

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Positive Developments

BROOKLYN

Editor, Daily Worker:

Your editorials in criticism of the lack of analysis and complete candor on the part of Khrushchev of the crimes and fearful mistakes of Stalin were welcome. I also welcome the statements of the CPUSA and of the leadership of the Communist parties of France, Britain and Italy. Before we are done there will be lots more of the same.

Instead, I wonder whether in our efforts to demonstrate our independence, in our anxiety to show we now are going to take a really American line from now on, we are missing some very positive developments that should have us glowing with hope instead of grovelling in the dust of despair and breast beating. True, we've got plenty to criticize ourselves for, but it seems we see only "gloom and doom" while many liberals are quite encouraged.

Today's N. Y. Post, for instance, contains the first of a series of articles on INSIDE RUSSIA. Here's some quotes: "constantly improving standard of living, a humanizing of personal relationships, a relaxing of tensions, even encouragement of criticism of public officials . . . life for the Russian people is more free, more secure, more hopeful, and more relaxed."

I've heard much such praise of current events in the USSR by non-party people, to whom the Khrushchev disclosures came as no surprise as they did to many of us. Let's recognize these great events for what they are when we criticize. Otherwise we will play into the hands of the enemies of socialism who are anxious to fool people into thinking that these mistakes and crimes were inherent in the system itself.

I have heard such despair, such wholesale denunciation of the role of the CPUSA for the last 20 years, such calls for liquidation of the party, such attacks on our leaders, such plain and simple PANIC, that I wish we'd slow it down a bit. Let's come out into the light, brothers and sisters. Things are looking up!

In the old days none of us dreamed of questioning even the smallest thing that Stalin did, though many honest liberals and progressives did. Now we feel free to attack Khrushchev without let or hindrance, the very man who's bringing all these faults to light. Well and good, if we do it in a friendly and constructive way. But just remember what wonderful changes are taking place now in the world because of this new approach of the USSR, and what it means for the future of peace and socialism.

Freed of blind unquestioning ties to the USSR, but holding friendship and respect for her as the first socialist land, we can look about our own great and wonderful country and help build her future with our own hearts and hands and minds.

-C. S.

## Hits Clark's Use Of Times Reports

Editor, Daily Worker:

I don't think we need a Joseph Clark column to report and repeat what we as well as Clark can read in the TIMES and other prejudiced publications. It is not the business of a "foreign editor" to rehash the observations of other journalists, and particularly such journalists as we all have easy access to. It is not the business of responsible Communist journalism to purvey at second hand the wares of the bourgeois hucksters.

The grievous errors into which Clark falls are exemplified in his swallowing whole and then regurgitating on our hapless heads

some one-sided Times stories about student demands in Czechoslovakia. He threw the prestige of his position behind the Times account, uncritically supporting the students against the People's Democracy.

It now transpires that these malcontents are scions of the ancient regime, sons of the former ruling class, whose opportunity to bite the hand that fed them came when "class selection" of students, i. e., preference for sons of the proletariat, was modified in favor of a more "liberal" policy toward sons of the class enemy.

I think Clark's columns, and a great deal of other matter in the Daily Worker, are reflections of that bourgeois infiltration to which a weak workers' party in a strong capitalist society is always prone, and against which the American Communists, in the excesses of a revulsion against "left sectarianism," are today less than ever on guard.

FRANCIS SHEEHY

## 20th Congress Had Constructive Side

DETROIT.

Editor, Daily Worker:

A group of us, regular readers of the 'Daily' had occasion recently to chew over some of the recent developments in the action and thinking of the various Socialist Governments and people of the left. In this connection, the role of the Daily Worker came in for considerable discussion. It is the essence of the latter that I want to pass on for what it is worth.

It is not enough to praise the 'Daily' for opening its pages for letters from its readers. For a paper like ours, we feel that it has the responsibility for giving some direction to the discussion that it unfolds. We feel that such direction has been missing.

