

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Respect for Friends' Opinion

Editor, Daily Worker:

The terrible events in Hungary have set off further discussions around the question: what should be the attitude of socialists toward the USSR and its leaders?

Surprisingly, there still seem to be many people whose views on this subject have changed not at all since the 20th Congress. Criticize the USSR? Sure, they're for it—until somebody actually criticizes. They're willing to parrot the CPSU's own "self-criticism," but anybody who goes one inch beyond this is denounced as "anti-Soviet," "revisionist," ect. etc.

This attitude is rationalized in two ways. The first argument is essentially: the CPSU is so experienced, so expert in Marxist theory and practice—how can we presume to criticize it?

The shortest answer to this is, "There's no fool like an old fool." More concretely: no matter how one feels about the Soviet intervention in Hungary (and I have yet to meet anyone who feels happy about it) does anyone doubt that the basic cause of the mess there was a hair-raising and criminal series of blunders committed by the CPSU and by Rakosi's clique with the advice and consent of the CPSU? So "expert" were these experienced Marxists that they have set back Hungarian socialism by 10 years (at least!). And yet we must not "presume" to criticize them!

The second argument is: the Soviet government is a socialist government. Socialist governments never (well, hardly ever) make serious mistakes. At any rate we should, as socialists, give them "the benefit of the doubt," at all times.

Of course this by-passes the question of whether the USSR is really a socialist country. Personally, the most I would be willing to say is that it represents a kind of socialism and not a very good kind. But let that go. Assuming the USSR is a socialist country, does this automatically entitle the CPSU to special consideration, "the benefit of the doubt"? I think not.

Most of us expect (and generally get) the "benefit of the doubt" from our friends. But in return our friends expect, first, that we will respect their opinions (whether or not we agree with them) and, second, that we will tell them the truth. Otherwise we are no longer friends.

Has the CPSU ever shown any respect for its friends' opinions? Of course not! It will not even acknowledge their opinion publicly if it disagrees. Dennis' feeble criticism was printed in Pravda, but the one point where he went beyond the CPSU's own admissions—on anti-Semitism—was cut out. Togliatti's considerably sharper criticism was not printed at all.

Moreover, the CPSU has not once conceded that any "outside" criticism had the least merit. Where their opinions differ from those of other Marxists, it is always the other fellow who is "confused" or "fails to understand." You would think that after the terrible mistakes they admitted at the 20th Congress they would show a little humility—but, like bureaucrats everywhere, they don't know what the word means.

Has the CPSU been honest with other Marxists (not to speak of its own people)? Of course not! A few years ago, Khrushchev hailed Stalin as the world's greatest genius. A few months ago he denounced him as a criminal lunatic. It doesn't matter which you believe—one or the other was a lie. The same is true of the flip-flop on Tito—

one year a fascist dog, the next year a socialist brother.

At the very beginning of the Hungarian uprising, Pravda denounced it as a Western-financed provocation. This lie is today not accepted by even the Kadar government, installed by Soviet tanks.

If the CPSU expects the "benefit of the doubt" from socialism, let it respect them enough to print their opinions, without editing—and tell them the truth. Friendship for the USSR? Of course! Friendship for the bureaucrats who run it? Until they show a little humility—not to speak of common honesty—include me out!

—Alex Leslie.

Would Makes Votes More Specific

NEWARK, N. J.

Editor, Daily Worker:

It is obvious that there are disagreements within the National Committee. It is also becoming obvious that members of the N. C. have changed their opinions and positions on one question or another and even entirely on the draft resolution.

I have no objections to anyone changing his or her position, but then let's say so, let's make positions clear.

Gene Dennis spoke at a meeting of New Jersey people. It is apparent that he is NOW in disagreement with the draft resolution. He is in agreement with Foster. The only difference seems to be on the question of whether there is over-emphasis on left sectarian errors. But basically I see no difference now in Foster's and Dennis' position.

Dennis has changed his position. He has that right, there is no question about that. But as a leader, as general secretary of the Communist Party USA, please, let's be frank, let's say "I voted for the resolution, I disagreed with Foster, but now I have changed my position for thus and thus reasons."

