

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Can't Defend Aggression

CLEVELAND.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I've just finished reading Lester Rodney's article on the situation in Hungary. Rodney has written the most sober article to date on this situation, in my opinion. His honest conclusions and facts are more of what we need in these times of struggle.

In our section of the Communist Party there are heated discussions in progress. But with all the apologizing for the Soviet Union's action in Hungary, I, and many others here, cannot be convinced that a grave error can be termed "protection."

Since I work in a shop, I agree with Rodney that you can't force workers to agree with our Marxist belief. In the shop here, or in Hungary or Poland, or anywhere, workers must come to understand the fight for socialism and peace in their own way, by struggle and reason.

How can I defend an act of aggression to my fellow workers? I can't and won't even though the Soviet Union is involved. We have never thrown out the Marxist theory of "self determination." Why should we do so now.

Let the Soviet leaders own up to their mistakes.

Let them remove their troops. Otherwise it will be many years before the Hungarian people will ever trust the Soviet Union.

Again I would like to say that was an excellent article, Mr. Rodney. We need more such people. I for one would like to see Mr. Rodney in the national leadership of the Party.

—Cleveland Auto Worker.

Fascist Menace

Editor, Daily Worker:

Lester Rodney prefers to believe that Hungary wasn't on the verge of becoming a nation of Fascists.

The murder and hangings of Communists and progressives, bookburnings, harassment of Jews, the secret influx across the Austrian border; Nagy's invitation to the embrace of fascism, Mindszenty, into the government, that is fascism everytime.

Rodney seems to think that if the S. U. made a mistake once then they'll always make mistakes. That is not logic.

Anyone who knows can point out where the S. U. has chosen the correct path in 10,000 instances.

It was the duty of the Red troops to march into Hungary, it was their duty for the Soviet Union, for the other Socialist countries, for Hungary itself, for the peace of the world.

The capitalist countries are trying desperately to again encircle the S. U. with hostile countries and atomic bomb bases. They are trying to subvert the Socialist countries. One of their weapons is the splitting of the progressive movement.

Rodney says, "It is only their country after all"; so was Germany under Hitler, "only their country after all" but the USSR and the U.S. marched in. Yes, we know Germany made war, but now the Soviet Union acted to prevent war.

Hitler had a strong base among the workers, using anti-

Semitism, Nordic "superiority," the red "menace," etc.

Fascism in Hungary likewise had a strong if not stronger base among the workers. They used the powerful tool of reactionary religion plus the other trademarks of fascism, including ultra nationalism.

You don't destroy fascism from minds so controlled in 11 years, especially where mistakes were made.

Rodney goes on to say "certainly the elements of facism were in the Hungarian situation."

Well, the elements of fascism were not only there, but ready to take over completely.

He mentions "a non-talkable line."

"Is it not thought-provoking," he asks, "that those who oppose the Daily Worker's editorial on Hungary will not go to any American outside of the Communist Party with their line?"

The gist of this is that we must have a rosy cozy line acceptable to anybody.

People's temper and attitudes to a great extent may go along with the newspaper hysteria of the moment. We are in the midst of that made-to-order psychology now. Remember "Poor Little Finland", when the British built the Mannerheim line.

Is a "talkable line" one that must agree with the temper of the times?

Is it one that must agree with manufacturers of this hysteria?

"Go to any American with their line?" What did the progressives do when the "Poor Little Finland hysteria" was in effect?

Twists and curves are proper to the sport of baseball, but they are not right on the road of reality.

He names a few people who left the party; what about the thousands that have stayed in? Furthermore, a person leaving the party for one disagreement is better out.

A.L.

Discussion

Held Sidetracked

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have been a reader of the Worker of 20 years—a subscriber to the Daily for almost as long, and a frequent contributor to your fund appeals. The last contribution was about three weeks ago.

I must admit that I am seriously disappointed in your paper for the first time. After initiating a much needed discussion of the status of the Socialist movement in the United States—you seem to have drawn a curtain on the subject and on discussion of the Resolution of the National Committee of the CP. You seem to have become bogged down again in the rightness or wrongness of the Soviet Union. This time in regard to Hungary.

