

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Disagrees with Editorial

Editor, Daily Worker:

Your editorial "Grievous Deeds" written in indignation, anger and grief, could have been reserved for a better cause. The paper should not be so touchy. Doing so drags the paper into a cheap, religious, sectarian corner and it is not honest when done in the name of socialism.

-A. F.

Feels Fog Is Lifted

Editor, Daily Worker:

When The Worker was locked up by the Treasury Department, I was afraid for a while that an independent thinker like myself would be cut off from the only real source of liberal thinking and liberal attitudes that this country has. Actually, I suppose it was the Dept. of Justice, but in any event, it makes little difference since it is indicative of the doctrine of thought control that the present administration seems intent on ramming down our throats.

I must admit that for a time I was a little depressed at the apparent uniformity of thinking displayed by contributors of the paper, but sensed a more independent approach to the problems that confronts us after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Union met and self-critically wiped away the wisps of fog that had retarded our view of the tremendous achievements of the U.S.S.R.

As a southern worker, I have come to depend on The Worker for a proper interpretation of the news, both industrial and political.

-A READER

Let's Learn To Listen

Editor, Daily Worker:

The open discussion is tops! Keep it up.

Let's have more on our situation. With their record of achievement in the birthplace of socialism, those people are best equipped to handle the lion's share of necessary criticism. Time enough for our experts to preach about them after they've helped solve our own shortcomings.

Steve Nelson, James Allen and John Gates are great guys in my book. But if the rank and file are held to 300 words per letter why double the limit for leadership?

Let me second M. W.'s motion for a second look at Joe Starobin's FROM PARIS TO PEKING. A trade union friend urged me to re-read his last chapter long before the 20th Congress opened the floor for

broad discussion. For my money, this Starobin is a guy who has learned how to listen. We'll all go a long way toward the peoples' goal when everyone, leadership especially, learns to listen.

Keep up the good work, and start listening!

-HOOSIER TRADE UNIONIST

Asks More News of Struggle in Spain

Editor, Daily Worker:

Since December of last year and up to the present day, there have been heroic struggles conducted by the Spanish people against the fascist Franco dictatorship. The seething unrest expressed in extraordinary actions by the students and workers of Spain are unprecedented under a fascist regime.

It seems to me it would not be amiss for the Daily Worker to give some adequate coverage to these developments—to reaffirm its opposition to the pro-Franco policy of our government—to call for the widest support to the efforts of the Spanish people to overthrow Franco—and to call for greater support to the stand taken by president Meany of the AFL-CIO in support of the struggles of the Spanish people.

-M. F.

The Only Guarantee

Editor, Daily Worker:

What are the deterrents and guarantees against injustice under socialism? I would suggest that the only such guarantee rests on an enlightened, articulate and questioning people; the fullest opportunity for education and the encouragement to question, doubt and dissent on all matters.

It seems inconsistent with belief in the socialist system and the working class to be fearful of complete freedom of expression or exposure to all views.

To deny or limit the right to dissenting opinion assumes infallibility. The free questioning of all ideas and policies makes necessary their constant examination. When correct, the necessity to explain and defend them gives them life and prevents them from becoming fossilized into meaningless dogma through unquestioning acceptance. When incorrect, a questioning scrutiny exposes them and makes easier their correction.

In a classless society encouragement to question and dissent should be a cherished principle ensuring an enlightened people guarding the health of their system.

Hopeful Reader

Warns Against New Cliches

PHILADELPHIA

Editor, Daily Worker:

There is a ready tendency to slide over the many and varied problems presented by the current reevaluations by burying thought with fresh armfuls of cliches and hackneyed phrases. Alongside of such stalwarts as "developing crisis," and "Wall Street imperialists" we now have "cult of the individual" and "Beria gang," all of which gets as meaningful as soap commercials when used as a substitute for thought.

We believe the development of society to be governed by scientific laws. Any period of history is capable of being analyzed within such laws. In the Soviet Union, for the first time in history this analysis could be, and was day-by-day.

Theory and practice were united and currently used in the development of socialist society. Now if errors are uncovered, if crimes against the people are committed, if anti-socialist ethics and morality crept in, elements of the theory, the practice, or both were wrong. Let us (and them) not ascribe such malpractice to "cults" and "gangs" with a wry shrug, and let it go that.

