

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Marxist Center

Editor, Daily Worker:

I'm arguing for taking the C.P. out of the political arena the area in which parties vie for political power, as of this moment. This would be in compliance the practical situation which exists in any case. For years we have been unable to run candidates under our party name (not so important) and giving the program of the party for socialism.

What should be set up in its place is a Marxist center of all those who want to work for socialism. Its program to be a Marxist interpretation of transition from capitalism to socialism based on American traditions and experiences. Fundamental works of Marx, Engels, Lenin — and yes, many works of Stalin including "the National Question" and works to be written by American Marxists based on the American scene. Why not a "Das Kapital" with American working conditions and a modern example of surplus value?

I think this Marxist organization's members should all be members of the mass peoples organizations fighting for the immediate needs of the people of America — trade unions, tenants councils, PTA's, civil and cultural organizations, etc., etc.

They should not be members to "bore from within." They should be members because the objectives of the particular organization conform to a need that they themselves have in the purpose of the particular organization whether it be to fight for better conditions in his shop or to play a clarinet of an evening—or, what is important to me, to be able to play a little pinochle occasionally.

In their everyday relationship with people, Marxists will do what they have always done and will always do—propagate, argue and convince—mostly in struggles against the class enemy—for socialism. I do not believe that Marxists should attempt to turn these organizations into something other than what they are—in other words turn them into organizations whose main purpose becomes the struggle for socialism.

I may be cock-eyed as the dickens, but I think the essence of democratic-centralism has ex-

isted on the American scene for a long time.

Most people's organizations of the U. S. have constitutions. They call for periodic conventions where the rank and file express their will which is the highest authority in the organization. They elect officers and leading bodies who are the highest authorities for carrying out the will of the membership between conventions. And these bodies and individuals on them have authority to make decisions between conventions with all kinds of provisions for consultation with the broad mass of members below between conventions.

That officers and leaders of these organizations do not democratically carry out their obligations is also well known. That bureaucrats, opportunists, betrayers, etc., etc. creep into power in these organizations is too painfully apparent to need mentioning.

In essence, therefore, I don't believe our Marxist center needs too different a structure than say the party, has at present. But it sure needs to be carried out in practice with a constant vigilance on the part of every member from top to bottom.

—M. F.

Independent Thinking

Editor, Daily Worker:

There is a contradiction in American Marxist thinking.

(a) We American Marxists attribute our failure in discovering for ourselves the errors and crimes of the Stalinist dictatorship to the failure to achieve independent dialectical ("Marxist-Leninist") thinking.

(b) But the discussion abounds and resounds with critical cries to the Soviet Communists that they have not explained enough to account for and for us to understand the origin of the Stalinist dictatorship.

This incessant appeal and demand for the leaders of the CPSU to explain, explain and explain is nothing but a tacit admission that we American Marxists continue to fail in the vital cultivation of independent thinking. We require everything to be "spelled out" for us. For the same reason many in our ranks cannot accept the possibility of peaceful transition to Socialism in the U. S. unless

they are handed a blueprint of how it will happen.

It is relatively true, as Togliatti stated, that the explanation of certain details of the origin of the Stalinist dictatorship could only come from Soviet Communist leaders, since such facts were and are inaccessible to any others. But this is only relatively true because, on the other hand, there is now available a large body of facts, historical and political, which outline sufficiently the processes and conditions which gave rise to the Stalinist errors and crimes. This aggregate material is tremendously supplemented by the various Collected Works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, of Stalin, too, and by various histories of Russia—all of which contain materials which bear upon this profound question.

It is my impression, following the hundreds of letters and articles in our discussion, that far too few show evidence of any effort to survey and master this relevant material. There is a vast difference, a qualitative difference, between writing just what thoughts leap into one's mind and independent thinking based upon scientific study.

In terms of independent thinking, American Marxists, who contradict this goal by demanding more explanations from abroad might ponder the fact, frequently noted, that Communist leaders in the U. S. have insufficiently explained to the rank and file of the Party and to the American people their own errors and the differences which have developed among them.

—S. J.

The People Want Facts

Editor, Daily Worker:

The Communist Party to which many fine men and women have devoted the better part of their thinking, their courage and their lives is, and should be, very dear to us. It offered the only chance to devote our whole energy to achieving a social order capable of eliminating war, unemployment, discrimination, ignorance and poverty.

There have been errors, deep-going, dogmatic, unforgivable errors—here in the USA. But now the handwriting on the wall (small membership, isolation,

sterility) spells change.

There are those who want no change, merely a correction. They feel the Party would fly apart at the seams if we did not have democratic centralism. Such people I think, lack confidence in the Party, in its basic Marxist understanding, and its deep intention to work for Socialism. Open and continued discussion need not turn us into a debating society, but would increase the Marxist understanding of all of us. Regional autonomy need not produce disunity, but would enable us to develop proper local tactics, and exploit local possibilities.

Then there are those who want change, but look for it in a Party form which will seem "natural to the American people." This strikes me as being plain pragmatism. The people do not so much need forms and formulations from us as facts and understanding. Therefore in changing the Party, shouldn't we make a complete and continuing study of the American scene, American capitalism, American labor, American farming, American Negroes, minorities, education, religion, culture, etc.

We should prove with facts and figures, as McDonald began to do in his steel studies, the ugly corruption and greed that is choking our advance to a higher standard of living with a mountain of mortgages, taxes, instalments, stolen profits, that is illegally whittling away our constitutional rights, and deliberately destroying our human decency.

With such facts and understanding will come a program for American Socialism that will logically produce its own form of Party.—A. S. T.

Getting on with Normal People

Editor, Daily Worker:

Isn't it time we started examining other than just political and theoretical questions in our attempt to find the answers to why we have become so isolated from the American youth and why we have failed to move into their mass organizations? Shouldn't we also examine our whole past attitude—socially, culturally and sportswise too? What is it that has made us so different and separated us from other young people?

Haven't we been sort of moving through life with our

eyes and ears closed for fear that we may come in contact with "bourgeois junk?"

How many of us have believed and still do that tennis and golf are sports for the rich? That they're bourgeois? A visit to any one of the resorts where young people go or to any of the public tennis courts and golf courses around our city would show us otherwise.

How many of us know how to dance the cha-cha? Do we know that among the youth today the cha-cha, the mambo and the merengua are the rage? At almost any resort or public dance which young people attend there are two bands, one playing Latin-American music and the other American music. Today the cha-cha often outdraws the fox-trot.

How many of us read Living For Young Homemakers, American Girl, Glamor, Made-moiselle, Parents, Redbook, True etc. These are magazines for young people and millions of them read them. Shouldn't we know what young people are reading in them?

Today young people love square dancing, folk dancing, horseback riding, skiing, traveling, sightseeing and music festivals. Young people have many hobbies. Aren't all these things normal healthy desires? How many of us do any of these things or dismiss some or all of them as bourgeois, unimportant or wasting time. How many times have we turned our noses up on hearing about one of our people going on a skiing trip or taking a few weeks trip to California and had thoughts running through our minds like irresponsibility, lack of understanding, being mixed up, running away, etc.

Let's face it many non-progressive youth consider us different, that we're smug, snobbish and "drips"! We don't know how to socialize well! Our personalities can stand some improvement!

We tend to drop our non-progressive friends and relatives when we enter our movement.

Let's continue to look into the political and theoretical aspects of our past work and as Dennis calls it the "Tasks and Perspectives" of our future work but let's at the same time also start looking into some of the things I have mentioned. They are there—as big a life itself!

YOUNG MARXIST