

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Opposes Arms Race

Editor, Daily Worker:

I cannot agree with the position taken by A. B. Magil on the question of arms for Israel.

He states that Israel, like every sovereign, non-aggressive country is entitled to arms for self-defense. He also maintains for the same reason that it was correct for Czechoslovakia to sell arms to Egypt. He then calls upon the American Left to more vigorously support Israel's request for American arms.

Should war break out between Israel and Egypt one of these two countries will have been an aggressor. By no stretch of the imagination could it be considered a just war. It would not serve the interests of the people of either country.

It seems to me that should we support the sale of arms to Egypt and Israel we should be supporting an arms race, pure and simple. And arms races have never been known to lead to peace.

I agree with Magil that to support Czechoslovakian arms for Egypt and not American arms for Israel is inconsistent. But why should that lead us to encourage an arms race?

-D. M.

Socialism and Civil Liberties

Editor, Daily Worker:

In my opinion, the Soviet leadership is wrong in claiming their government is a full-fledged socialist state: socialism without democracy is simply not socialism. The nationalization (or socialization if you will) of industry is not by a long shot all there is to socialism: it is a beginning. A beginning, however, which without the simultaneous flowering of civil liberties and freedom, inevitably develops monstrous situations.

Because of the fact that capitalism has been abolished there, the Soviet Union is presently at least a force for peace, and its diplomacy for peace by the present administration has been brilliant and of benefit to the whole world. That industrialization and the abolition of the feudal landlord system has raised the standards of living of the peasants and workers is, I believe, also true. But along with this has been the sorry fact that the Marxist leadership failed completely—never seemed really interested—in imbuing the country, not to speak of themselves, with an understanding of and respect for civil rights and what is known generally as the Rights of Man.

The fact that not one Soviet voice was heard around the

world protesting the frameups and murders of the Jewish writers is a fact horrifying to dwell upon. It is not that courage generally is lacking in Soviet citizens: they had more than necessary to defend their soil; but courage to defend freedom of conscience and expression has, it seems, been rooted out. Where this has happened there is no socialism. Not yet.

I hope fervently that the first giant but crippled step they have taken in that direction does grow into socialism. But never let us forget again that without democracy and civil rights there is no guarantee.

America needs a party of and for genuine socialism—a civil libertarian socialism. The American people, troubled as they are by the callousness of an unjust system, can, I believe, be won eventually for socialism; but it must be a democratic socialism: no dictatorship for them. In this vital respect their intelligence and taste has been far superior to that of the American Marxists and, may I add, to that of myself. I for one don't intend to make the same mistake again.

A Believer in Socialism

The Phrase, Black Belt

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am a Negro member of the Communist Party. When reading Party literature on the Negro question I often see where the Party refers to the most densely populated Negro section of the United States as the black belt. As a Marxist, I think the Party, which is a fighter against white chauvinism, should find another name for that part of the U.S.A. It is distasteful to me and I know the Negro people as a whole resent it. —AN UPSTATER.

(Ed. Note: The term "black belt" is a widely accepted designation of the particular area and originated from a description of the black soil where slavery dominated. It was used by the entire Negro press of our country long before the Communists used it and still is used without any feeling of revulsion.)

Suggestions on Party Structure

Editor, Daily Worker:

Many of your readers have been wondering out loud whether democratic centralism needs some fundamental changes. In connection with this I would like to put forward for discussion the following specific suggestions:

1. National and State Committees should have the power to make policy decisions only on national or state matters. On

questions of local significance (who to support in a local election, tactics in a particular strike, etc.) these higher bodies can and should offer advice, but the decision of the local club or clubs should be final.

As a note on this: while it is true that the higher bodies generally consist (or should consist) of more experienced people, the local clubs are in far closer touch with the immediate and specific situation, including the thinking of non-party people. Mistakes would still be made, but no worse mistakes than those which have resulted from higher bodies issuing directives about problems they knew little about.

2. While higher bodies should be empowered to (if necessary) suspend people from membership, no one should be expelled except as a result of trial by their own club.

3. All members of leading committees should be required to be members of their neighborhood or shop club and to attend at least one club meeting a month (unless they are away from home.)

4. No one should be eligible for election to any leading committee unless nominated by their own club.

5. Where there is disagreement in some leading body, the viewpoint of the majority will of course be binding. However, the viewpoint of the minority should be published along with that of the majority.

-ALEX LESLIE.

The Withering Away of NATO

Editor, Daily Worker:

What is the real situation of the monstrous war organization called NATO? In view of recent press comments in the press one is entitled to ask: who's kidding whom?

"... NATO although an organization comprehending much more than Western Europe, nevertheless provides the cooperative mechanism for greater security in the area. ... NATO is a great alliance, rich in human and natural resources." President Eisenhower May 26.

