

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Urges Foster to Re-Think 'Realities of the Times'

Editor, Daily Worker:

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Many years ago I was subjected to sharp criticism in regard to certain activity I was doing in the progressive movement. It stunned me, because I was sure I had been doing only the right thing, and yet, a lot of competent judges were agreed that I was wrong.

From that experience I learned something that I have seen repeated many times by other people. That is, a person being criticized almost never can see the validity of criticism because he is so sure that, with his good intentions, he must be right, and it seems that the critic just does

not understand.

It takes a lot of effort to really open one's mind to accept, or evaluate, a criticism of one's self.

This fact has been a standing problem in our ranks for the past couple of years, and an outstanding sample is William Z. Foster's reply to M.G. this week. It is a perfect example of how the best of us can't grasp a criticism when it is directed against us.

Perhaps it can be made clearer by reference to other, past writings of Comrade Foster.

The key point in M.G.'s letter was the need of American Marxists to base themselves on the specific realities of actual life around us and to take full responsibility each and every one of us to solve the problems that confront us, and once and for all to get away from dependence on dogma, which for us, has been mainly in the form of taking other countries' experiences as final and authoritative for us. It is this concept which many of our members, including Comrade Foster, cannot digest.

If reference is made to the Worker of August, 1956, one will recall an article of Comrade Foster, plaintively asking why do many comrades complain that we do not ground ourselves in the American scene, when he has written so many books, etc. Foster's review of the International Affairs article is an example of what those comrades complained of: verbal acknowledgment of the American scene, practical tailing after imported dogmas. A re-reading of the letters which criticized that August article might help Foster grasp the idea better.

A second example. Way, way back, in the days which very few now recall, during World War I, Comrade Foster made great contributions to the struggles of the workers in certain big industries. He was able to, because he based himself on the actual circumstances and conditions of these American workers. Then, as the years went on, the blinkers of dogma were imposed on the American movement, so that in his book "Bryan to Stalin" Foster himself swallowed the theory that his 1917-1918 activity was wrong; it "should have" centered on the fight against the war, not on the trade union struggle. And we accepted that line, and in 1939-1941 led one union local after another into disaster as we fought the drift to war (we thought) but actually only isolated ourselves from the workers. They wanted jobs and more pay after ten years of depression and we gave them pamphlets, "The Yanks Are Not Coming," and the APM, when the Ford strike victory came, we marked it here in New York with a narrow APM peace rally, not by a CIO organizing drive.

Foster's reply to MG completely misses the point. It would be helpful if he would re-read that letter and start rethinking, the way Marx and Engels and Lenin, thought out, the realities of their times.

R. BAXTER  
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## Detroit Cops Kill Negro Lad

DETROIT. — Cops here again have shot and killed a Negro youth, 15 years of age, Sept. 30, reported fleeing from them in a stolen truck. The lad's name is Virgil Miller, seventh grade student who died of a gunshot wound in the head.

His stepfather, Albert Martin, stunned by the news could only say, "the shooting was a mistake, the boy didn't know how to drive."

The youth's body was found 10 feet from the truck on Hastings just south of Erskine. The cops claimed he was driving a truck stolen from the Eastern Market. Their story is they passed the truck which was without lights then they blinked their lights but the truck speeded up and they gave chase.

They fired 10 shots at the youth behind the wheel the cops said. The truck banged into a parked car and stopped. Six shots went into the truck, but the cops admit one shot hit Miller as he fled. He was hit in the head. Thus another killing has taken place and a life taken. Detroit cops notorious for being trigger happy when it comes to Negro citizens will have a hard time on this killing when it comes to explaining how they couldn't catch a 15-year-old youth but had to shoot him in the head.

## Chrysler spends \$400,000. As layoffs hit workers

DETROIT. — Newsmen returning here from Miami, Fla., where the Chrysler Corporation had a press review of its 1958 models, said that an estimated \$400,000 was spent by the corporation, winning, dining and entertaining some 300 writers, TV and radio men. "Tex" Colbert, Chrysler president, who wants the UAW to take a wage cut in 1958 was a prominent participant.

During the festivities in the swank hotel in Miami, the corporation also announced that its 7,000 member Evansville, Ind., plants be closed down, discontinued.

The main line of the press briefing was "its going to be a great year for Chrysler, if the union don't rock the boat."