

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

The Labor Movement

Editor, Daily Worker:

In the current discussion of Communist Party policies and perspectives the most important topic, to my mind, is the place of the party in the American labor movement. It goes without saying that the advancement of American labor, politically and economically, is the main concern of the Communist Party, and of Socialist parties as well. One cannot think of a Socialist or a Communist Party apart from labor; it must necessarily be of it and for it.

In order to fulfill this role Marxists must deal with American labor as it is, as we find it. If the American labor movement is not rich in theory, if it is not conscious of its class character, then this is how we have to accept it. We have to build our work in and with labor in full knowledge of these conditions, and not denounce labor if it has not yet realized its mission in society.

It is the task of the conscious sector of American labor—the Communists and Socialists—to enlighten the working masses on their historical role of emancipator in the coming change from capitalism to socialism. And this needs to be done with great consideration and tolerance. Formulations like "The backwardness of American labor," that is led by "misleaders of labor" who are "agents of Wall Street" are obsolete and false. They must not form any part of socialist teaching.

The American working class, may I note here is not what it was 20 or 30 years ago. Now it is practically all American born, first and second generation Americans, to whom the "old country" is but a vague conception. They have had American schooling, and their mores are accepted as American. Socialist writing, agitation and propaganda need to recognize this new status of American labor.

Second place in the current reevaluation should be given, it seems to me, to the laying of the Browder bogey. Since 1945 this bogey has played havoc in Communist ranks, has created distrust and confusion, and was greatly responsible for the near severance of the Communist Party from the labor movement and the American people. The fundamental and fruitful work which the Communist Party accomplished in the decade up to World War II was greatly undermined in the last ten years. The time has arrived for a review of this phase of party history, for thoro-going criticism and self-criticism in this connection. The still open wound must be probed and healed.

Next in importance at this moment, it seems to me, is the question of the forthcoming elections. To vote or not to vote?

To follow Dr. DuBois' advice and stay away from the polls does not seem to me wise. We are citizens of this Republic and we should not neglect an opportunity to take part in the voting. In the absence of a Communist or a Labor Party from the ballot, whom should a Communist vote for? Surely a Communist or a Socialist cannot support either one of the two capitalist parties. And his vote this year can be at least only a protest vote. We have to find a way to register this protest somehow, differing in the different states according to local conditions. Perhaps a vote for any party which carries the title "Socialist" will be in order, or for some candidate on any ticket and for any office, who is known to be pro-labor.

Finally, a word about the concept of the Communist Party in brotherly cooperation with labor and socialist parties and groups

in the building of a "mass party of Socialism"—an American Labor Party. Who will not grant that this is "a consummation devoutly to be wished?" With the understanding that the component parts remain autonomous.

In this connection, C. D. H. Cole, the British Socialist, in his very interesting article in *The Nation*, Aug. 4, 1956, reports from London: "Recently at an unofficial Paris gathering of non-Communist, left-wing Socialists from a number of countries—at which we set up a new organization, the International Society for Socialist Studies—I was deeply impressed by the extent of the change that seemed to have come about in the attitude of most of those present on the issue of Socialist-Communist relations."

I would say, a worthwhile beginning. A. A. HELLER

Corrects Title Of Article

Editor, Daily Worker:

I should appreciate publication of this letter correcting a title used for an article I wrote which appeared in the Aug. 5 issue of the Worker.

The title given is: "Were Last Ten Years of party Wasted? The Answer Lies in What We Do Now." The title I submitted was: "Will We Learn From the Past to Change the Future." This is the theme of the article and I consider it to be the central question, not whether the last 10 years were wasted in the Party.

I consider this a negative way of posing the problems we have and not helpful in finding the answers.

LILLIAN GATES.

'10 Years Of Hell'

KANSAS CITY, Mo.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I don't agree with Max Weiss on the peaceful transition to socialism and maintaining civil liberties for the capitalist class. We have lived through ten years of hell, and I will pay the capitalists back blow for blow. There is a possibility for peaceful transition to socialism but I have serious doubts here in the U. S.