"The First NATO—And Its Tragic End"—Headline over dispatch from Paris by C. L. Sulzberger, N. Y. Times May 5.

"Proposals at the NATO Council meeting here to turn this foundering military alliance into a political and economic agency are mostly fuzzy."—Ludwell Denny from Paris, World-Telegram & Sun, May 4.

"The NATO has for a long time been ailing. Behind all the brave words about unity and strength, the military front of NATO has been withering

away."—Marquis Childs from Washington, N. Y. Post May 15.

"The NATO army is in trouble because of a growing skepticism as to whether it reflects a right estimate of the coming military situation."—Walter Lippmann, Herald-Tribune May 17.

WATCHFUL

Exception Taken To Threat

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am taking exception to the letter signed "Free Marxist press."

Does it occur to the writer how unethical it sounded when he or she threatened to withdraw financial support if the letter written by the writer were not printed. It may be an error on the part of the editors not to print certain letters (including mine). But does the writer think that only the editors gain from our financial support of the most indispensable newspaper to date?

All of us, including the writer, gain from each other's financial support. And let us be realistic about it and not subjective over such a small matter as to seeing our letters in print.

I shudder to think if reaction should succeed in shutting off this guiding light. Criticism, of course—but constructive, and wholesome criticism, by all means. —A READER.

Doubts Existence Of Negro Nation

Editor, Daily Worker:

Several persons since the 20th Party Congress in the USSR have asked for a new appraisal of the Negro Question. Let us hope that this will come soon and that it will start from scratch. This may be possible since the deflation of Stalin.

Whatever Stalin's shortcomings, it cannot be denied that his work on nationalities is a Marxist classic. It does not follow from this, however, that the Negro people in the U. S. are, or ever have been, a nation. While the Negroes in the Black Belt did have some superficial similarities to the nations described by Stalin, the differences are glaring. Stalin was writing primarily of the minority nations of the old Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, but to transpose his work to an entirely different situation is not far removed from the act of a fundamentalist preacher applying the literal words of an Old Testament prophet to a 20th Century problem.

The people of whom Stalin wrote were conscious of their nationality and were fighting for national self-expression. In the matter of schools, for instance,

they wanted their own in which to teach their separate languages and cultures, and they steadfastly resisted pressures to force them to amalgamate with the dominant nation. With the Negroes, the exact reverse is true. Their whole history has been a struggle to amalgamate with the American nation and they have been forcibly prevented. Advocates of Negro nationhood would be consistent only if they opposed integrated schools in the South.

Not only has the idea of Negro nationality kept many Negroes from full participation in the fight for Socialism, the idea has obliterated anything scientific in the discussion. Marxism presupposes a scientific approach, but there is no science which tailors facts to fit a theory.

Early in the first Roosevelt administration, there was a ruling that a sharecropper have his

AAA check made to himself and not to his landlord. Whenever it was possible the landlord then switched to hired labor, and aided by tractors where the land permitted, they forced the sharecroppers from all the best land. By 1940 sharecropping was a thing of the past except in regions of marginal farming in the South. War-time labor shortages finished the job. Yet the Party hung on to the sharecropper long after he was a historical relic.

Any renter is a sharecropper if he takes some of the risk out by paying rent with part of the crop. In the fertile Delta region there are sharecroppers who run a dozen tractors with hired labor, but none who make a crop with the aid of a mule.

If a reappraisal of the Negro Question shows that there was ever a Negro nation, let it also show that it was the most ephemeral and certainly the most reluctant in history.—G. C.

Justice, Not Sympathy

PHILADELPHIA

Editor, Daily Worker:

The "Icy Hearts" editorial, May 25, it seems to me reveals a basic weakness of the "Daily Worker" and the Communist Party. A basic Communist tenet is that the means of production in fact belongs to the workers and not the money manipulators in an advanced capitalist country. Their sweat and toil and ingenuity produces the marvelous technology, (I'd like to see Mr. Pyle try to run some of the machines he probably owns via some stock.) For their sweat and back-breaking labor the working people are rewarded by miserable living and working conditions and are encouraged by

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every means possible to keep at odds with each other.

The workers don't want sympathy from Pyle, Wilson, or Eisenhower. They want what's coming to them by every conceivable law of justice. The real crime of Pyle is that he as an exploiter is gloating over the fact that due to a mixed up way of life he still has the power to enjoy the suffering of his subjects. He is inhuman and against the interests of the people of America.

I believe the CP has retreated from helping the American worker achieve what's his due. I think immediately the CP, if it believes in right and not might, must project a step by step road to Socialism beginning right now in time to affect the '56 election. Socialism is not today a radical idea; it is necessary if such problems as juvenile delinquency, the mentally ill, crime, poor housing, bad medical coverage, injustice against the farmer, second class citizenship for the Negro, etc., are to be solved.—S. M.