

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

On Letters In the Past

Brooklyn, N. Y.
Editor, Daily Worker:

"A Reader" in Tuesday's DW says that he used to be depressed at the apparent uniformity of opinion of letter-writers to the paper. Wouldn't it be only honest on your part to admit that the uniformity was not so complete as it seemed; that letters criticizing the paper or the movement were not printed as often as laudatory ones? I used to think that perhaps I was the only one who had sent a number of letters to the paper on various occasions, only to find that the critical ones were never published, while the others were, albeit in severely altered form. But now since the columns of our paper have been opened to both kinds, I read of others with the same experience. Since this is surely no coincidence, I think the editors of the DW would do well to comment.

One of the biggest lessons to be learned from recent criticisms, I think, is the burning necessity for a tremendous change in our attitudes toward theory. A firm grasp of theory is the best deterrent to dogmatism, and only in an atmosphere of dogmatism can there arise the blind following of a demigod. A party with a living grasp of theory cannot by definition follow anyone or anything blindly and uncritically, and cannot as a matter of course greet a new theoretical formulation by a revered leader with just a campaign of popularization, instead of critical examination. A criticism of the Jefferson School is in order here, for in past years, as soon as a new theory was expounded by Stalin or other leaders, it was immediately made the subject of a new course in exposition, rather than analysis, and students felt strongly that they could not with full freedom express their doubts or disagreements in class. This atmosphere of dogmatism may well be one of the causes for the decline in registration, although certainly not the only one.

Brooklyn Subscriber.

Summer Soldier

New York.
Editor, Daily Worker:

I find Jesus Colon's column and Howard Fast's consistently inspiring; particularly the latter's remarks on capital punishment

which I have always opposed on religious and humanitarian grounds.

Another point I wish to reiterate is this: the "breast-beating" and soul-searching, criticism and self-criticism will have the effect of bringing many "new" people into and closer to the Communist Party and the left-wing of the "movement," which even without direct socialist help and guidance is showing greater inclinations than ever of late to "move"—and fast, in its own right. However, even if the country had not started stirring and the welcome self-criticism had not been going on overseas, many of the "summer soldiers and sunshine patriots" (of which I suppose I am one) would now be drawing closer to the left just the same—because the domestic and world tensions are lessening, and jails and persecution don't seem quite so inevitable these days.

Summer Soldier.

About Israel

New York.
Editor, Daily Worker:

The "Regular Reader" whose letter on Israel appears in The Daily Worker of Tuesday, April 10 evidences concern for the survival of Israel which I as a Jew cannot help but be appreciative of in the heart of a Christian.

So if I can direct that heartfelt goodwill in the direction of knowledge I shall have helped "Regular Reader" to find the truth that will set him free from the fears that beset him with regard to Communist policy in the Middle East.

His concepts of that policy and of what is going on there in general are very much in conflict with the facts as revealed in numerous issues of Jewish Life, an American-Jewish Marxist publication well worth the close perusal of an "adherent of Marxism." I have particular reference to Jewish Life of December, 1955 in which the article "Israel-Arab Crisis: The Way Out" appeared and then was reprinted in pamphlet form obtainable at any progressive book store. I also recommend the book, "Israel in Crisis" by A. B. Magil, International Publishers, and the pamphlet, "Israel and Dollar Diplomacy" by Victor Perlo, International Publishers.

Sincerely hope "Regular Read-

er" will continue his adherence to Marxism. All the above-mentioned publications are certain to be of great help to him in that regard. A Reader.

Questions on The Party

New York.
Editor, Daily Worker:

It seems to me that the current discussion may be useless unless it examines the most fundamental positions heretofore taken by the Communist Party of the United States. If we are to take a position almost indistinguishable from Jeffersonian democracy in regard to civil liberties, as Max Weiss has indicated we should, a position which grants the right of political opposition even after socialism, it presupposes a fundamentally different kind of Communist Party than that we now have. Therefore I think we must discuss such questions as these:

1. Is the principle of democratic-centralism, adopted in Czarist Russia in a time verging on revolution, the Revolution of 1905, the proper organizational principle for an American Marxist Party in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, when the basic political position, both on a world scale, and on a national basis, is completely different from that in Czarist Russia more than a half century ago?

