

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Suggests D.W. Contests

Editor, Daily Worker:

Recently I have been giving the problem of low circulation of the Daily Worker some thought, and I think I have, at least, a partial solution.

The Daily Worker could run a contest of some sort which would appeal to the average American. The advantages of this contest would be twofold. One would be to increase their income and the other would be the furtherance of the cause of truth and equality.

This contest could be of almost any type. One type is the answering of clues, the answers being famous people in any walk of life (entertainment, sport or political), either living or dead. The puzzle could run for a length of time with the prize (not necessarily cash) increasing in an arithmetic progression.

Another group would contain the language type. Such as the crossword puzzle, either high class or tricky, cryptogram, or the breaking up into many words or one large one.

I have mentioned but a few of the types of puzzles that could be used. I am sure that you have competent men on your staff who could develop this idea, if you deem it worthy of being used.

A. G. L.

## How About 'Cosmopolitanism'?

Editor, Daily Worker:

The news of the execution of Jewish writers and the suppression of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union in the last years of Stalin's leadership filled me with such astonishment and grief that for days I could not formulate a protesting letter. Your angry editorial of April 13 expressed my feelings exactly, and I need not add to it.

I would like, however, to voice a few thoughts on "cosmopolitanism," which, if I remember correctly, was considered a sort of literary crime in the Soviet Union a few years ago. It seemed to be Jewish writers, in the main, who committed it.

I remember that when "cosmopolitanism" lifted its horrid head, I tried to analyze it and determine what was bad about it. As a matter of fact I had always liked the idea of being cos-

mopolitan, and had thought that it was to be internationalist in a sophisticated and well-traveled fashion. I had thought "cosmopolitan" was the opposite of "insular," the opposite of "provincial," the opposite of "isolationist." To me "cosmopolitanism" had been the reverse of a narrow and ignorant patriotism.

But looking at it as sort of a crime, I began to suppose that it was actually an aspect of imperialism. It must be, I told myself, a kind of apologetics for colonialism and cartelism and world monopoly rule. Well, I thought, there just might be a kind of right danger for the intelligentsia in a "cosmopolitanism" like that—if there truly were such a thing at all. But I doubted it, and dismissed it from my mind. I felt I had more real perils to worry about and more dangerous enemies to fight.

Then came the news of the execution of the Jewish writers. The only crime I ever heard charged against them was "cosmopolitanism."

I think that perhaps at this time we should re-examine our critical and artistic theories, and do some re-evaluating in this direction also.

Oakley C. Johnson.

## Value of Thomas Jefferson

Editor, Daily Worker:

Although I am not a Communist I have followed with keen political interest your course and your fortunes in recent years. And this revaluation business, especially in connection with the tough American question of civil liberties, strikes me as being just what the doctor ordered. Hithertofore, individuals representing your political faith, though doubtless sincere, have never-the-less, been the personification of the old saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. They have been too ready to blast, too reluctant to listen, to opinions other than their own, both in private and in company.

It is my opinion that although you have been correct on major questions affecting the domestic and foreign policy of this land of ours, you have, at the same time, negated this by your uncritical approval of excesses committed against civil liberties by Communist parties abroad. Nor was this contradictory practice

the sole monopoly of the Communists; it was carried on by both the GOP and the Democratic Party, as well as by the leadership of the labor movement . . . as when the latter was positive on domestic issues and negative on foreign policy, particularly where such policy was related to the life and death issue of hydrogen war.

The new period now opening can perhaps best be described as one of winning friends and influencing people. The ideas of Marx and Lenin are as legitimate as ever, but if the left in the U. S. A. expects to make political hay while the sun shines it must pay attention to the technique of Thomas Jefferson. It is not enough to pay lip service to him by merely quoting from his writings. His fine tact, his diplomacy, his ability, should be part and parcel of every leftist's equipment, and this calls for unending self-education and self-discipline.

J. C.

## Party Discipline

New York.

Editor, Daily Worker:

On April 4th, at the Jefferson School, John Gates gave a thoughtful and searching analysis of the rejection of the "cult of the individual" by the 20th Congress of the Bolshevik Party. He also stated that, in the Communist Party of the United States during recent years, discipline had been extended to the point where almost any kind of disagreement was branded as anti-leadership. He called for greater democracy within the ranks of the Party and recommended that the leadership consult the rank and file more on policy and its implementation. During discussion from the floor, one person remarked that, in the past, certain comrades who sought to raise questions of honest disagreement were either intimidated or forced out of the Party.

I am an expelled person. Judging by my own experience and that of others, I would say that, usually, the Party has never expelled anyone until that person committed a whole series of political mistakes that threatened organizational unity. Nevertheless, I will also say that, had greater democracy

and comradeship prevailed, what was originally honest dissent might have been prevented, in many cases, from degenerating into chronic misbehavior or anti-Party factionalism. I think the time has come to liberalize the meaning of democratic centralism and develop, according to American standards, an integrated approach to the whole question of criticism and self-criticism.

This is the basic lesson we can learn from the 20th Party Congress. There is only one Communist Party. It should be as representative of the American people as possible. Our leaders—and they are mine, as well—must be urged to correct errors while, at the same time, the rank and file must not take an "off with their heads" approach to the leaders.

We—those in the Communist Party and those who take inspiration and guidance from it—can only fulfill our responsibilities if the Party develops a unity based upon a free exchange of opinion and the most rigid criticism and self-criticism. It is on this basis—and again I refer to John Gates—that the Party can achieve the highest kind of discipline because this will stem from understanding and mutual respect rather than the coercion of necessity or the trappings of office.

M. A.

## Party Organization

New York.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am convinced that the strange mixture of sectarianism and opportunism which has plagued the Communist Party of the United States the last three decades will ultimately be traced to the mechanical grafting onto our Party of organizational forms and principles alien to American life.

Take, for example, the principle of Democratic Centralism. This, from all evidence I could turn up, was adapted almost without change from the techniques developed by the Bolsheviks, of the R.S.D.L.P. under conditions of extremely violent oppression. (An autocracy, the need for "complete secrecy in our work," as Lenin put it, a poverty of legal avenues for conducting

mass work.)

I am told that the general concept of democratic centralism was set forth as a pattern for the world's Communist Parties at the 3rd Congress of the CI in 1921. Well and good. But was it changed in any way to conform to the legal, judicial, parliamentary and social peculiarities of the U.S.A.? Of this I can find no data, although Lenin in 1922 criticized the CI's organizational resolution of the year before as "too Russian; it reflects Russian experience." (Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. X).

I believe the time has come to work out an application of party organizational forms that fit the needs of a party of Socialism, a party which is, at the same time, rooted in the American tradition. This may require a revised form of democratic centralism—or even its substitution by something else. Whatever is needed, let's do it!

J. S.

## Many Communists Were Snobs

Editor, Daily Worker:

If other Communists were, like me, they were troubled and had questions over developments like the trials of Rajk and the Jewish doctors. But if they were like me they did not take exception to those events. Instead, they muzzled themselves lest they be stamped as "waverers," you know, the kind that went to pieces, or even raised an eyebrow, if something fishy took place in one of the socialist countries.

Conversely, that comrade seemed to gain prestige and status who did not bat an eyelash over events in socialist countries which horrified many honest Americans, who accepted and could patiently explain something which, deep in his heart, also confounded him.

I say that in the past we Communists have put a premium on uncritical conformity in our ranks. We have practiced snobbery in that we felt pity for, and somewhat superior to, those among us who couldn't accept the party line on this or that question. To the extent that Communists are subject to this type of pressure and feel the need to keep up with the Jones' ideologically, we will keep rolling dogmatically along.

R. G.