

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Self Criticism In Jeff School

Editor, Daily Worker:

The appeal for Jefferson School attendance in a letter from a student in Wednesday's Daily is all to the good. But his statement that there "lies the answer to many of the questions these half-baked Marxists need answered" relieves the school of its share of the responsibility for having circulated the past picture of the USSR, Lysenko, Yugoslavia, Stalin, etc., from which we all suffered.

The school, too, needs to re-examine itself most critically, and needs the help of public criticism in so doing. Perhaps its students, who are not irresponsible people, could organize one (or more) public gatherings to discuss its shortcomings, theoretical and otherwise, and offer suggestions for eliminating them. The faculty and officers should by all means be invited to such a meeting, but it seems to me that they should not participate in organizing it, as, with the best of intentions, that sort of thing always tends to reduce free expression of criticism.

-E. F.

Urges Fortright Position on Issues

Editor, Daily Worker:

Ring Lardner is so correct when he makes the point that the American Communist Party should re-examine itself. It is by far more necessary than to spend time discussing the 20th Congress of the CPUSA of which we know so little.

Let us examine the errors made, when individuals were expelled from the CP for being critical of those who subsequently were expelled or worse turned out to be stoolpigeons, etc. There is a great deal of room for self-criticism and general criticism of the CPUSA.

To gain the respect of the American worker it must be earned by taking a forthright position on the many issues of the day. The C.P. should have its own candidates and its own program and not the excuse that the American workers are not ready for this. The workers are not only ready but in many instances are ahead of the CP, but are unable to get anywhere for they lack leadership.

It would be better to go down to temporary defeat and come back fighting than to lose by default and thereby disillusion and dishearten the American workers.

HARRY ZUMOFF

PS: I think the Daily and the Sunday Worker have improved

considerably since I first started reading same back in 1938. Rodney is still my favorite but the others are OK too. In fact I like Rodney well enough to contribute another five through his column.

Editorials Commended

Editor, Daily Worker:

I feel that the Communist Party, has contributed most positively to the public discussion now taking place on the 20th Congress through Eugene Dennis' article "Dennis Answers Questions on Roads to Socialism." Bringing to the attention of the S. W. and D.W. readers the positive and negative results that were registered at the Congress of the CPSU will be extremely helpful at this time. May I suggest that the CPUSA makes a special effort to issue a popular written pamphlet (as a give-away or a penny price) which would bring to the American people the content of the 20th Congress that is overwhelmingly positive. The American people are hungry for truth about the Soviet Union.

Permit me now to congratulate you for such an excellent editorial on the Rajk case and your reply to James Allen's letter of April 12, as well as your prompt reaction to the revelations of former anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. However, it seems to me that in your editorial of April 13th, "Grievous Deeds," you make concessions to Mr. Allen's position.

In the Rajk editorial, you correctly state "We . . . have every right to demand that the investigations in Hungary and the Soviet Union shall be full and complete and shall bring to book those responsible for injustice, no matter how high their position was or is." (This is the position with which Mr. Allen basically disagrees). In your editorial on the Soviet Union's violation of the socialist principle of race and national equality, although indignation and anger is expressed and you question "what has been done to punish all those responsible?" and when you add in bold print, "We register our strong dissatisfaction that the Soviet leaders have not offered any explanation of what took place," I feel that your position is no more as firm.

Vile anti-Semitism that culminated in murder took place in the Soviet Union. Let the demand for justice be as firm here as in the Rajk case.

-H.P.

On Peaceful Transition

Editor, Daily Worker:

The American road to socialism was discussed in your paper both by Max Weiss and Eugene Dennis. The immediate thought is that the approach smells too much of Browder — necessity forcing monopoly capital to give up its power and ill-gotten wealth.

It is conceivable because of the stalemate in the armament race that American capital would think twice before launching a world war. Does that preclude a civil war? Would Wall Street wait until the progressive forces unite to strip it of the control of the government?

Credulity has fortunately been shattered by Browderism and more so by the recent shocking reevaluation about another hero, Stalin.

More facts and more discussion please on the peaceful transition to socialism, especially in the stronghold of entrenched capitalism.—D. K.

Hasty Action On Party Policy

Editor, Daily Worker:

The new official Communist position that a socialist America should have complete civil liberties for all, including opposition parties peacefully seeking restoration of capitalism, put forth in the Daily Worker articles by the Party's National Educational Director on April 5 and 6, is a deep-going change which many will approve. But one wonders what right leaders have to arrogate to themselves alone a change in the attitude toward parties and state held by Communists for 40 years.

Any who differ with this policy will find themselves arguing against the Party line. I hope this will no longer mean expulsion, but it certainly means that questioners or opponents face the handicap of opposing authority in an organization whose members are firm believers in a disciplined policy.

From the viewpoint of inner democracy, the important thing is that no publication indicated, until a brief news item in the Worker on a lecture by Max Weiss a few weeks ago, that the formulation of a new position on this particular question was under way.

An excellent opportunity to deal with this problem democratically was offered by questions posed by Alexander Leslie in last November's Monthly Review, answered by Political Affairs in the current Monthly

Review along the lines stated more fully in the Worker.

A democratic procedure would have been to reprint the questions in Political Affairs and the Worker, ask the readers for their opinions, formulate answers accordingly, but not label them as Party policy until action by a forthcoming Party convention.

Even a referendum would not be out of order on so basic a long-term policy, not requiring decision in a hurry. It can still be held. Perhaps it will be, if the Communist National Committee realizes that this latest example of making policy over the heads of the membership is an instance illustrating why many regard the CP as fundamentally undemocratic in manner of operation. They don't think an undemocratic party can carry out democratic objectives, and find this confirmed by the news about Stalin.

