

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

The Right Of Nations

Editor, Daily Workers:

I see that you have decided that "counter-revolutionaries" and proponents of "the former Horthy dictatorship" are responsible for the uprising and bloody violence in Hungary. May I make so bold as to ask how you arrived at this conclusion? Is it based on facts, or is it merely a convenient explanation like the Stalinist "devil theory" which exterminated the cream of the Bolshevik party as being "murderers, spies and wreckers" in league with Hitler and wishing to restore capitalism?

Once upon a time a man named Lenin urged the "right of nations to self-determination." Apparently you construe this to mean that the USSR has the exclusive right to determine for itself the fate of the Magyar people, using Soviet troops and tanks to do so.

Once again, as in the East German workers' uprising, where many indigenous Communists and soldiers sided with the insurrection (as in the October revolution, remember?), you have decided that the cause of justice lies with military intervention by a foreign power, i.e., the USSR. You were against such intervention — and rightly so — when American, Japanese, Czech and many other foreign troops attempted to defeat the Communists in the Russian Civil War.

Odd, isn't it, how Marxism inexorably works upon you to bring you to your present position—the antithesis of your former one. I am still looking for the dialectic to transform this attitude and bring it back into harmony with the original principle. It is indeed a shame when you can't tell a revolution from a counter-revolution, when in a conflict between indigenous workers and students and the soldiery of a foreign power you automatically side with the latter and brand the former as reactionary.

Such conduct serves to curry favor with the masters of the Soviet Army. Well and good, if you believe your future lies with Russian tanks. But don't think such an attitude will win support from the masses anywhere—certainly not in Hungary, and most certainly not in the United States. But you have long been in the habit of destroying your own future and alienating yourself from the people: one could hardly expect you to wake up to your own folly after cozily acquiescing in it for so many years.

But I'm sure that the thought of Soviet tanks firing on unarmed demonstrators must privately jog your conscience a little. Even after swallowing Kronstadt, the Moscow Trials and all the rest, I bet there is still room for a gnawing pang that no glib rhetorical editorials can quite assuage. God only knows what your indignation would be if they were fascist tanks firing on workers who had been certified pure proletarians by the properly constituted Soviet authorities.

Not that switching labels has anything to do with the basic issue of self-determination versus armed aggression, I am curious to know just how you decided that those brave Magyars were nothing but fascists. Or did you just make it up in your head because it made the situation easier to explain, even if it didn't have any connection with the truth? Either way, it raises a nice question: How did so many and such courageous "fascists" manage to survive all the purges, when even stalwart Communists like Laszlo Rajk did not?

Furthermore, how is it that the younger generation—those who were at puberty when

Communism came to power—is so infected with the virus of "fascism"? From a Marxist viewpoint, what are the socio-economic foundations of this "counter-revolution"? I'm sure your dwindling readership will want answers to these questions, and if it doesn't get answers that make sense and ring true, it's going to dwindle some more.

Possibly you are embarked upon an ingenious scheme to dissolve the Communist Party gradually by disenchanting the membership and promoting defections. If this is the case I think you are doing so with consummate skill. At least you're blighting the tentative hopes of one former adherent—me.

WILLIAM ROBT. MILLER

P.S.:—As in the past, I write not as a representative of the FOR (Fellowship of Reconciliation), but as an individual committed to and vitally concerned in the pacifist and radical movement. The views expressed here are my own and none of the responsibility devolves upon either the FOR or any other organization with which I am connected.

Urges Respect for Soviet Leadership

Editor, Daily Worker:

The Daily Worker and some sections of the Communist Party have been taking an anti-Soviet position since the 20th Congress. We feel that the severe attack and criticism of Stalin tended to disrupt the Socialist movements outside the Soviet Union. That the Soviet leadership decided at this time to reveal the errors of Stalin because of their strength in world leadership, nevertheless in our opinion the opposite result took place throughout the progressive movements in the world.

If mistakes were made they were not made only by Stalin but by the whole Central Committee of the CPSU.

Most of us look to the Soviet Union as the first Socialist state and we respect the leadership of the Soviet Union. Mistakes were bound to happen in that country as in any other country.

We don't know what is going on in Poland. We believe that all countries have the right to find their own path to Socialism. But we wonder that the DW takes the stand that it did in the editorial attacking the Soviet Union.—MANHATTAN CLUB.

