

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Starobin's Book

Editor, Daily Worker:

It is my opinion that you are on the right track in opening a discussion about the Soviet Union, and the conclusions which American Communists and Progressives have to draw from what is happening there. Actually, the problem is what we have to do in this country to correct the many mistakes of recent years. Don't get so involved in what is happening over there as to lose sight of the ball.

But I notice that in the articles of Alan Max and James S. Allen and Joseph Clark nobody has pointed out the usefulness of a book by Joseph Starobin, entitled "Paris to Peking" which was published last fall by Cameron Associates. Anybody who read the book carefully should have seen that it has many insights into the problems that have now been brought to the surface by the Russian self-criticism.

Starobin says in his last chapter many of the things now being said here and elsewhere such as the need for a reexamination, and a different road to Socialism in the USA, and a new look at inner-party democracy. I have been rereading the book and find that it is an eyeopener in view of recent developments.

Although you have run several reviews, you seem to have forgotten this book even though it called many of the shots. I remember that Starobin was for years one of your most effective writers; and it is not clear to me why he stopped writing after visiting China and the Soviet Union, or why you do not make more of the fact, in answering the Post and the Times, that one of your writers did raise some of the questions that are now being debated. Why leave that to Monthly Review? (see Paul M. Sweezy's article).

—M.W.

On Clark's Reporting

BOSTON

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have been moved to write my first letter by the plea of Boston packinghouse worker (March 26) for an agonizing reappraisal of the so-called Stalin era. While I agree with some of the generalities set forth (who doesn't), I don't see that there is any need to plunge ourselves into a long, tedious and demobilizing period of purging ourselves of "Stalinism."

I say lay off Joe Clark! We are lucky we had a correspondent in the USSR during those years. We are very lucky that he isn't the sort who feels that now he must inflict us all with breast-beating panegyrics. I have read all his articles on the current discussion, and have been impressed by the objectivity, temperance and balance—marks of a good newspaperman, which Clark is. Petty bourgeois, my foot!

So, how facilely Guido (March 27) accepts the reports of "bourgeois reporters" in the past, attacking Clark for not reporting likewise.

As they say, there's nothing like hindsight. And it's easy now for us all to sound brilliant. I think we've got to study—and do some hard thinking—not just on the Stalin part of the 20th Congress reports, but on the main part of them. Clark can help us, and is, because, though he didn't have a back-door entrance to the Kremlin as some report imagine, he lived with the Soviet people during the great reconstruction period, and we've got so much to learn about so many things—especially criticism and self-criticism.

As to our own problems of bureaucracy. We've got to go on tackling them at all levels

"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!

and indulge in self-examination, too—for our day-to-day work is urgent now (the bourgeoisie is urgent—witness the tax gimmick to get the Daily)—and the possibilities this year especially in the civil rights struggle enormous. We shouldn't forget we've sustained some hard knocks; our leadership has been weakened, and often through no fault of their own, people not ideologically equipped nor through experience, have found themselves in positions of leadership, so we have our little bureaucrats, too.

I'm enjoying the discussion. Think some of the contributions have been fine, some provocative in a destructive way, and we must not let ourselves become victims of any provocateurs.

Our need is leadership and education and above all—confidence in the great American people—the men and women at the benches all across the land.

BOSTON STITCHER

Our Own Mistakes

PHILADELPHIA

Editor, Daily Worker:

As a union man for 20 years, watching management lie to, cheat, threaten, and manhandle working people when they could get away with it, I have never been too upset at some of our unions' faults, though I have tried to correct them. As a Communist also for those same 20 years, I have seen how world capitalism tried to wipe out socialism in the Soviet Union. I can't feel any "embarrassment" (though I was taken unawares) to find out that the Communists there had some faults, even serious ones. They still did a historic job.

The Soviet Communists are now criticizing and correcting their faults. No doubt we here have the right to join in the criticism, if we wish to. I think we'd do better to look at our own faults.

We also have glorified individuals and tended to forget the rank and file. We have made other bad mistakes too. I would suggest the following:

1. Third Party Fiasco: This has been discussed; it was pretty obvious.

2. The War Danger: We exaggerated the strength of the pro-war forces. Our mechanical tactics isolated us from the people, who had to find their own ways to oppose war.

3. Postwar Capitalist Economy: Our incorrect forecasts of early crisis hurt us, especially in the unions.

4. McCarthyism: We retreated too far, again leaving the people to find their own way, which they did.

5. Negro Movement: We underestimated the drive of integration.

6. Agitation for Socialism: We just quit.

Sure, I've exaggerated somewhat, but I say we have to jar ourselves into figuring honestly how it happens that we're so isolated and dull when the mass movements of the American people are thriving all around us.

What I get from the 20th

Congress is that there is going to be a great broadening of the movement for socialism in the next few years. Let's break with our left-sectarianism and get in on it!—R. M.

Campaign Issues

HILLSBORO, N. H.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I wish to take issue with the main theme of your March 2 editorial "Can the Cadillac Cabinet Be Defeated?"

The two big issues in this campaign are peace and Negro rights. You state that although Eisenhower ended the war in Korea, went to Geneva and during his term the Supreme Court issued its anti-segregation school decision, all this was due to pressure from the people. Precisely. Of course. What capitalist government will concede anything without pressure? And if there had been more pressure from the people more victories. The best in our time—Franklin Roosevelt—was the best chiefly because he received the most pressure from the organized, fighting workers, farmers and Negro people.

One of the roles of a working-class press is to help formulate and build popular pressure from below. To do this they must identify that section of the capitalist class which is the most dangerous at the given moment. Although space does not permit a full development, right now the main enemies are the war-now, lynch-now advocates who are for the most part outside of the Cadillac Cabinet. You also identify these forces as dangerous, but the sense of the editorial is to place them as a secondary danger—in fact you list the tasks facing the people in such fashion.

Furthermore by placing the defeat of the Eisenhower administration at this time as the main task you are by inference supporting the Democratic ticket. Yet one of their main possibilities, Stevenson, is weaker on the main issues than Eisenhower. Certainly the way to strengthen Stevenson is by criticism and pressure rather than by what amounts to a "go ahead, we're after the other guy."

Sometimes we're so busy raising hell editorially about the Presidential candidates that Senators and Congressmen don't receive much attention. Yet it is often easier to do something about them and in turn struggle on a state level will bring pressure in the Presidential candidates.

HOMER B. CHASE

Glad to See Paper Alive

Editor, Daily Worker:

We all feel good and proud around here to see the paper still coming out. If they steal the addressograph for a while, please save our papers for us! And meanwhile perhaps send extra copies to the Modern Bookstore.

Does anyone around the staff remember when Boston confiscated an issue of the Harvard Lampoon in the middle '20s? The Lampoon never got such a boost in sales.

I note that the Catholic Worker wired that if it had the space it would offer you "the use of our offices and even our mailing list . . . and we are sure that we would risk nothing in such a gesture but achieve a healthful clarification of thought."

It happens that I used to receive the Catholic Worker. As you probably know, it was and probably still is far more socially wholesome than otherwise.

—W.R.