What was wrong? From facts available, it seems to be a result of a preoccupation with the fear of counter-revolution, subordinating more and more areas of life as it went along under the (by now) grisly slogan, "the end justifies the means." Certainly that fear was well-founded.

But it was apparently analyzed in 1950 the same way as it was in 1920. One reason at least, may be advanced for this; that there was no good yardstick to measure the development of socialist theory and practice in the USSR, during this period. In 1956 there are bases of comparison and they grow all the time.

This means that there must be analysis of practical and theoretical errors by the various parties. To dismiss these as products of "cults" and "gangs" is an insult to Marxist understanding.

If this present ferment will lead to a rapid advancement of the ideals of Socialism, to the well-being of mankind, it will in some small measure repay the injuries of the framed and the slaughtered.

A READER

"Property Is Theft" Is Proudhon's Phrase

Editor, Daily Worker:

It's good to see so much more discussion in the Daily Worker, but really when Francis Sheehy in the April 16 issue attributes Proudhon's "Property is theft"

formula to Marxists, there ought to be at least a footnote indicating that he is off base. Marx's letter to Schweitzer, Jan. 24, 1865, and Engels in Anti-Duhring both exposed the inadequacy of Proudhon's theory.

It's a pity that Sheehy is so full of malaprop quotations, like his Fabien "inevitability of gradualness", because his main point, his disagreement with Max Weiss, packs a real wallop.

-A. Jacks

Likes Articles Of George Morris

Editor, Daily Worker:

I would like to compliment George Morris' articles for their frankness, especially his tying them in with the labor situation in our country.

There is still a lot of confusion about the 20th congress because very little information exists. Also we too are guilty of not questioning some of the arrests and incidents in Soviet policy and concerning Stalin as a man who could do no wrong.

Cleveland Auto Worker

Guarantee Flow of Ideas, Says Communist

Editor, Daily Worker:

As one who has participated in the American Communist movement for the last fifteen years and as one who has had his share of witch-hunting, I want to say that my belief in the ultimate value of socialism, as a planned society for the service of the people, is unshaken. Eventually, production for profit must give way to production for service. How this will come about must depend on the particular conditions in a given country. Although the ownership of the means of production is basic to remove the most rabid inequalities and oppressions, it is not the only important factor to consider.

To carry Socialism to fulfillment, it must be remembered that other values are also extolled by society; the right to disagree and the minority right of having its views aired without fear. History has shown, many times in the past, that the minority view in one period has become the majority view in another. The flow of ideas to and from the rank and file must always remain open.

There are no human demigods. Some people are more brilliant than others and some people make greater contributions than others but to give them a carte-blanc, forever after, is wrong to them and stifling to others.

A formal organizational means should be found and adopted to guarantee the standards mentioned above. This is

not a plea for liberalism but a reaction against hierarchy, stagnation and bureaucracy.

AN AMERICAN COMMUNIST

Wants Clarification Of Right to Dissent

Editor, Daily Worker:

In your issues of April 5 and 6, Max Weiss examined critically the party record on "Communists and civil liberties."

He pointed out that the right to dissent is a popular American tradition. He declared that it will be granted under socialism.

The reasoning he set forth laid great stress on changes in concrete conditions, the ironic fact that owing to the law of uneven development, the U. S. A. will probably be the last stand of capitalism and the American minority resisting socialism will find no help abroad. Dissent can be tolerated so long as no attempt is made to restore capitalism by violence.

This is reasoning from concrete conditions, from the relationship of force within the nation and on the world scale. So far, surely, it is good Marxist reasoning.

Accordingly it is unlikely to arouse enthusiasm amongst those millions who believe, or say they believe, in the right to dissent, apart from any conditions or relationships of class forces. To many such minds, we shall be following expediency rather than what is to them principle.

It seems to me that Weiss' points need further development along a number of lines: (1) to what extent would we now reject the ideas of Lenin's "Proletarian Revolution and the renegade Kautsky"? which deals with the same problem as of 35 years ago. (2) how do we go about persuading America that we shall know how to distinguish between dissent and attempt at overthrow by violence.

Of some consequence also, though less important, is the fact that in our history the right to dissent has often been matched by the "right" of the conforming majority to isolate the dissenter or otherwise harass him. Let us not becloud disagreeable aspects of contradictions newly "discovered."

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