P.S. This letter was drafted before the recent events in Hungary which certainly indicates the use of Project X agents.

Warns of Smug Generalizations

UPSTATE NEW YORK.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Like the well-reasoned and tastily seasoned letter of A. S. in Oct. 25th's D.W., I too have felt more than a qualm or two about some of the "popping-off" in editorials. However, I can welcome the editorial in that same issue about "The Events in Hungary" without qualification. Also Sunday's featuring of the Strontium 90 peril was a masterpiece of timeliness and profundity. In these days of chain-lightning events, the responsibility of a Marxist journalist is also "a little frightening," just as are the implications of a wrong slant on certain issues.

What is our newspaper's safeguard against possible mistakes in judgment? Here too, as in workingclass political organizations, it seems to me that the rule of criticism and self-criticism must govern us. For instance, if a particular editorial was later recognized as being off-beam (or a feature column) shouldn't the error be acknowledged as soon as realized? What

comes to my mind today, in the light of the Project X, provocateur-inspired violence in Hungary, is the question as to whether the D.W. still maintains the stand against capital punishment, as was expressed in its otherwise far-seeing editorial on the Radj tragedy?

Unlike A.S., I agreed with the D.W.'s criticism of Pravda for its "imputing on a blanket scale, to sections of the Polish press, the desire to restore capitalism." Alongside this editorial you printed what I assumed to be the entire Pravda article. That it reminded you too much of some of the unjustified criticism made of Yugoslavia in 1948 seems a bit far-fetched. Even if Pravda has a "case," however, the facts it cited certainly didn't prove it to me. And wasn't the over-tone arrogant and dogmatic?

But to get back nearer home: how about those "Ed. Notes" added on to some letters? Were the two "blanket" declarations made by the "Speak Your Piece" editor after the A.S. letter meant as an answer to clearly expressed problems that are on so many minds? Most often, I would say, the letters should stand on their own feet, as expressions of an individual's opinion. Usually other letters answer them. Sometimes only time, and more information, and new events, will provide the answer. Certainly the Daily Worker as a whole provides the main part. But let's not fall back to the days of smug generalizations!

I enclose \$34 from a few of us. We plan to at least triple this as soon as we can get around more. We are encouraged by our paper's independent journalism, based on its deepening understanding of the people's struggles for democracy and Socialism in our own country and throughout the world.

—G.W.K.

Changes Predicted In Soviet Union

Editor, Daily Worker:

Friends of socialism must be prepared for changes in the Soviet Union similar to those now occurring in Poland. We can only hope—and express our desire—that the Soviet leaders permit these changes to follow a more orderly course than that in Poland. Otherwise there may be danger to world peace.

If we are not prepared for these changes, the effects upon us, when they come, will be more demoralizing than the revelations about Stalin. The fact is that you cannot impose democracy from above, as the former Polish leadership was trying to do for the past three years, and as the Khrushchev Soviet leadership has been doing in the USSR. Leaders who took part in a system of rule based on lack of faith in the people are incapable of handing things over to the people. That is demonstrated by many recent events and current practices in the USSR.

Why was the July Supreme Soviet meeting the same old rubber stamp? What it did about pensions and atomic testing was wonderful, but can one really believe that there was not a single member who wanted to ask questions about the participation of the present Soviet leaders in the Stalin regime? Or to make a statement of his own opinion on that?

It is ridiculous to believe that the Soviet people, now with 2,500,000 college graduates among them, and a million graduating high school each year, will continue to accept crude political lies. Currently, I refer to the fact that the Poznan demonstrations are still described in the Soviet press solely as foreign provocations. Or the

fact that Party relations are treated as diplomatic secrets, so that the Soviet people were told only that Khrushchev and his associates had an amicable discussion with the Polish leaders.

Worse still is the one-sided news-straining and intellectual spoon-feeding to which the Soviet people are subjected at home. Can a Soviet reader help feeling insulted when Pravda calls a well-known economist, Yaroshenko, a "renegade" for words uttered in a discussion on the cult of the individual, but gives not the slightest hint of what he actually said?

How must Soviet students feel when the official journal of the college system equates dissenters with delinquents by bracketing rowdies with philosophy students who are thinking for themselves (Soviet News, Sept. 19, 1956)? This story pertained to Moscow University, but the same technique was used against the students in Georgia after the demonstration on the anniversary of Stalin's death.