The time is past when the Soviet Union is—or should be—the keystone of the world Socialist movement. The S. U. is a going concern, one of many Socialist states. As such, it is liable to do both wise and unwise acts.

As American Socialists it is not our province to get overly involved in the power politics of even Socialist states. We can make our contribution to world Socialism only by unlocking the forces of Socialism here in the United States.

A few months of discussion will not lay the foundations of the Socialist movement of the future, so let's stick to the task until it is accomplished.

Unless The Worker applies itself seriously to this revitalizing of American socialism, it cannot expect, or deserve, the continued support necessary to keep it going.

—GORDON M. MONROE

Discussion Which Doesn't Discuss

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have sent the following letter to the editors of Party Voice, published by the New York State Communist Party. I believe the letter will be of interest to readers of the Daily Worker:

Editors of Party Voice: The December issue (No. 8) of PV carries an article by Al Lannon in which the following paragraph occurs:

"I believe that the position taken by our Party leadership on the events in Hungary and Israel and their endorsement of the ANTI-SOVIET, ANTI-SOCIALIST POLICY OF THE EDITORS OF THE DAILY WORKER, have raised very sharply the question of the ideological corruption of this leadership." (My emphasis—A.M.)

The majority of the party leadership is "corrupt"—according to Lannon, because it supports the policy of the Daily Worker editors, which in turn is "anti-Soviet" and "anti-Socialist." The reader will notice that not once in Lannon's entire article does he quote a single sentence, phrase or word from the Daily Worker on which to base this slander.

This method, which passes for discussion, can only be designed to stop any examination of past policies of the party particularly of the last ten years. Lannon is here only carrying to its logical extreme the method inaugurated at the outset of the present discussion by a minority of the National Committee of the Party, beginning with the national chairman.

For seven years these leaders supported and helped carry through the excommunication of Tito as a "fascist." They have yet to admit and explain their own participation in this colossal blunder. Meanwhile, the very least they could do would be to think twice before proceeding to read still more people out of the Marxist movement.

ALAN MAX.

Class Position On Civil Liberties

Editor, Daily Worker:

The issue of civil liberties has been debated with some heat and—I believe—rather abstractly. What should be the position of the Communist Party on this issue? The issue needs more perspective. First and foremost, I think we would all agree that we should have a class position. Let us now examine some aspects of this.

Should we belittle our bourgeois democratic rights? Of course not. On the contrary, it is an obligation and necessity to fight to maintain and extend them. Having said this, however, is not enough.

We must set our sights class-wise and argue that under a socialist society it becomes possible to go far beyond the restrictions imposed by bourgeois democracy in the matter of civil liberties.

But I do not think that this means that the workingclass and its allies, having come to socialism through sharp class struggles against the monopolies, will then allow any and all civil liberties to the enemy of our people. This is no simple conjecture.

Let us get down to cases. Any trade unionist—and this includes all wings of the trade union leadership—will tell you that when they are organizing a shop and the boss or company issues a letter—or the foremen go around telling the workers that they should vote against the union in the coming NLRB election—the union considers this an unfair labor practice that should be prohibited. In fact, before Eisenhower's appointments to

the present Labor Board this procedure was prohibited by the previous Board. No union considers that the boss is entitled to that kind of civil liberties.

Let us not be so fast with our pens and glib with our tongues to promise "all things to all men."

Let us remember, the workingclass and its allies have some things to say on this subject and they should be consulted at the time and place the situation arises.

This is the first attempt at writing a letter to you in the 20 years I've read and supported the paper.—HERMAN KLEIN.

Regular Editorials Held Unnecessary

DETROIT

Editor, Daily Worker:

As the London Daily Worker refused to publish the eyewitness reports of their own correspondent in Hungary, and as we all complain of lack of facts, why can't our paper get these reports and publish them?

Another suggestion for the paper: Why have regular editorials? I read the paper pretty thoroughly, but as with my other daily paper, I don't find the editorials worth my time. I think the position of the paper is made sufficiently clear through the handling of news items and through feature writers, and except in the case of issues where the position of the paper must be distinguished from that of individual staff or other writers, where it is urgent to organize some action, or to clarify something that is particularly complicated.

