

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Self-Imposed Limitations

Editor, Daily Worker:

It seems to me that a most significant result of the 20th Congress, and the ensuing world discussion is general recognition of the fact that there is more than one road to socialism.

I believe there is a parallel here which applies to our own American Communist Party. Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform because those who were in leadership in the Soviet Union thought they knew all the answers. They alone were Marxists! I think we have made the same kind of mistake. Our party has always claimed to be the party of socialism. We stated flatly that there were no Marxists outside of the Communist Party — and proceeded, somewhat immodestly, to lay out the road to socialism with an oversimplified roadmap provided for those who were willing to agree that all other roads only went in circles.

This narrow exclusiveness had a disastrous effect on much of our trade-union and community work. When an issue arose, we got together, planned a protest meeting, chose one another as speakers, sold tickets to one another, and finally went to the meeting where we had a wonderful time saying hello to this or that comrade whom we hadn't seen in years.

Oh yes, I forgot to mention that after everything had been planned down to the last detail, —including what was to "come out" of the meeting—we cordially invited the people in the community to step right up and be sponsors.

In spite of all this, however, I believe that our party and its leaders are sincere and honest in their desire to see socialism in America. It is necessary for us to realize, now, that there are many others who are equally sincere and honest in their desire for socialism. These people are in unions, fraternal organizations, and political parties. They call themselves socialists, Marxists, and other names. They believe in democracy, peace, and equality of peoples.

I think that there is room for these people, together with us, in a united party of socialism under the banner of Karl Marx.

Like many of my comrades, I am deeply concerned about the future of our party, and the future of the socialist movement. In my opinion, the forthcoming party convention can well become a turning point at which we can take a new direction. I would like to see a call issued now, to all those (inside and outside the Communist Party), who believe in socialism, to participate in the convention. The purpose of this should be to plan the building of a genuine, broad socialist movement. If a new Marxist party should result, I can envision one in which there would be the fullest freedom to express opposing views within the framework of a common goal.

In such a way, we can begin, collectively, to find the correct road the American road to socialism.

—H. S.—Bronx.

Historical Evidence

Editor, Daily Worker:

In his letter appearing June

28, Herbert Aptheker objects to the charge that Communists have been deliberately blind to reputable evidence that was fully available concerning the Stalin era. Aptheker is of course right in emphasizing the major responsibility of Communist leaders within the USSR . . . for having misinformed the world Communist movement.

Aptheker is also right in seeking a more fundamental explanation of how Communists used "criteria, of scholarship, of weighing evidence." I look forward to studies by Aptheker on these matters.

However, it seems to me Aptheker is absolving all of us just a little too much, by placing so much responsibility on "deliberate falsification" from above. As a historian, Aptheker must have been aware at least of the falsification of history by Soviet leaders. He had such reputable evidence as the deletions and falsifications in the works of Stalin. All that was necessary was to compare the latest Stalin editions with those published 20 years ago by International Publishers.

Aptheker has written the most authoritative and brilliant works on the Negro in American history. Why didn't he use the same kind of scholarship in considering Soviet history? Why didn't he, for example, check the Short Course History of the CPSU with reputable evidence in works by E. H. Carr or our own John Reed?

Unfortunately, in his letter, Aptheker continues to blind himself to reputable evidence about current Soviet developments. He dismisses I. F. Stone's recent report from Moscow with

the question whether that too is reputable evidence.

Stone concluded that Russia was a bad society and had dishonest leaders. I think Stone was wrong in drawing such drastic and unjust conclusions; he did so by weighing evidence of only one kind. He blithely excluded the enormous contributions of socialism in the USSR to industrial growth, to the cause of world peace, to raising living standards, to developing education and culture.

But Stone also cited reputable evidence of a critical nature, such as the dragnet legal definition of counter-revolution under Soviet law. There was other cogent criticism. In other words we can sift what is reputable from what is biased and unjust in Stone's report. But Aptheker dismisses Stone just as we dismissed that part of the evidence in bourgeois correspondents of the past all the way from Duranty to Salisbury.

As for myself, I must admit I blinded myself to the same reputable evidence in the past. Breast beating won't help, but admitting mistakes and correcting them may.

—JOSEPH CLARK.

Suggestions For Elections

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am disturbed by the fact that we do not seem to have made any plans for the elections. Surely we do not intend to sit this one out.

Some people are hesitant about the question and they say the following:

"We are confused about the

elections. We do not look upon them in the same way that we did a few years ago. At that time we saw the 1956 elections as a decisive phase of the struggle to defeat war and fascism. Now the situation has changed. The outcome of the elections will not make any decisive changes in our country. Therefore, what role can be played by the Left?"

I agree that this may not be the kind of decisive year that we thought it might be. Nevertheless it will be one more stepping stone by which the American people will travel on the way toward a third party. The participation of the Left will help to give it that character. The bourgeoisie would like us not to participate so that they could make this just one more contest between the "ins" and the "outs."

I would like to make the following suggestions:

1. Let's inform the public about what candidates are running, their platform, what the issues are, which candidates should be supported and which defeated.

2. Many unions will be active in the campaign. We should try to work with them in order to strengthen the independent political action of labor.

3. We should engage in activities to defeat the worst reactionaries and to help elect liberal-labor Congressmen.

4. We might begin discussion among the different socialist-minded groups to support a few advanced thinking candidates.

It is true that our forces are small but we will only grow larger by this type of work among the people.

—BRONXITE