

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Fighting with Blinders Off

BUFFALO, N. Y.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Today, one of my comrades said to me, "It will never be the same again." How true . . . for him, for me, and for millions all over the world. We don't mean we've lost our faith in the fight for human decency, for Socialism . . . we mean that we're fighting for mankind for the first time with all blinders off. Nothing is accepted as dogma. Everything is open to questioning, probing, to testing through experience. Capitalism is on its way out, and mankind is moving toward socialism. How much better fighters for it we can be in the future!

I deeply believe that most of those thousands of Americans who are now communists will in years to come be leaders in fighting for and building Socialism in our country. I don't think our Communist Party will build it, as the dead hand of past mistakes is too heavy on us.

But I do believe that the Communist Party can play a valuable part in organizing a new party of socialism in America, and that the history of social movement has shown us that dissolution without the existence of a new organization would only lead to thousands of good fighters scattered and splintered, with a resulting body blow to the cause of socialism. And a really new party is not about to be built overnight.

But our organization will only go forward if we make some big changes. Two basic and minimal changes are:

First, we cannot remain tied to the Soviet Union's policies and present leadership, no matter how much respect we have for the October Revolution and the Soviet people. The Soviet leadership's answer to foreign criticism, though in some respects a step forward, doesn't answer our deepest questions, as ably expressed by Togliatti and Nenni, and with less clarity by our own National Committee, as to the structure of Soviet society, particularly in regard to lack of democracy, bureaucracy in state and party, and the resulting degenerations in many aspects of the country's life, including the ranks of the country's top leadership, with few or no exceptions.

It is inevitable that the Soviet Union, under the best of circumstances, will make serious mistakes in years to come, both internally and externally, and particularly true if the leadership there continues to cling to outmoded ideas of democratic centralism and arrogant pride in relation to the Soviet masses.

It is likewise inevitable that there will be, over the years, sharp differences between many Americans fighting for Socialism with theories and policies of Soviet Communists and the Soviet state, with many agreements as well.

If we treat defence of the Soviet Union as a mainspring in our activities, we will not be capable of fighting for socialism in our country.

Second, we must have a democratic Communist Party, and later a democratic party of Socialism. An undemocratic party cannot lead the American fight for Socialism successfully. Its policies will not be close to the masses, and the advanced people, and particularly the advanced workers, will not join it or stay in it long.

Democratic centralism has shown itself to be no good as a central principle of party organization, and tied with the necessity to defend wrong policies of the Soviet Union as well as right ones, has led to bureaucracy and the production of bureaucrats, and to the growing isolation of thousands of the best Socialist fighters in our country from the democratic masses. Democratic centralism must go, to be replaced by democratic majority rule!

Our present party leadership should lead the way, by learning how to practice democracy daily. Our convention committees, including national and all other party conventions, should insist, and so should we rank and filers insist, that all voting delegates to the coming conventions be elected from actual party sections.

All present party leaders, such as National Committee members, who are not actually elected from sections, should be allowed to attend, with voice and not vote. Present leading bodies should not present slates as official nominations for future leading bodies.

Incidentally, it is beyond belief that our national commit-

tee has a unanimous opinion, as stated in the statement on the Khrushchev secret speech. Only two weeks before, on June 18, Dennis had put forth a significantly different position. Was it impossible for one or more National Committee members to publicly disagree, or to generally agree and differ on details or emphasis? Our present leadership has to convince the rank and file and other socialist people of their sincerity and belief in democracy or there's going to be no rank and file and no Communist Party worth sticking to. Let's face it, and then move forward to build a really effective democratic, independent Communist Party, and later a mass party of Socialism in America.

—Steelworker.

PS.—I'm not sure what your policy is now on unsigned letters, but I'm not signing mine. I'd like to point out that the Party is at best semi-legal and mostly illegal in basic industry, including the steel industry.