I think our Communist Party will be the mass party of socialism. (Haven't read Dennis' report.) People talk about a new party now. Are they throwing the Communist Party away? Well, I'm not. We can fight the Devil himself. I get discouraged, too, because thousands have left us and we are isolated. We can win many people back with a new, correct policy.

Look at our comrades in China. They were almost wiped out, and they fought clear across the whole country. We haven't seen anything yet. A new depression will come and new giant struggles are ahead.

We must concentrate on the industrial workers. In time, they

will come to the Communist Party for answers.

Many members blame our party leaders for all the mistakes we have made. Our sectarian approach since World War II stemmed from the idea that fascism was upon us, and we were in a last-ditch struggle. I think most of our members believed this.

Most letters blamed all our ills on mistakes we have made. This in itself is a mistake. The capitalist class made a giant assault to wipe us off the map. They have failed. Many of our errors resulted from fighting this prolonged attack on many sides.

New national leaders should come from industrial workers, men and women who are closer to the people. We need young people—from 21 to 40 in top leadership.

On the cult of the individual: the charges made by Khrushchev seem to be true. No one has disproved them. The whole speech rocked me from top to bottom. The explanations offered by the Soviet leaders don't impress me at all. There must be more beneath the surface, not yet revealed. They haven't explained the killing of Jewish people since 1946, and the suppression of Jewish culture as "cosmopolitanism."—J. P.

A Special Proposal

Editor, Daily Worker:

If a careful examination is made of the gigantic leap forward of the Negro people's movement during the past thirty years, it will be found that new prospects have been opened up for raising the quality of what Negroes want, and the question arises: what is the future of this movement, and what is the responsibility of American Marxists to it, but particularly the obligations of Negro Marxists?

It goes without saying that this leap forward of the Negro people, surrounded as they are and have been for generations by seemingly insurmountable obstacles, is due in the first place to their own heroic and intensive struggles for their rights. But it is also a fact, admitted by all fair-minded people and progressive and democratic forces generally and acknowledged, some times grudgingly, by those who have been and are the main obstacle in the path of their advance, that struggles led by the Communist Party for Negro rights over the past thirty years have been a major factor in the victories this movement is now achieving.

If there is to be further liberalizing advances of the Negro people and progress of the American people as a whole, American Marxists will and must have a hand in it, notwithstanding the anti-Communist drive of a core reactionaries who want to hold back progress, nor the contrary judgment of honest people who otherwise judge correctly the modern course of history.

But there are many honest people among Negroes them-

selves who say that Negro Marxists have no voice in formulating the general policies of the Communist Party, and its Negro policy especially. There are indeed shortcomings in the Communist Party, and as a Negro Communist, I am aware of the weaknesses that cause skepticism among many Negroes.

I am therefore setting forth a definite proposal to be acted upon by the forthcoming national convention of the Communist Party.

Whereas, The Communist Party has played an honorable and historic role in raising high the banner of struggle for Negro liberation,

Whereas, The Communist Party has helped to unite the working class and democratic people's movement for progress with that of the Negro peoples' movement in the interest of their rights and liberation, and

Whereas, The Communist Party, basing itself on Marxism-Leninism, advances the struggle for socialism in the best interest of all the American people.

I therefore propose that—
The forthcoming national convention of the Communist Party consider and take action on establishing a new post in its national leadership to be known as a Deputy Secretaryship, headed by a Negro comrade, on an equal basis and with equal authority of other national secretaryships.

JAMES W. FORD.

An Indigenous Communist Party

Baltimore.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Although much that Khrushchev said about Stalin in his report before the closed session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, appeared to this writer to be intemperate, poorly balanced, long-winded, and melodramatic, nevertheless the CP has and will continue to benefit by the attack upon the "cult of the individual."

The "cult of the individual" expressed itself in the Communist Party of the United States chiefly by a too uncritical acceptance of every twist and turn in Soviet policy and by an unwillingness to engage independently in a constructive criticism of developments in Russia during the Stalin period.

