

Dear Editor

LETTERS FROM READERS

The views expressed in the letters printed below do not necessarily reflect our own. However we are glad to present their opinions and invite others to write to this column.

A Fresh Look At Old Questions

BOSTON, Mass.

Editor, The Worker:

I heartily agree completely with "Springfield Worker" in his letter to The Worker of May 13 on the aspect of scapegoatism in the discussions around the Stalin critique.

Although I am not a member of the Communist Party, I think it would be wise for that party, especially in terms of extra-party influence, to take a very bold and wholly independent stand on the whole issue of Soviet and Soviet-bloc purge. With so many executed revolutionaries, heroes of Marxism, having been declared innocent and with "fascist agent" Tito now welcomed back into the Communist fold, much doubt has been thrown on all such cases in general.

The C.P. would do well to take a fresh look at the most "celebrated" of all the purges, the Moscow Trials of the '30s and take a neutral stand on it, at least, demanding that the So-



viet C.P., as a matter of simple justice, clear up any doubts in regard to that question.

This is not to be taken as urging any vindication of Trotskyism, but as a matter of pure justice. On the other hand, I will flatly state that I think the story of Trotsky being a Nazi agent, cooking up a deal with Hitler to divide a conquered Soviet Union between them, is so much bunk. Much of the harmful effects of negative, latter-day Stalinism (no collective leadership for 20 years, said Mikoyan) can be traced to having roots in the battle against Trotskyism.

The curse of negative-Stalinism can be laid to a great extent at the door of the prior curse of Trotskyism. But Stalin was partly to blame for Trotskyism too. . . . Stalin lacked the finesse, the skill of Lenin. It was clumsy and selfish to exile Trotsky. Stalin should have kept Trotsky inside of the USSR where he could keep an eye on him and neutralize him, nipping his harmful tendencies before they could get very far. But by exiling Trotsky he only allowed him to roam loose to create discord and hostile division in the working class movement, adding to the ranks of anti-Sovieters, alienating people who would have otherwise been friendly to the first workers republic.

And to, on top of this shoot other old Bolsheviks, guilty or innocent, only served to sow more hostility towards the USSR, give the anti-Sovieters more meat to bite into.

While any important legal and moral international issue is surrounded by clouds of doubt, such as the purges or arms to Egypt, a Communist Party would be wise to refrain from ill-considered action, should take the most careful of positions, glossing over nothing and thinking of considerations other than the defense of the first labor republic.

Speaking of the latter aspect,

defense of the USSR is no longer as urgent as it once was, when the Union was weak and young, but is now no more important than defense of world peace and all democratic orders in general.

The U. S. Left needs not only self-criticism with which to catch up to Khrushchev & Co. but to go past said company and strive to correct them if it turns out that they may be wrong also.

NEW ENGLAND WORKER.

Likes Articles

About Housewives

Dear Editor:

Just a brief note to congratulate The Worker on the two articles (all that have so far appeared of a projected series) by Woman's Page Editor Elizabeth Lawson on "the 100-Hour Week" of household drudgery which is the "American Way of Life" for the vast majority of married women.

This subject has always been one of the two reefs upon which many previous bravely conceived voyages on the woman question have foundered before they have even cleared the harbor of discussion. (The other is the problem of the influence of pseudo-scientific bourgeois "naturalism" in relation to sex.)

From one side pours in the wave of "things are not really so bad, look at all the electrical appliances at the housewife's disposal, why American women have more equal rights than those of any other capitalist country." This is met from the other side with a contradictory, yet complementary tide that says "nothing can be done about the housewife's drudgery this side of socialism, so don't rock the boat with unreasonable feminist demands." The voyagers make their way back to shore—not all of them of course—as best they can.

With this series by Elizabeth Lawson, The Worker has begun in a really brilliant way the necessary ideological onslaught on the important aspect of the woman question, to clear the way for a correct and broad-range labor program on the woman question.

Again, congratulations!

T. ALLEN.

Thoughts on Self-Determination

SEATTLE, Wash.

Dear Editor:

In discussing the national question in relation to the Negro people in the U. S. it seems to me that we should take another look at what is meant by self-determination. In his excellent discussion article Max Weiss writes:

"In the meantime the liberation movement of the Negro people has been developing under a slogan which is the exact

opposite of self-determination, namely, integration."

This is a clear formulation of what I believe to be an incorrect and one-sided concept of self-determination—a concept that has long been prevalent among U. S. Marxists. It is the source of many of the contradictions in which we find ourselves.

What is the generally accepted definition of self-determination? Lenin: ". . . only the right to independence in a political sense, the right to be free. . . ." Stalin: "The right of self-determination means only the nation itself has the right to determine its own destiny."

But we have put some drastic limitations on this broad concept. We have restricted it to mean only (1) federation with the oppressing nation or (2) secession from the oppressing nation.