Unanswered Questions About Soviet Jews

Editor, Daily Worker:

Faced with Tsarist pogroms in Russia and with anti-Semitism in capitalist states generally, Jews have long joined with members of other national minorities in being among the most ardent fighters for socialism and in defense of the USSR. The Soviet policy on nationalities was long one of the most appealing aspects of its program. It is our deep hope that events will yet take shape in a manner to warrant this continued confidence.

At the moment however our questions are deep ones.

Pravda deletes that single clause of Dennis' article which deals with the snuffing out of the U.S.S.R. of the Jewish leaders; Khrushchev's report makes no mention in its many pages of any of the crimes committed against the Jewish people; Khrushchev's interviews with the French Socialists (and true, this is from the N.Y. Times) in which he suggests a reactionary quota system as he speaks of Jews in higher positions being "disproportionate" to their number in the total Soviet population and in which he urges Jews to become "Russified" (!); Furtseva's astonishing interview with Petran

of the Guardian in which she claims ignorance of the murders of Jewish leaders and closing of Jewish institutions. Her "logic" is to point to those rights which Jews do have. Would a similar approach be acceptable here—to meet evidences of anti-Semitism or anti-Negro crimes in the U. S. A. by pointing to those rights which Negroes or Jews do have?

The workers of the world, many of whom have lifetime histories of struggle for a socialist brotherhood of man, have a right to expect something better on this from the present Soviet leaders. Likewise Dennis and other American leaders, before rushing acquiescence in recent statements, should know that there are rank and filers who can not be satisfied with Soviet statements which—among other shortcomings—continue to ignore the executions of Jewish leaders and destruction of Jewish institutions. Recent events have cut too deep and hurt too much to settle for anything less than a truly Marxist position on nationalities.—Longtime Reader.

George Morris On UE and IAM

Editor, Daily Worker:

Ernest Thompson, in his letter (Wednesday) regarding the shift of upstate New York UE locals to the International Association of Machinists, evades the basic questions under discussion, and leaves readers with the erroneous impression that I favored the shift to the IAM.

It will be recalled that in my first column on the question and in my column in reply to his first letter, I deplored the absence of a unification agreement that would have made possible unification of ALL UE members with the International Union of Electrical Workers. But I said I do not blame the district people of Upstate Dist 3 U.E. for deciding to go to the IAM, or the Dist. 4 (Lower New York-New Jersey) members for deciding to shift to the IUE, because in the absence of long awaited unification, they are doing the best they can to protect their organizations, contracts and conditions.

But Brother Thompson argues that it is in principle wrong to enter a union like the IAM because it is a "craft" union and until several years ago excluded Negroes.

To challenge my point that the IAM is predominantly an industrial type union, he alleges that at the merger convention the union represented 630,000 members, of whom "400,000 of the number is craft." I have before me the proceedings of the merger convention. Of the 626,000 the IAM represented, the union affiliated 450,000 with the Industrial Union Division. That's a good bit of industrial unionism.

As I wrote before, there is no dispute on the union's bad record with respect to Negro workers. Its ban was eliminated only in 1947. But let's not forget that there are nearly a million Negro workers in the unions of the former AFL, most of which had some sort of open or tacit restrictions not many years ago. It took struggle, changed conditions and other influences like the Cleveland FEP ordinance he cited to make those unions go forward in this respect.

Much as I'd prefer that UE unions unite with the IUE. I don't regard those joining the IAM, as some locals did, as "lost." Those with a progressive and militant history, especially the Negro workers, can make a tremendous contribution to IAM progress.

GEORGE MORRIS

Dennis Article Helpful

WABASH, Ind.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Your new feature "Speak Your Piece" is clarifying and inspiring and is timely in a manner never before possible. The maze of problems which confronts all peoples, the confusions and frustrations encountered, make it difficult to recognize correct policies. For this reason I find the article of Eugene Dennis of June 18 most helpful.

I especially liked his point about self-criticism as expressed by self-correction. No scientist ever went directly to correct conclusions. Only those who act will make progress toward correct conclusions and also mistakes. And even mistakes can sometimes contribute.

So, thanks to the Daily Worker for its long career of activity, some of it brilliant and some not, but always devoted to a search for truth. —R.H.A.