We felt that at all costs we had to defend everything that went on there; one may say that we took a decidedly utopian view of that great country.

A leading lesson the CPUSA can learn from the struggle against the "cult of the individual" is the importance of building an indigenous Communist Party. If we had done that all along we would have a greater mass following today.

If we look back we can see that the activities we engaged in that arose out of the American scene are precisely those that have been most successful and

about which we can be most proud: for example, the struggle in behalf of the Scottsboro boys, the help in organizing the CIO, the courage of our leaders while under Smith Act persecution, the struggle against McCarthyism. These activities made us friends among broad groups.

But the unseemly haste with which the CPUSA endorsed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact alienated many decent people. The pact may or may not have been wise: the point is that the CPUSA should have felt no duty to compel all members to consider this pact a fine thing.

If we develop a truly indigenous CP we have everything to gain. It is no accident that the two Communist parties outside Russia that are strongest are those that have been most national, namely the Chinese and the Yugoslavian. These parties are so vigorous because they have forged the closest ties with the broadest sections of their peoples in conformity with their particular national traditions, values, and ideals. And, moreover, they have excellent relations with Moscow, based on mutual respect and equality.

Dennis' report to the National Committee CPUSA touches in a beneficial if rather sketchy manner upon the need to develop a more imaginative concept of American socialism. (pp 44-48).

As a corollary of building an indigenous party we should insist on doing our own housecleaning. We do not presume to tell the Communist parties of other countries how to go about putting their houses in order, nor should we submit to having others tell us how to clean up. Never again should we have a deviation disposed of by reading an article by Duclos!

In closing, this writer would like to comment on the phrase, "cult of the individual." This phrase may be admirably suited to the Russian temperament and environment, but it doesn't suit the American scene. Recently our local union voted its long-time president out of office. The main gripe against him was his tendency to want to run the whole show. But if I had said to a fellow steelworker that "so-and-so is addicted to the cult of the individual" he would have looked at me in surprise and considered that I had lost my marbles. . . .

Steelworker.

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Knight Refuses Ride on Nixon Band Wagon

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Aug. 8—Gov. Goodwin J. Knight continues to resist the concerted pressure of state Republican bigwigs to push him aboard their Richard Nixon bandwagon.

The GOP brass, with Sen. William Knowland calling the tune, went on record here Sunday for Nixon's renomination as Vice President.

The notable exception among the "name" Republicans who managed in one way or another to laud the former California Senator in two days of state GOP politicking here was Knight.

Knight "did" it by simply not mentioning Nixon.

It's no secret that there's no love lost between the governor and the bellicose young Vice President. Two years ago they tangled in a fight over the state Vice-Chairmanship of the GOP with Knight winning out after Knowland threw his weight to the governor's side.

This time, however, Knowland is all for Nixon as a running mate again with President Eisenhower. So he made sure that the GOP in Nixon's home state was on record for his renomination.

But that didn't stampede Knight.

The Hearst press, which seemed disturbed by the governor's failure to jump on the Nixon bandwagon, cornered him and asked

him pointblank if he would have any comment on the action of the state central committee backing Nixon.

"No, I have nothing to say," the governor replied.

Clint Mosher, the political editor of *The San Francisco Examiner*, wrote:

"Knight has long had a personal dislike for the so-called Nixon bloc of the party, a bloc whose members he believes have always been cold toward him."

Some observers saw a connection between Knight's labor ties and his aversion to Nixon. The *San Francisco News* today carried a page one head, "Labor behind Knight's dim view of Nixon."

Knight was quoted as saying he had "no facts" to show that an Eisenhower-Nixon ticket could carry California.

Other Nixon opponents in GOP ranks predicted earlier that an Eisenhower-Nixon ticket would carry California for the Democrats.

A wire was sent to Nixon pledging the allegiance of 76 Republican state senators, assemblymen and candidates.

Lending credence to the labor angle on Knight was the fact that among the few GOP legislators who did not sign was Assemblyman Thomas Maloney of San Francisco, who has always enjoyed close ties with organized labor.