Our problem, it seems to me, comes from confusing the concept of self-determination with the course or courses it may take depending of the circumstances. Lenin and Stalin did not speculate about what might be possible under entirely different conditions. Obviously in the case of Finland, for example, it would have been folly to talk about "integration" as one possible course open to the oppressed nation.

The thrilling developments in the Negro liberation movement should in no way "embarrass" Marxists or the Communist Party or cause us to throw away the correct slogan of "self-determination." It was valid yesterday, it is valid today. All that needs to go into the ash can is the dogmatic assumption that self-determination means only one of two possible courses. Let it rest with the old concept of a single path to socialism.

There are many things which compel me to believe that we are witnessing in our day the possibility of the long delayed completion of our own American (bourgeois) democratic revolution and that the motive power is the aroused and embattled Negro people. What a glorious role for the people who carry with them the oppression of the centuries.

The extension of the principles of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to the South will have far reaching effects on every aspect of American life. Within them we find the hard rock base for Negro-white unity which today is indispensable for the workingclass and the nation.

TERRY PETTUS.

Second Look at Woman Question

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

The article on Housewives gave me a lot to think about. It's about time. Now that we are in a period of reevaluation



"LIKE THE MAN SAID... 'THE RIGHT TO SUFFER IS ONE OF THE JOYS OF A FREE ECONOMY!'"

★ PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT HOWARD PYLIS

and discussion, the woman question also should be re-evaluated. This is the problem that has always been pushed to the background, or when it is written about, stock cliches have been used.

Now is the time to do away with all that. We must get down to the job and use Marxism creatively. Through collective discussion we can come up with a realistic program for American women.

E. M.

More Understanding Needed at Home

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the institution of "Speak Your Piece". . . .

Although the plight of the housewife in this society has been discussed in your paper, too little has been said on the role of the husband in helping to lighten the load. Also I have not seen anything written by a husband and father on this subject.

As a Communist and housewife and mother, I feel that I could make a much better contribution to the struggle for socialism were there more understanding of the "Housewife Question."

It has been acknowledged that the many chores of keeping house and caring for children, although important are completely unstimulating. Unless a woman is extremely developed and independent, it is very easy to fall into a rut and find reading even the Daily Worker an arduous task.

Unfortunately, many of our husbands, although quite sincere and active, tend to underestimate the importance of their wives and other wives' role outside the home, and therefore, do not do their utmost to lighten our tasks.

Nor do they feel it important to give up a union meeting or other meeting occasionally to baby sit so that the woman can attend whatever function she cares to.

Together with the present reevaluation of the Communist Party, our role as Communists in unions, communities, and so on, how about re-evaluating our attitudes in the home?

M. H.

Urges Love Of Our Fellow Man

WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.

Dear Sir:

It is quite deplorable about the five Marines getting drowned in the swamp. I blame the instructor for his drinking, but I condemn even more the damn-

able system that causes such things. All this war stuff is uncalled for. If it was not for the warmongers and war-profiters, we would have peace without risking our sons.

Lately, we have been more on the brink than ever before. Where is the United Nations? Why doesn't it take some action and bring a halt to this Middle East Crisis? Dag Hammarskjold has done what one man can do, but what about the other nations together?

Mr. Eisenhower says the United States will oppose any aggression in the Middle East within the limits of the American Constitution. Of course, that means, if Egypt gets any help defending their country, we will intervene. Those Egyptians have had control of that country for a thousand years. And what about the aggression of France murdering people by the thousands in Algeria?

One word could solve the whole thing. "Love"—not the love of Christ alone but the love of our fellow man. I have been raised under the Christian faith. But I notice the best peace maker the world has at present is a Hindu.

Our Ten Commandments say, Thou shalt not kill. That's all. The 65 commandments of the Hindu religion say, "Thou shalt not kill any living creature." We might find some solution in this way for a lasting peace.

C. RAY SWAIM, Jr.

Socialism and Right to Travel

New York, N.Y.

Dear Editor:

Many "slanders" against the USSR in the press had at least a grain of truth to them, we now learn. That does not mean we must now swallow everything that the sworn enemies of socialism write. It does mean that where there is a great cloud of smoke, there is likely to be some possibility of fire.

Disturbing to me are the reports over the years of how the Soviet Union has either tried to prevent people from leaving the country or has used coercion to bring Soviet nationals back to the country.

While they are correcting a great many things over there, this is something they should change too. In any country, socialism has to be decided on the basis of the self-determination of the majority of the people. However, there may be some who are unwilling to accept socialism. They should be free to go elsewhere if they choose—which is to say that the principle of self-determination should be extended to them on an individual basis.



I'M EXPERIMENTING WITH A NEW PRODUCTION METHOD

MARY G