2. Does democratic-centralism inevitably tend toward the creation of a bureaucracy that may incline toward the oppressive and tyrannical because there is not sufficient check upon it? Does the ancient American idea, present in our history since shortly after the American Revolution, of a government of checks and balances, still have validity? Is it a weakness of democratic-centralism and one-party government that it may tend to create an oppression, or stifling atmosphere, for which the cure is difficult since its cure depends upon the action of its perpetrators?

3. If we are to back, as Weiss suggests, the classic concept of civil liberties, won't we have to abandon the concept that under socialism the government has as much right to control press, literature, art and science as it has to control public health? Under American conditions and American traditions, is it not necessary for the Party to clearly declare that it does not believe

that art or science, music or literature should ever be under the control of either party or governmental bureaucracy?

4. Won't it be necessary for a reconstituted party to emphasize socialism in the U.S.A., socialism by and for the American people, a better, grander socialism than the world has ever seen, with more vigor and persistence and imagination than we have ever used before? Socialism is our reason for existence but we are almost silent about it. Can we not at last learn how to merge and constantly employ short term programs for the present with the grand goal of a socialist United States?

5. And, most important of all, should a new American Marxist Party be founded, a fresh start made, a new foundation layed for a democratic socialist movement more solidly grounded in American traditions and methods?

Our present party is devoted to the welfare, and only to the welfare, of the American people, but if the people do not believe that fact, its truth may avail little. There is such a thing as striking out. It is possible to make enough mistakes to exhaust the potentialities of an organization. But the organization, in the last analysis, is not of primary importance. It is the object of the organization that is important. The heart of the matter is socialism and the welfare of the American people. R. B.

Why Not Invite Other Socialists

Editor, Daily Worker:

As part of the present evaluation, may I offer these thoughts on the role of the Daily Worker.

Recently, it has often been said that one of the hopefuls in the new situation is the possibility of pulling together the various marxist currents to form a unified American Left.

The Daily Worker is the only socialist daily in the East. Cannot this paper pioneer in the direction of unity by offering space in its column to representatives of other marxist groups? Would not the Daily Worker better from correspondence or debate with Leo Huberman (Monthly Review), Bert Cochran (American Socialist), or Tabitha Petran (National Guardian)?

The advantages of such a move seem to me many: it would

begin the needed discussion between the "pieces" of the Left, it might help eliminate divisive questions or policies; it would make a more vibrant newspaper; it would create a new esteem for the Daily, at least among Leftists; etc. Ovod

A Program For Elections

Philadelphia.
Editor, Daily Worker:

The discussion now taking place is fine, but for one thing, there are not enough positive suggestions. Academic discussions are fine for debating societies, we have more important things to do.

May I suggest that the D. W. recommend to its readers and to the Communist Party the proposal of supporting only those candidates who will accept PUBLICLY the minimum program of fighting for the rescinding of the Taft-Hartley, Smith Act and similar vicious legislation; Positive programs to improve the lot of the American Workers; Reduction of taxes of the low income groups and higher taxes for the Oil Barons and a positive peace program. Not necessarily in the order stated. Otherwise I suggest write-in campaign of an advocate of these resolutions.

Stop supporting candidates who are the lesser of two evils. We should be tired of apologizing for the inadequacy of elected officials who were supported as the lesser of EVIL candidates.

In the April 16 issue of the National Guardian the article by Cedric Belfrage proves what I stated in my previous letter, about the workers being ahead of the vanguard. I refer to the statement regarding the British Co-Op demand to abolish conscription while the British C. P. requests reduction from two years to one year for conscription.

Lets be more positive and less negative and prove that we are correcting previous mistakes.

H. Z.

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