-C. D.

Women's Status

Editor, Daily Worker:

The current discussions in your letter columns have come as fresh spring cleaning into a musty house. And now that the house is being put in order, let us consider woman's place in it anew. I think we must recognize not only that there is a "Woman Question," but that we do not have all the answers.

There is much to reexamine in past attitudes. Male supremacy has affected both sexes. And the husband who helps dry the dishes may still be refusing to help his wife develop politically—or still unwilling to learn from her.

When we look at the heroic role that Negro women — and white women, too—are performing in our country and all over the world, it is clear that our movement is lagging. It seems to me that if progressive women are not by now in positions of leadership, there is something wrong with the leadership and the members.

I used to be bitter about "token" representation; now I feel that a token is at least better than a total blank. Yet trade unions and the most advanced political groupings still act as if "ladies auxiliaries" were the order of the day. If women are not ready to take positions of leadership, let them learn on the job. How else will they get the experience?

New economic surveys need to be made and new programs planned: the role of women in this country is undergoing a

vast change. We are no longer a nation predominantly of housewives and working "girls." Today, most working women are over 35; many mothers of young children work at least part-time — and so do grandmothers.

There is now much talk about being less arrogant and listening to what other people have to say. Well, women are neither the second sex nor a gift from the sea — they are people to listen to and learn from. And incidentally, that Anne Lindbergh book has a potent appeal for all women—including progressives if they would examine it!

A CONTINUING READER.

Capital Punishment

Editor, Daily Worker:

Current discussion points up the need for balanced criticism plus self-criticism. I know people who have quit the Communist Party because of dogmatic, unreasoning people whose actions were undemocratic and who thought their own words were the final (and only) answer. "Sectarian" or "pure" principles generally lead to sectarian action—in a vacuum.

I have always been against capital punishment, but I never spoke out. Many non-Party people I met have also indicated great loathing for the legal taking of human life. But I was unclear. I never questioned or thought it through.

There has been no discussion on capital punishment on any level of the Party, as far as I can ascertain. Aside from the fact that a principled stand on this evil opens possibilities to new paths of work—we owe it to ourselves to deal with questions of this nature. Marxists stand for all of humanity being nurtured, developed, strengthened. We can only aid in propelling the forward mass movement of all people if we ourselves are truly humane, creative, and approach problems honestly. We should overhaul and improve (thus strengthen) the means and methods of democratic centralism. I know we will.—R. E.

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NO TRIAL FOR FOSTER!

By BENJAMIN J. DAVIS

THE ATTEMPT of the Department of Justice to bring William Z. Foster to trial—in reckless disregard of his life—shows the unscrupulous and vindictive lengths to which the Administration will go to suppress ideas.

For Foster, like all the other victims of Smith Act indictments, is not only innocent, he is an extremely sick man.

Since 1948, Foster has had two trumped-up indictments hanging over his head; one under the conspiracy section of the Smith Act, the other under the membership clause. Government doctors found in 1948 that Foster could not stand trial without endangering his life. Eight times since, they've made the same findings.

The basis of these findings was that Foster was suffering from a complicated heart ailment, that there was no possibility of his improvement, and

that it was bound to get progressively worse. The doctors concluded from their own diagnosis that even the strain of trial might have fatal consequences for Foster.

It takes no medical genius to realize from this that if Foster couldn't stand trial in 1948, he is even less able to stand one now, eight years later. But in flagrant disregard of medical science and of the stubborn facts of Foster's deteriorated physical condition, Attorney-General Brownell proposes to force him to stand trial anyhow. The gimmick is that Foster could supposedly stand a so-called two or three hours a day in court, although everyone knows this is a mere cover-up to softsoap the public.

ACTUALLY, to force Foster to trial is just plain attempted murder.

A trial for Foster is not just a

question of making him a little sicker, or a little worse. In certain extremely mild cardiac cases, conceivably, this might be so. But Foster has a long, widely-known cardiac history dating from the '30's. He has been fighting for his life for more than 25 years, causing the most severe restrictions upon his physical activity.

Even since 1948, when he was adjudged physically unable to stand trial, he has had several acute and dangerous breakdowns.

Foster, a leader of the workers and chairman of the Communist Party, has lived the life of a worker, who is hard pressed indeed when serious health problems arise. Millions of American workers find that even heart ailments and other diseases are class angled, that they cannot afford either the expense, medical care or leisure to recover or function. Only the rich can afford this.

Communists and labor leaders are today languishing in prison—among them Jacob Mindel, Pettis Perry, Will Weinstone and others—with serious heart ailments which are aggravated by the tensions of prison life. Others like Andy Onda and John Steuben are incapacitated by heart ailments—which the Government cynically proposes to cure by jailing or deporting them.

BUT NOT ONLY has Foster had to grapple with a dangerous heart condition, he, like many others, has been the target of frequent government harassments on trumped-up social security accusations, not to mention other contemptible kinds of hounding. The multiplicity of forced examinations he has undergone is only another form of persecution by the government—persecution by examination. For the last four years this has

been at the hands of the Republican administration, which is indecently trying to make every bit of political capital out of the President's cardiac troubles.

Of course, the main reason for this murderous attempt on Foster's life is his continued contributions to the cause of peace and democracy, to Negro rights and to labor—his passionate love of people, of socialism and his hatred of capitalism. High-placed reactionaries who are whooping it up for war and also lynchers, racists and Eastlands are left to menace the American people in open defiance of the Constitution, although they've broken enough laws to spend the rest of their days in prison.

The Eisenhower-Brownell government must be held responsible for Foster's life, as well as for the safety of all Smith Act, and Taft-Hartley victims whom the administration has thrown into jail, deported or persecuted.