

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Measuring the Soviet Marxists

Editor, Daily Worker:

While it is now accepted that the Soviet leadership can make mistakes, I have seen no discussion of the unwritten law, in Communist circles, that they are necessarily the world's best Marxists. It is this assumption, I believe, along with the old habit of not contradicting them, and particular of defense of the Soviet Union dating to the period of capitalist encirclement, that explain, to me, the European parties' endorsement of the self-serving resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the Stalin question.

It is not Marxist, but idealist, to hold that Soviet Marxists must be the best in the world. In a certain sense, they can be the poorest, and get away with it in practice. By this data, it is not their Marxism that makes Soviet socialism, but the existence of socialism in the USSR that requires them to be Marxist. The only alternative is a return to capitalism, which even the Nazi invaders and the Harvard Research Center investigators of the thinking of Soviet D.P.s concluded the Soviet people would not countenance.

The problem facing today's Soviet leaders is practical management, which, incidentally, is what Marxists have always stated would be the function of leadership ultimately. As practical managers in home and foreign affairs, the record of Khrushchev and associates is absolutely brilliant. But the fact that theory not only is not their great concern, but that such thinking was suppressed under Stalin's traditional Russian absolute monarchy, as Mikoyan and Khrushchev have admitted, explains why there can be such gross backwardness as Furtseva and Khrushchev have displayed on the Jewish question.

Is it not a fact that the 20th Congress did not originate, but merely swung in line, with the concept of legal transition to socialism developed in Communist parties in capitalist countries, including the United States, over the past 20 years? If Marx could correctly analyze our Civil War better than American Marxists of his day, why cannot foreign Marxists today analyze aspects of the socialist USSR better than the same Soviet leaders who admittedly strayed so far at least on the Cult of Stalin?

WILLIAM MANDEL.

## Some Suggestions For Improvement

Editor, Daily Worker:

Here are some suggestions for improving the Daily Worker and The Worker content.

I think we should carry more stories of the "human interest" type. Instead of writing a story about the cost of living going up and giving statistical material from the Bureau of Labor Statistics why not assign a reporter to write-up how a worker's family lives under the high cost of living. Give the cost of their food, tell the kind of food they have to buy, tell about their rent and other expenses and how much or little they might have to spend. It's put this in human terms and then include the statistics if we want to. Good family pictures are fine also to go along with this feature.

Do this with other issues as well. I agree with one writer to the editor who said that we should write more about issues which directly affect working people. Our must be a popular paper.

Another suggestion: I would like to know more about people's movements in China, Africa, Italy, France. How about

some good, detailed features and pictures about these? How about copying editorials from papers from these countries sometimes—not necessarily left-wing papers (but certainly these too)—especially when they are controversial, when they may agree or disagree with us vehemently. This will add interest and flavor to our paper.

I know you have been trying to get material from the South. We have some writers who live in the South who I am sure would be willing to write features and spot news. Organize these into action.

Today we must think in terms of not what can we do for the South but what can we do in the South for ourselves. The South wants no "missionaries." We want no "cultured" persons to come down to show "civilization" to the "barbarous" South.

The truth is (a truth many in the North and West still do not understand) that many whites and Negroes are already acting for freedom here—that the only "barbarians" are the few, but powerful Dixiecrats who are simultaneously harming the South and the North.

The time to laugh at poor whites as "yokels" and "hillbillies" must be over if we mean to bring freedom to our nation. The poor whites are very ready to work for freedom and they must not be confused with Klansmen.

Best wishes,  
A White Worker of the South.

## Pounding An Open Door

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have been disturbed by a number of letters which merely complain and don't add anything constructive to the discussion. Two such letters appear in "Speak Your Piece" for July 17.

R. U. complains that discussion on the Negro question in "our upper circles" has not reached the rank and file. This writer refers to the "wealth of experience" of those living in Negro communities. Further: "We in the rank and file should be given a chance to discuss the pros and cons of this question. . . ."