And Ralph Parker in New World Review tells us of a student expelled from another college for asking questions prompted by reading John Reed's "Ten Days That Shook the World." In this case, higher authorities reinstated him, but the important thing is that such an expulsion could take place now at all.

I write about these things at this particular moment because I believe that the Soviet people may respond to the Polish events more rapidly than appearances may indicate. There is no longer a pressing world danger to cause the Soviet people to agree to their socialism being run from the top, and we ought to be prepared for their efforts to change this, in whatever manner they find necessary.

WILLIAM MANDEL

Use of 'Ed. Note' Held Unfair

The developing habit of the "Ed. Note" rebuttal to certain letters in Speak Your Piece is disturbing. Today's edition carries two in a column of three letters. These two are directly critical of the editorial; i.e., political, handling of certain events. Do consider the possibility that you accept with equanimity criticism of C.P. policy and questions of D.W. format, but are touched to the quick; i.e., cannot take it, when some reader questions your very own political approach.

This selective "Ed. Note" policy is unfair to the responsive reader. His comment appears days after your story, while your rebuttal is instantaneous and (as today) based on facts available to neither of you at the time the story and letter were written. Moreover you create the impression that opinions bearing no "Ed. Note" meet your approval or at least are inoffensive, while those that do, clearly merit your stern and instant disfavor.

The substance of these notes is equally disturbing. In the first case, involving Pravda's criticism of the Polish press, you ignore the reader's exposition and rest upon an unknown apology of Khrushchev, thus directly contradicting your pious present-day resolve to think and decide for yourselves. In the second case, critical of a headline of yours, you choose to be completely unresponsive. While, as you say, the story came from the London Worker, the headline was yours and its choice of words distinctly yours.

Why not let your readers judge the virtue of Speak Your Piece contributions; you reserved the column for them. You have so many other columns in which to express your own views.

—ANON.

The Right To Dissent

Editor, Daily Worker:

The right to dissent is one of several vital issues being widely discussed among us these days. Not long ago I heard a County representative express the personal view that it should be exercised legitimately not only before but after the vote. Some others share that view. Still others say, could you do that sort of thing at a union meeting determining strike policy and procedure?

It seems to me, first, that a prior blanket rule of either full conformity or full freedom would probably be unsound. After all, situations differ in substance and also in accidental circumstances. Is there any sense in approaching identically a minority of one vote on one type of issue, and a nearly even split on another type of issue?

Second—to reflect on what our neighbors do, in most American organizations the staff member supports established policy or resigns. Ordinary members may or may not; "it depends." Our organization is different from most others in the degree of participation sometimes obtained and usually fought for, with regard to the rank and file. Such a situation offers the possibilities for, and also demands, an exceptional degree of unity.

Third, those who ask for a guarantee of democratic procedure by means of by-law protection in the organization constitution have a point. But let them beware of stressing traffic lights to the neglect of the road map and gas in the tank. The desired guarantees lie mainly in ties with the people, persistent struggle for mutual understanding, and individual sense of responsibility.

The last point can hardly be overemphasized. The abuses of the past should not be laid exclusively to the excesses of bureaucrats. They derived in part from the disposition of too many of us to accept what we were handed without thinking. A real sense of responsibility includes that as well as readiness to write the letter you promised to write. In my opinion we must reinvigorate the Leninist concept that a person is acceptable for membership only if he supports the program, pays dues to support the organization, and takes responsibility for activity in an organized way. That seems to me to be no "Russian" formula, irrelevant to America today, but a very common sense formula highly relevant to class struggle anywhere.—Stanley Archer.

AIRMEN CRASH, SAVE SCHOOL KIDS

PEMBROKE, Ga., Oct. 30—

Three airmen apparently spared the lives of 210 children by swerving in their plunging plane seconds before crashing to their deaths, a witness said today.

Principal J. O. Hurst of the Black Creek elementary school said the B-26 light bomber from Mitchel Air Force Base appeared headed directly toward the school between Pembroke and Blichton yesterday.

At the last moment the bomber, used for target towing, pulled up and crashed some 100 yards away, he said.

Daily Worker

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday by the Publishers New Press, Inc., 35 E. 12th St., New York 3, N. Y. Telephone ALgonquin 4-7804.

Reentered in second class matter Oct. 22, 1947, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

3 mos. 8 mos. 1 year
Daily Worker only \$4.00 \$7.00 \$12.00

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