

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Positive Aspects

Editor, Daily Worker:

In reevaluating the work of the Communist Party, is it also permissible to cite the positive aspects, the successes which stand like shining stars above the murky clouds of sudden bewilderment and confusion?

Lest we forget—how many unions have been purged of racketeers who fed upon and bled the workers, like leeches? These same unions are now models of fairness, good wages, benefits, etc., due to splendid work planned and executed. How many huge organizations lethargically ambling along, standing for progress only in name, injected with life-blood and prodded by left-wingers, which are now on the move, to a higher level of progress?

How many reforms put through, and masses of people moved—even after the 30s, social benefits (the most glaring the social security and unemployment New Deal program). And how much influence petered down through the liberals? And if only as a spur, political parties of reaction have needed to present progressive platforms! I could go on and on and even be very explicit—for fear of hampering any of the work, however, I am talking in the abstract.

What is needed at this point is MORE Marxist-Leninist training, more ideological study—the problem is: how to bring it to the masses. How to bring it to our own followers? There is more Utopian attitude among certain groups than we realize. This intense reaction and hysteria to the knowledge recently gained of excesses during the Beria era and the blind swinging out, is a proof that where there is no theory to form a stable base, emotion

takes over: "I am disillusioned; my god has feet of clay." "Where shall I turn to now?" That is religion, not Marxism.

Events have proven that the line of the party to break out of its isolation, according to the Draft Resolution of 1952 was a correct one. The United Front program logically follows.

To reiterate—let us not lose sight of the woods for the trees.

L. A.

American Heritage

Editor, Daily Worker:

Many writers have pointed out that we should consider more carefully than we have in the past the question of each nation having to travel its own road to socialism. The question has been raised that in the U. S., the strong tradition of civil liberties will necessitate a different approach to civil liberties under socialism from that which prevailed in the Soviet Union. But I feel that it is not enough to say that we have a tradition of civil liberties.

We must understand how this came about. We must understand why certain patterns of culture exist among the American people, the good and the bad. And to do this we must study American history and culture afresh.

A renewed study of American history will tell us not only why the American people think as they do, but will show us more clearly than we understand at present, the direction in which this thinking is changing. It will provide inspiration from the glorious past.

For instance, American Marxists seem to have absorbed some of the lessons that the study of pragmatism, as the main enemy of the philosophical front, has

to teach. (I say "some of the lessons," because a pragmatic contempt for theory still plagues us).

But how much do we know of other American philosophical movements? What do we know of the fascinating group of transcendentalists (Thoreau, Emerson, et al) in the 1840s and their relation to various communist experiments at the time? How much have we learned of the great materialist traditions at the time of the Revolution which were influenced by the French mechanical materialists? How seriously have we studied the great democratic upsurge of the Jacksonian era, and so on?

Gorky said the people must know their own history, and that goes for us as well as the Russian people. We must know past history the better to make future history. I would suggest that the Jefferson School consider an intensive course of study, or institute or division, devoted to thorough study of all phases of the American heritage.

Brooklyn Subscriber.

Was War Danger Over-Estimated?

Editor, Daily Worker:

The clear breeze of discussion and self-examination that is sweeping the left is the most exciting thing that has happened in many years. Many foolish things will be said and many mistakes made, but the left will never be the same again. And a good thing.

Speaking of mistakes, it was a bit discouraging to see the "unanimous" resolution of the Communist Party national committee couched in the same dreadful jargon that has done so much harm to the party inside and out. And can it be that there was not one member who disputed the statement that the Communists "over-estimated the

war danger?"

How in the ever-loving world could anybody have over-estimated the war danger in recent years? We have indeed, as John Foster Dulles put it, been brought to the brink of war more than once. In fact, we were in one, in Korea, and we were that close to war in Indochina, Berlin and the Formosa Strait at various times that a single false move by a single trigger-happy general could have set off the atom bombs.

The great crime of the Browder period was not its false theory, but the lack of democracy (cult of the individual, if you will) that made it impossible to thrash out the right line. This did not begin or end with Browder. It seems to me to persist in some leaders, veterans of many a change in the line, who now are trying to discourage this renaissance that is taking place, and who resist facing up in detail to their actual, concrete and personal, rather than theoretical weaknesses.

No doubt the leadership would benefit from some new blood, better able to guide the party back to the realistic, but libertarian and (if you blasted theoreticians will allow me to say so) idealistic road to socialism.

J. P.

Max Gordon's Article

Editor, Daily Worker:

Max Gordon's remark in the May 10 issue seems to me useful in general but off-the-beam on two points of importance.

He writes that in "the application of the theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat to the U. S." we did not "take into account the profoundly different character of the United States

from tsarist Russia."

The theory, as I understand it, was first formulated in the "Critique of the Gotha Program," by Marx, before the experience of tsarist Russia moved forward on the stage. It was later developed out of observations of conditions internationally. As expounded in Lenin's "Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" it is seen in its proper character as a higher form of democracy than anything known under bourgeois rule.

What we failed to do here, in my humble opinion, was to explain it clearly in language our fellow-citizens would understand, especially the workers and the Negro people. One aspect of the problem has been the psychological block produced by the word "dictatorship"; we must solve that—but not by evading it. If that is what Gordon means I agree. If he is questioning the theory itself I want to know just what he does mean.

The second point: no honest person can at any time "accept uncritically everything that goes on anywhere and remains intellectually honest. Not all honest persons are Marxists, but all Marxists have got to be honest people.

Thank you for making Miss Strong's statement available. It is worthy of the highest respect and sober study.

STANLEY ARCHER

Fast's Article 'On Comparisons'

BRONX.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am gratefully appreciative of Howard Fast's article "On Comparisons." It is so wonderfully sincere, so human and understanding. It expresses my thinking and belief. —B. C.