This reader is pounding on an open door! He or she wrote a letter. It was published. Why didn't the writer also take the opportunity to tell about local experiences and try to generalize on them?

Manny G. on the same page fumes at Max Weiss, but does not offer any specific disagreements.

You don't have to use impressive formulations in order to speak your piece. A good letter does take hard work and struggle to work out a new idea. Giving everybody hell is no substitute.

—H. K.

## A non-Communist Lauds the Party

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am only a youth, a worker, and do not have many years of experience under my belt. I do have a driving thirst to understand the world about me. I have come to the conclusion that one must start at the very bottom, at the roots, and proceed to make a complete turnover. In so doing one must battle the very pettiness of men around one, the self-seeking opportunism of individual workers and, of course, at all times the bosses.

I cannot organizationally accept the responsibilities of Communist Party membership. For the comrades themselves are only human and tend to ape the caste system of bourgeois organization.

Socialism will indeed be here when one will be accepted for

one's self, for one's contribution to the general welfare, for one's self. I have read as many of the Marxist publications as I have been able to obtain, and the stature of the Communist leaders in this country, and throughout the world, is to me remarkable.

Here we have the living replica of future Communist men and women in a Communist society. Indeed, what a wonderful place for our children to grow up in.

A BAKERY WORKER.

## Businessmen And Consciences

Editor, Daily Worker:

I note that eleven prominent American business-men have flown to Russia in an effort to convince the Russians: "that they shouldn't be painted as oppressive masters of the laboring people." Could it be that these wealthy men suffer from a guilty conscience? It might be interesting to know what methods will be used in the effort to convince the Russians. Will films be shown of the mansions and the fine cars that are owned by these business tycoons? And will the shrewd operations (crooked is a better term) that built their fortunes, be highlighted?

—H. A.

## "Blind Groping, Stumbling Course"

Editor, Daily Worker:

Following extended group discussions and study of the editorials, reports, articles and letters appearing in "Speak Your Piece" I am moved to express my disagreement with the disastrous and negative course being followed by the Communist Party's leadership during the past ten years, as well as the blind groping, stumbling course of the present.

I ask how any working-class political party can be the vanguard of the working class, or even command respect, and still condone and only half-heartedly criticize the stupidity of the left sectarian errors of the past and present. Must we now forget these errors—and the crimes (long concealed) of Stalin—and continue with a leadership that says, with tongue in cheek, that they are sorry and it won't happen again.

We in the Northeast have had occasion to be particularly aware of the leadership errors of the past and present. The last five years has seen the influence of our American Marxist movement drop to microscopic proportions as one left sectarian error or wrong estimate after another was made by a bureaucratic leadership, who refused to listen to the voice of the rank and file. They indeed failed to acknowledge that such a voice existed. Today these self same individuals continue to be the ones who pull the strings that make the puppets dance.

I say we must not continue to make half-hearted, sense of duty, self-criticisms and continue on the same road to ruin and self destruction. As Marxists we must acknowledge our mistakes and go forth on the true road to socialism, taking with us all people who recognize the desirability of socialism and are willing to struggle for its establishment in a world of peace.

The main weapon in this struggle should be the strengthening of the principles of democratic centralism and the removal of all bureaucratic leaders of the past.

I would also praise the editor of a paper who has the courage to print letters such as this and others. Such a practice is unparalleled in my reading of the Daily Worker over the past years.

—C. C.

## Fast "Too Polite"

To Lyons

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have just concluded reading Howard Fast's reply to Eugene Lyons and I find it "full of sound and fury" but, in this case, signifying something. And that "something" in my opinion is a real petty bourgeois self-righteousness that really is quite uninhibited in expression.

Fast falls all over himself to be polite to that arch-cynic and anti-Sovieteer to such a degree that he will not criticize him directly but prefers to make rather oblique and guarded statements about the past and present of this individual, Lyons. To do otherwise, he feels would be "name calling."

I think that Fast is confusing what our attitude should be towards people, who while differing with us on many, even basic, issues, are in the same broad camp of progressive humanity, with what our attitude should be with such social wreckers as Lyons is.

