakes are made in ANY organization, whether it is the Soviet Party, the American Communist Party, a local PTA or Church Betterment Committee, there is more than one person at fault. Because organizational mistakes are the result of a POLICY which more than one individual had a part in creating and FOLLOWING.

I wasn't around of course, when Stalin was a leader in the Soviet Union. But I WAS around when Earl Browder and his associates created the late and unlamented Communist Political Association, and laid the CPUSA in a premature grave.

It always seemed to me something less than dignified, among other things, for people who claimed to have been either blind or voiceless followers of anybody or anything to denounce the object they followed instead of putting the blame on their own blindness or their own voicelessness.

I do not wish to imply to I put Browder and Stalin on the same level. Stalin, who with whatever faults he had, and whatever his errors, made great and important contributions to the building of the Soviet Union.

But the "cult of the individual" rubbed off on our party, too. And precisely the nub of it for every one of us is that the deifiers are every bit as much to blame as the deity, and these, were after all, human deities. It is, as I see it, part of that cult that one both praises and blames an individual for everything. . . .

Trotsky, crying out in the wilderness of a traitor's exile, claimed, piteously, that Stalin maneuvered him away from Lenin's funeral. If Stalin did, and if Stalin was one of the main forces in fighting Trotsky ideologically and politically and with strategic maneuvers, well, good for Stalin.

I don't think it detracts from Stalin's memory to regard him as having been tough, hard and shrewd. Anybody in leadership in the first socialist country HAD to be. But I was a little offended at the Soviet movie, the "Fall of Berlin" in which Stalin was presented as a kindly, lovely old fellow, sort of everybody's grandfather.

We have to expect that enemies of the party will make hay with this whole business. But we also have to watch, to make sure that we do not narrow up our eyes suspiciously at either party or non-party people who ask questions about this, even sharp questions. Anybody who feels a bit acid about this individual cult business is not necessarily an enemy. I feel a bit acid myself.

Let ANYONE who wants ask honest questions. And if there are people who raise dishonest questions, let's answer THEM,

Life

Welcome to TWO NEW this week! RWC of New York the Bronx \$1 per month. We know that we can count on our paper.

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Ways to Socialism

(Continued from Page 6)

the same camp of social progress, in that Socialism, under Constitutional democracy, can become a national decision of the people.

THIRD, this is because the arrival of Socialism in the United States will obviously take place only after many other nations will already have become Socialist. This is a fundamental difference from the conditions prevailing in the first Socialist country the USSR, which had its own very peculiar forms of development.

For, it follows from this fact that Socialism in America will not face any danger and actual presence of outside military intervention which the first Socialist state had to face. There will be no such peril of a forceful cancellation of the American people's decision for Socialism, or a restoration of capitalism by undemocratic means.

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FROM THIS it follows that far from growing dimmer, the possibility of a peaceful, Constitutional transition to American Socialism is bound to grow.

The Bill of Rights is now seen more clearly than ever as a permanent part of American society, with Marxism in fact presenting itself as the most intransigent defender of it before and after Socialism in the United States.

The right to advocate a return

too. Let's be ready to answer ALL questions with clear, objective historical evidence. AMERICAN COMMUNIST.

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Criticism of Stalin Help to Capitalism

NEW YORK.

Dear Editor:

I believe that this criticism of Stalin is the most terrible instrument in the hands of the capitalists, and that it is causing a split in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in Communist Parties all over the world. Where was Khrushchev when all those "crimes" were committed? If the present Soviet leaders wanted to say that the time had come when dictatorship was no longer necessary, they could have done that without making such terrible criticism of such a great man as Stalin, without whom there would not be today a Soviet Union. In my opinion it is a terrible mistake to destroy the tremendous sacrifices of a great man like Stalin. S. O. S.

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