

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## On Starobin's Proposal

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have just come across a recent issue of The Nation with a letter from Joseph Starobin, erstwhile foreign editor of your paper. It seems to me that the letter begged for a reply from some spokesman for the Communist Party. Since none has been forthcoming, to my knowledge, I'd appreciate your giving space to my own personal views in the matter.

Starobin has come to the conclusion, according to my reading of his letter, that the Communist Party is too much saddled with its past mistakes to be curable, and he hopes that some future socialist organization will be gracious enough to welcome individual Communists into their ranks without fear or reproach.

He is even kind enough to suggest that some Communists are already making a "modest" beginning toward rehabilitating themselves by busying themselves in unions, civic organizations, etc.

I do not deny Starobin the right to his opinions on the life expectancy of the Communist movement in America. But although I, like Starobin and many others, believe the compelling task of Communists is to work toward the founding of a socialist movement more solidly rooted in American practices, I do not believe that the existence of the CP prevents others from forming a new socialist movement. Nor would its non-existence automatically evoke one. On the contrary.

The fact is that organizing is work, hard work. Experts in it like John L. Lewis have paid tribute to the Communist Party members' eminence in the field. And not every person who espouses socialism, to whatever degree, has been willing as the members of the Communist Party to work at the day in, day out job of being a socialist. It comes as an unpleasant shock, then, to read Starobin's impression that rank and file Communists are only beginning to make their contribution to America by participating in its trade union, political and community life.

Hell, they've been doing it for years.

Starobin is entitled to an-

nounce his departure from the ranks of the Communists any way he pleases. But as a former reader of his, I'd like to suggest that it would have been nicer to find his views in the paper for which he wrote—particularly at a time when the DW is running the greatest no-hold barred discussion by readers in its history.

It's a pity that Starobin should be participating in this discussion from the outside looking in.

I suspect that a greater appreciation of the hardworking, devoted Communists, and a respect for their ability to come to grips with the failings of their movement, is what was lacking.

—G.B.M.

## A Proposed Mental Exercise

Editor, Daily Worker:

For those who still do not seem to understand how much we have to change, who now see clearly and are willing to concede that "we made some mistakes but let's not go off half cocked," etc. etc., I submit the following mental exercise.

Try honestly to imagine what would have happened just one year ago to a member of the Communist Party who had come to some of the conclusions now pretty well established and printed here almost daily, i. e. that our party had gone astray in its relationship to the Soviet Union, that this unmerciful and mechanical relationship had brought it to grief time after time in our own country, and that the whole Leninist concept of a party organization borrowed from the Russian revolution was unsuitable for this country with its traditions.

Think now—our Communist fights to get over this point of view, with all the unanswerable logic and clarity you can read in Speak Your Piece on the same subject almost any day now. Nobody will listen to him! Even the least sectarian, best rounded Communists with the best sense of the needed national development of our movement will tell him to please stop, he is being factional, is hurting party unity, will get himself expelled. The fight against him is a "fight for the party line."

Let us say this Communist, seeing so clearly and poignantly

what is correct, does not bow to expediency, but says he does not care about his personal fate in the movement, but only cares about making the party an effective party for American socialism. He insists, please don't give me the automatic shocked answers, LISTEN to what I am saying and think about it with your own mind.

What finally happens to this person? Answer truthfully, you who say, what's all the excitement about, there was nothing basically wrong with the party, it was all the unfavorable objective situation!

He is inevitably expelled. He is possibly even denounced as an enemy agent. Old friends who are party people walk past him with averted heads. You can fill in the nightmarish details. Is it an exaggeration to say that his poor tormented wife (or if this is a woman, vice versa)—might break up the marriage?

Well, that is the kind of people we had become, that is the kind of organization we had and all the good things we accomplished were in spite of this and would have been ten times as much without this. Until we fully realize that we are not ready to do what is necessary.

I would only add that the most heartening thing in the world is the way, with the block released, so many fine Communists are proving that good sense was close to the surface all these years. Let nobody think things can go back even close to where they were!—D. F.

## Consensus of Discussions

Editor, Daily Worker:

Like all of us, I have engaged in countless discussions with comrades, ex-comrades, friends and allies since the 20th Congress. With the exception of a very few whose position I could not figure out at all except on the basis that they simply refused to believe the second Khrushchev speech, or at least felt if it were true it should not be mentioned, and one who felt Khrushchev and present leaders were deeply suspect for downgrading Stalin, all seemed to feel:

1. That the party organization and the Daily Worker should be kept. This they were not lukewarm or "philosophical"

about, but to the contrary.

2. That it should be completely autonomous although maintaining fraternal relations with other Communist parties.

3. That any analysis of our errors whether "left" or "right" was less important than figuring out now what our position should be in regard to the Soviet Union and countries on the way to Socialism and the Communist parties of same.

4. That the guide for this struggling small party in the most powerful of capitalist countries must at all times be the basic interests of our own working class. If at some given moment of history these run counter to the immediate national interests or policy of the Soviet Union, such as happened at the time of the Soviet-Nazi pact, we defend our American working class interests.

Most of them felt, as I do, that with all honor to the present national leadership, there should be a change; and that there must be an end (isn't there already, or is this period deceptive?) of the fear within the party—and I don't mean fear of the enemy.

—V. G.

## Let's Go by The Record

Editor, Daily Worker:

One gets the impression from some letters that the Communist Party of the U. S. and the Soviet Union have both been big flops. Can you imagine what this world would be like if we didn't have an American Communist Party and there were not a Soviet Union? Let me cite a few items from the record.

1. The First World War. Who explained to the American people its imperialist nature, redivision of the world and conquest of markets? Nobody but the early left socialists who later founded the C.P.

2. Who led the fight for Tom Mooney? Leaders of the C.P.

3. Who first talked about and fought for industrial unions? The C.P.

4. Who first talked about and fought for unemployment relief and insurance? The C.P.

5. Who first took up and fought for the Scottsboro boys? The C.P.

6. Who first exposed the jury system in the South and fought

for Negro equality? The C.P.

7. Who helped greatly in forming the CIO? The C.P.

8. Who first pointed out the danger of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria? The C.P.

9. Who exposed the Franco uprising in Spain and showed that Hitler and Mussolini were behind it? The C.P.

10. Who helped the World peace movement thus preventing war? The C.P.

Now for the Soviet Union.

1. Who succeeded in the first socialist revolution? The Soviet Union.

2. Who defeated all kinds of foreign intervention? The Soviet Union.

3. Who took a backward, illiterate, war-ravaged country and made it into a great socialist industrialized state? The Soviet Union.

4. Who took on the greater part of the fascist military machine—and despite grave errors—succeeded in breaking its back? The Soviet Union.

5. Who succeeded in developing A bomb and H bombs thus holding back the warmongers? The Soviet Union.

6. Who by their very existence helped the colonial countries and inspired them to throw off their former oppressors and stand up to them like equals? The Soviet Union.

So the CP. USA and the Soviet Union made some grievous mistakes? Big deal! Aren't they human and subject to human weakness? Aren't they admitting their mistakes publicly and correcting them and isn't that a sign of growth and strength?

A batting average of 900 isn't too bad.

JOE SMITH

PS. Enclosed is \$10 to help a courageous bunch of fellows keep up the grand fight.

## Lester Rodney's Article Lauded

Editor, Daily Worker:

Lester Rodney's article last week on Congressman Walter and the martyred Rosenbergs was a cogent, beautifully expressed piece of work. My favorite columnist, it seems to me, reaches his greatest heights when writing on non-sports themes.

Enclosed is my weekly contribution (\$2).—P.R.N.