It is interesting to note that among those from whom he learned socialism Fast makes no mention of Lenin. Perhaps he doesn't think that the figure of this great revolutionary can't stand beside such relatively respectful persons as the Hebrew prophets and even Marx and Engels, who wrote about revolution but never had the opportunity to actually crush bourgeois rule as Lenin did.

As for Fast's complete 110 percent condemnation of Stalin as the embodiment of all manner of evil, this simply doesn't stand up to an objective appraisal of what Stalin contributed to world socialism. Maybe even a breast-beating Fast could learn something from many of the writings of Stalin although he claims that he learned nothing at all from him.

CONSTANT READER

## Soviet Explanation

Not "Adequate"

Editor, Daily Worker:

According to the article by William Z. Foster in the Daily Worker of July 25, and the statement of the National Committee, Communist Party, USA, in the next days' paper, it would seem that the leadership of the Communist Party, USA, finds that the recent resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union gives an adequate explanation of the mistakes made in the So-

viet Union during the Stalin era.

Neither I, nor many others I have spoken to, agree. The main brunt of their explanation is that the "cult of the individual" and the "lack of democracy" developed because of capitalist encirclement and the difficulties of building socialism in one country. But the Soviet Union was able to allow much freer and more democratic discussion from 1917 to 1927, including a referendum on the Trotskyite position, precisely when it was weakest, most attacked, and had not even begun to build socialism.

It was in 1934 when collectivization had already largely taken place and the industrial foundation for the building of socialism had been laid that democratic practices were largely abandoned.

The Soviet statement says further that the party leaders could not come out openly against Stalin because the people would not have understood. Of course they would not have understood in 1950 after 15 years of adulation in which this leadership participated! But why could it not have been nipped in the bud in 1934 before 70 percent of the Central Committee was murdered by the actions, supposedly, of one man?

Later the CPSU statement says 'Soviet democracy not only proclaims but materially insures the right . . . to participation in state affairs, freedom of speech, press and conscience, a real possibility for the development of personal ability, and all other democratic rights and freedoms.' By other statements of Soviet leaders, Soviet democracy did not in practice guarantee the people the above-mentioned rights. In fact, they were practically non-existent.

Last, but not least, there is no mention whatsoever as to how the shocking destruction of Jewish cultural life came about. I would also like to ask why Eugene Dennis has not demanded to know why his remarks on the Jewish question were deleted from his article as reprinted in the Soviet press? Are we again, going to accept everything coming out of the Soviet Union as gospel truth? Is it important to us to find out what, basically, caused these distortions of Soviet life in order to make sure that they do not recur. It is not enough quietly to "repair the fences" as on the Jewish question, without going to the root of why these things happened.

—T. M.

# Labor Paper Decries Political Job Bias

OAKLAND, Calif., Aug. 2.—Americans "must increasingly ask themselves," an AFL labor editor declares, whether they can, in their own interest, permit the discharge of workers on the ground of communism.

Louis Burgess, editor of the East Bay Labor Journal, official AFL organ here, declares in his July 20 issue that the concept of denying employment for economic or political belief could be extended easily to "New Dealers, in short, labor people, and most Democrats."

Cause for the comment, carried in Burgess' page one column, was the recent effort of the American Legion to prevent actress Gale Sondergaard from appearing in a play in Philadelphia.

"So far," wrote Burgess, "the only charge against Gale Sondergaard is that she pleaded the Fifth Amendment when asked whether she was a Communist. But let us assume she had openly confessed

herself a Communist, should she be debarred from appearing as an actress?"

"That is the question which Americans must increasingly ask themselves now that the Supreme Court has ruled that even in government posts it is the 'sensitive' ones that must be watched, not the routine minor ones. And if an actress recites lines written by someone else, is hers a 'sensitive' post in the entertainment world?"

Burgess notes that in unions many members who will oppose a Communist running for office in a union will not challenge the right of a Communist to belong.

"The standards of judgment in these matters by Legion leaders," he declares, "are too often 'preposterous.'"