To that extent, most of the letters have failed to make the distinction between the historical conditions giving rise to a Stalin in his last years and to a William Z. Foster in his. Therefore many of the conclusions are mechanical.

Further, many of the letters fail to distinguish between what are minor criticisms, and what are major that requires immediate correction. To elevate minor weaknesses to the level of major weaknesses, is a harmful and confusing practice which makes difficult tackling the essential.

Is the presentation of mostly negative (letters) contributions accidental? We find it hard to believe that such represents a balanced presentation of the letters received.

As for the series of Editorials presented, without discussing them specifically, we do object to many of the formulations and adjectives used. But, most of all, we resent the fact that so much editorial space has been devoted to the Stalin question.

All previous Congresses of the Soviet Party have been distorted by the State Department press. They have always seized on the most negative aspects of such Congresses. It seems to us therefore, that a paper friendly to the Soviet Union and the Cause of Socialism, would see as its main task the presentation of the main accomplishments of the Congress to its readers.

The 20th Congress certainly was not a defensive one. It did not proceed in a sea of negatives. Why then, does the 'Daily' proceed to discuss from a defensive position Stalin, separated from the context of the Congress?

-DETROITERS.

[ED. NOTE: We print a balanced cross-section of letters received and we give more space to those with which we disagree.]

## Cult of Individual Held a Useful Phrase

Editor, Daily Worker:

The tendency towards oversimplification in a very complex period is still very much with us. Quite a few speak-your-piece correspondents, for instance, have suggested substituting hero worship for the term cult of the individualist, so that the implication of the term might be more readily grasped and applied in our own country.

It would appear on careful examination that cult of the individualist embodied not one but many fatal characteristics, of which hero worship is only one. Others are delusions of grandeur, bureaucracy. Is the narrow shouldered trade union official with an expansive behind, fitted only for the swivel chair in which he is perpetually seated and to which he is permanently attached, a hero? No, of course not. He is a bureaucrat, a pear shape, contemptuous alike of the membership over which he rules with an iron hand, and most of his colleagues.

Is Mr. Dulles a hero? Scarcely, and by any man's standard, regardless of political connection.

George Morris once applied the cult of the individualist, and very effectively, to the trade union movement leadership. It was plain to see that there were few heroes among them, but rather, as John L. once characterized them . . . immeasurable fat asses, complacently leading the hosts of American workers into the wilderness.

I humbly suggest that hero worship does not quite fill the bill, as far as putting the finger on the disease as a whole is concerned. Unfortunately I cannot come up with a better term than cult of the individualist. It covers a multitude of sins.—J.G.

## Struggle Was Not Wasted

Editor, Daily Worker:

Fred Fine's statement about "wild-swinging tendencies," the negativism which leaves a "feeling of bankruptcy," is certainly illustrated by the article by "Philadelphian" in the Sunday Worker.

"Philadelphian" can't understand the low membership of the Party during recent years and feels that "in a political sense I have wasted the last 10 years of my life." It seems to me this is nonsense and childish thinking. Membership has been at a low ebb because we have been under the most desperate attack of any political party in the history of our country. In the atmosphere of witchhunts and thought control which has existed in the last 10 years it would be a miracle if the Party grew, or even retained most of its membership. The very fact that we are very much alive and kicking is a kick in the teeth to the free wheeling right element, which thought we would be buried long before this.

That we are confused and in crisis can't be doubted. Certainly Philadelphian's letter proves it. To say that the last 10 years have been wasted is to say that the fight for peace, for Negro rights, for jobs, is something that comes full blown into our lives. We took a very positive step in these battles. Granted we made some mistakes (and how easy it is now, with hindsight, to beat our breasts and moan about the size of the mistakes? To my mind, our principles were correct, our mistakes only one of degree) . . .

By the way, along with the hackneyed phrases of the Left, like "in the first place," I see we now have a new one . . . certain things are "Stalinist." Let's not wear out words until they lose all meaning.—MATT D.