

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

No Gag on Discussion

Editor, Daily Worker:

It was gratifying to find your paper on the stands this morning despite the government's heavy-handed attempt at suppression. I trust you will continue to defy those who would wipe out all dissent in our country.

But it was distressing to see in William Z. Foster's article—"Lesson from the Stalin Question"—a tendency to clamp a lid down on the recent surge of free discussion which has lent new life to the American left.

These past few weeks have been the most exciting in years for American radicals. We have been heartened by the new dynamism which has been infused by the long-delayed re-evaluation of policy and practice. We have seen new possibilities of development and growth.

This is no time to nip all that in the bud! Let us not again fall into the rut of abject adherence to an arbitrary line and destroy our new-found potential. Let us not revive the tired clinches which have too often served to obscure questionable policies and sluggish initiative.

—E.K.

Encouraged to Be Active Again

Editor, Daily Worker:

I believe that the letters now being printed in the Daily Worker on the Stalin Reevaluation indicate an optimistic trend as far as the progressive movement is concerned in criticism and self-criticism.

People are not only looking at the Soviet Union as having made its share of mistakes, but they are freely and seriously looking at themselves in an attempt to find similarities in mistakes within themselves and groups they belong to. This is indeed a step forward, for only when people begin to evaluate themselves again and become aware of their deficiencies do they begin to grow.

This spark, the spark of self-criticism that has recently been recreated, has touched off a light certainly indicates a good change in me to become active again. I certainly hope that this will occur with many others, for it is the potential for growth.

—DORIAN BARTLETT

Correction by Trachtenberg

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am asking a little space to correct an error in an article by Harry Raymond dealing with the forthcoming third Smith Act trial in New York. The article reports that I came to the U. S. after having been "released from a tsarist prison."

I believe in giving credit where credit is due. I was not imprisoned under the tsarist government before leaving old Russia in 1906 to continue my studies in freedom here.

I was indicted and tried for "teaching and advocating" etc., etc., 45 years after my arrival in the United States, under a Democratic administration, and was sent to prison soon after my 70th birthday under the aegis of the present Republican administration. Such are the blessings of bi-partisan government.

—Alexander Trachtenberg

P.S.—Since to err is human, permit me to take advantage of the opportunity to congratulate your redoubtable court reporter, Harry Raymond, on his 60th birthday.—A.T.

A Fresh Approach

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have read the article entitled "U.S. Marxists and Soviet Self-Criticism" in the March 13, 1956, issue of the Daily Worker with great interest and satisfaction, and I feel that it has struck the note for a new and fresh approach to the propagation of Marxist ideology among a broader section of the American people.

As a university student, I could not help but appreciate the honest and frank manner in which you admitted the mistakes and errors committed by American Marxists over the years. It may also interest you to know that many other students with whom I have spoken have appreciated this aspect of your article immensely. That American Marxists have been quite dogmatic and one-sided in many aspects of their work is a fact which, I think, no sincere and thoughtful Marxist can deny. And, as your article implies, the recognition and correction of this dogmatism and one-sidedness is

Letters from Readers

"Speak Your Piece" is a permanent department of this paper. We invite our readers to write on all questions that concern them. The response to the 20th congress of the Soviet Communist Party has been most gratifying. So many letters have arrived, and still arrive, that it is physically impossible to print them all. Every viewpoint expressed has already been published or will be printed. Keep letters to 300 words or less. We welcome particularly letters about domestic issues. So, speak your piece!

indispensable to the further advance if Marxism in this country.

This is particularly true for the advancement of Marxism among that great mass of American students who tend to reject any ideology which puts itself forth as possessing a catch-all solution to the problems of the American people.

Dogmatism has no place whatsoever in Marxism, and the soon this fact is recognized the sooner American Marxists will be able to correct the mistakes of the past and to undertake the further advancement of Marxism among the American people. In this respect, I feel that your article may someday be looked upon as being of historic significance.

—GRADUATE STUDENT

Not Enough Study

Editor, Daily Worker:

At the present time many progressives are going through a period of "agonizing re-appraisal." All sorts of reasons are given for the mistakes that Marxists have fallen into in the past few years. But lack of firm and sound theory has caused them to be in this position.

Too many think they know it all and to prove it they will quote you chapter and verse of Marx or Lenin. But when it comes to continuing their Marx-

ist education of course they have no tie for it. So thousands stayed away from the Jefferson School and wallow in an orgy of unhappiness about their mistakes.

On 16th Street and 6th Ave. lies the answer to many of the questions these halfbaked Marxists need answered.

Why so many, who should, don't go is a mystery to me. I'm sure if many of them would give up one night of listening to Hi-Fi or attending a concert and instead attend the Jeff School we wouldn't be in ideological difficulties.—A STUDENT

Sees Advance In Democracy

Editor, Daily Worker:

The execution of Laszlo Rajk (or many others) is troubling me a great deal. There is no way of restoring the innocent dead to life.

But it is only in socialist countries that an open admission of past errors is bared for all the world to see and hear.

My respects to those who are doing a good job. Errors are a part of life, in order to correct future errors there is one thing to be done. The Socialist countries have it within their power to immediately abolish capital punishment. The rest of the world, I believe will eventually follow suit.

This will be a democratic deed by the socialist countries. Although the path will still be difficult, a great democratic period is bound to arise out of this mess.

—B. E.

Finds Many Facts Still Unclear

Editor, Daily Worker:

The 20th congress of the Soviet Communist Party showed the strengthened position of the socialist and peace forces throughout the world. In my mind there is no question but that the world situation today gives great hopes for the future.

However, there were also disturbing questions raised that demand answers. If there are valid, scientific reasons for a re-evaluation of Marxism as developed under the leadership of Stalin let us have all the information available and not force the Marxist movements throughout the world to depend

on rumors and speculation.

Some of the questions that bother me and many people that I know are as follows: Why were criticisms of Stalin made at a secret meeting, the text of which has not even been published in the Soviet Union? Why does not the present Soviet leadership openly declare their own responsibility for past errors? If Beria and his gang were responsible for the break with Yugoslavia why was he not brought to open trial?

If the executions in Hungary were frameups is it correct to put all the blame on a police chief rather than the Party leadership?

Only by getting the facts can we come to correct conclusions. Let's have no more reliance on faith alone as a guide for the march to socialism. —G.S.

New Atmosphere In 'Worker'

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am utterly thrilled by what I read in your paper these days.

It sounds like a whole new outfit—none of the intimidation, slander, fear-mongering, etc., of the dead past.

I wish I could give you my name and all that, but I dare not until the witchhunt subsides more, but, in other ways, you will have real cooperation from me and my circle of friends as long as you keep on saying the kind of fine, wholesome, decent things you are saying nowadays.

All good wishes to you in your new program. Let there be discussion and dissent, differences, etc. so long as people are willing to unite under the will of the majority, once it has been voted. But at all times, while implementing the will of the majority, there should be the right to disagree in some fashion, such as on your letter age. The majority line can be set forth in the general line taken by the paper, in public meetings, etc.

There should not be any fundamental public disagreement by spokesmen of the CP at public meetings—that is good centralism. But there should be plenty of disagreement allowed in the discussion that follows—that is good democracy. And all CP leaders and members should always have a right to get dissenting views published in the Daily Worker and Political Affairs, etc. A Newly-won Friend