Editorials should not be written routinely to fill a certain space. Then more space can be given to news and features.

This doesn't mean that every news article should be an editorial. Rather, if our position is grounded on facts, then the facts can be allowed to speak for themselves. That is the secret of objective reporting which still makes a point.

I think the paper is doing a pretty good job and is improving. Lester Rodney's series from Clinton is excellent, and his statement in the Hungary discussion was a landmark. Virginia Gardner's work on Strontium-90 is very good.

You still have much to learn from the National Guardian and the Nation about objective, readable and effective journalism.

At present the Daily Worker is the source of leadership for our section of the Left. The Hungary discussion has revealed more clearly than anything else a crisis in the CP leadership, when comrades like Dennis, Foster, Ben Davis, Allen, and even Aptheker, veteran leaders and scholars, are not leading but attempting to hold back the movement for fear it is moving too fast and too far; grimly defending their position, as it seems, behind a barricade of phrases and formulas, in which there is no vitality, no creativity, no sensitivity—these qualities are found in "Speak Your Piece" and in the Lester Rodney article.

The danger which these leaders fear is the lesser danger; but the danger of new Hungaries is really hair-raising. And in order to forestall such dangers, all we have to offer is our alertness to warn the comrades of these countries, for there is evidently a lot of corruption and rigidity in the socialist parties and governments.

I hope you will be able to take up the Lifeline idea again soon.

DETROIT READER

Collision Of Two Paths

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Editor, Daily Worker:

When "Lillian Gates Answers Benjamin Davis," as the Dec. 7 headline enlightened us, it struck me that the former failed to pursue a fertile field of ideas opened up by the latter.

In my opinion, Ben Davis contributed new and much-needed thinking concerning this reaction, echoes of which reverberate through our movement. Alan Max's "Hungary, Oct. 24" article was its epitome; and Les Rodney's its more complete popularization. Certainly current happenings (as of Dec. 12) add to the difficulties of lessening its impact. So I can't help but feel that Mr. Davis' superlative expressions toward such ideology overshadowed, and detracted from, his really basic clarity.

Toward Mrs. Gates' letters, I am critical especially of political content. However, remembering that her single discussion article dealt exclusively with the problem of "approach," I felt that here too she failed to set a good example.

For instance, she charges that the Davis letter "seriously distorts" her main point. To me the word "distorts" implies an elements of deliberations. If she he said "misunderstands," then she would have avoided the inductive tone.

Even if Davis didn't recite chapter and verse; I think that he seized upon a certain subjective thinking well deserving the correction that he supplied by pointing out analogies in American life.

Now I want to advance an idea of my own, prompted by Mrs. Gates' comment that "the very existence of capitalism is responsible for all the weaknesses of Socialism." Such a generalization, she wisely notes, is not self-criticism because it leaves out the "specific features."

"And in the Hungarian situation," she is quoted as saying ungrammatically, "the specific features were that the tragic outcome there were rooted in the errors." She thus opposes the view of James Allen, who places first responsibility on the threat of counter-revolution encouraged by Washington. Isn't there a possible reconciliation of these two positions?

To start off my idea, I must give one more quote. Alan Max summed up Nov. 29 by saying: "It was no quirk of fate that the Soviet guns pointed in the wrong direction on Oct. 24. This was only a tragic climax of an eight years policy of errors."

"Quirk of fate" in materialistic language means "accident." But how do we define "accident?" I recall a dialectical definition that I think has bearing on this subject. It goes something like this: An accident is what happens when there is a meeting of two previously separate paths, the direction of each of which was inherently pre-determined!

The "specific factors" leading up to the Hungarian situation followed two paths: the imperialist path and the Socialist path, both with inner-motivated features of their own; and yet not separated from each other's influence.

Both paths had the heaviest, most explosive traffic. Which was the main highway and which the by-road needn't alter the extent of the ensuing collision. But the repair could take place on BOTH paths SIMULTANEOUSLY!

—GERTRUDE KOWAL

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