Members of the N. C. are abstaining, voting "yes with qualifications" (whatever that means). They have that right, but they also have a responsibility to the membership. I therefore urge that every member of the N. C. when abstaining, voting no, or "yes with," make their position known to the membership.

—GAY CANTOR

Questions On Hungary

BRONX

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have been meaning to write a letter for a long time, but finally the Hungarian events and Allen's article of Nov. 15 got me to do it.

Allen writes: "The DW editorial of Nov. 5 recognizes the shift toward counter-revolution . . . citing Nagy's attempt to withdraw the country from the Warsaw pact, and his call for UN intervention."

Is this proof of counter-revolution? Was this not clearly the most burning question of the Hungarian workers—the withdrawal of Soviet troops and true independence for Hungary? Has Nagy now become a counter-revolutionist?

What is of paramount importance—the wishes of the Soviet Government or the demands of the Hungarian people, or have we decided now that the Hungarian people are all fascists? Have so little confidence in the Hungarian people that we honestly believe they could be misled to allow fascist elements to come to power?

Even the N. Y. Times writes that nowhere in East Europe do the people want a return to capitalism. It writes that the peo-

ple want a form of democratic socialism.

A Socialist government which has to be kept in power through the use of arms is not socialism to me.

I think the Hungarian events called for the most vigorous protest to the Soviet Union, all the more because it is a Socialist nation.

The same action in Guatemala by our own country was protested by us. It cannot be condoned when it bears a Socialist label.

The action of the Soviet Union has harmed the cause of Socialism, world peace and coexistence.

We cannot afford again to be doped by labels. Tito was called a fascist too, and labels were pinned on all the thousands who were murdered in the USSR. After the 20th Congress, are we still going to follow explanations of the Soviet Union rather than the Hungarian CP itself?

I have been 15 years in the Party, have held some leadership positions, have been a constant reader of the press. At no accepted every twist and turn time have I been inactive. I have in Soviet policy, sometimes with great difficulty.

But not all the words in a whole collection of Lenin will get me to swallow this. For myself I must face the painful fact that I can no longer remain a member of the Party if it does not become completely independent of Soviet policy. I want to belong to an organization which seeks to bring Socialism to our country by whatever way the American people decide.

—FRANCIS L.

Lester Rodney's Article Praised

Editor, Daily Worker:

Three loud and mighty cheers for Lester Rodney's view on Hungary. Also \$5, which his article has finally induced from my much-beleaguered purse.

Rodney must pick up so much commonsense and sympathy with the great mass of Americans at the ball fields!

I don't think the above is entirely flippant. It seems to me that there is some significance in the fact that the working staff of a daily newspaper—which must say to itself over its typewriters every day, "This is going to be read tomorrow by several thousand Americans whom we are trying to influence"—comes up with a point of view which is so significantly at variance with that of party scholars and functionaries whose daily personal contact must by necessity be largely only with other Party scholars and functionaries. To repeat a fine old Marxist maxim. Existence does determine consciousness.

Please keep dissenting and being unorthodox. Only the most far-reaching and creative criticism and discussion will produce a really meaningful Socialist movement in this country. Of course you'll make mistakes. When you take the hard way—and this is certainly the hard way—you're bound to make dozens of them. You're also bound to come up with something.

Love and best wishes—and a bunch of red roses for Jesus Colon's fruit salad jar.—N.B.

Resolution by Harlem Region CP

Editor, Daily Worker:

A membership conference of the Harlem Region of the Communist Party USA was held on Oct. 6, 1956. Although the discussion included reactions to the many subdivisions of Section 4 of the Draft Resolution, the central issue which emerged and received maximum attention was that of preservation or liquidation of the CPUSA.

The overwhelming majority of

ment on the following points: So therefore it resolved:

1. That there be no liquidations present expressed agreement of the CPUSA.

2. That our Party be preserved and strengthened as a Marxist-Leninist Party based on the working class.

3. That fundamental changes are needed in our Party to meet new historical situation in which we live in our country and that such changes take place within the framework of our basic Marxist-Leninist principles and science.

To implement the above, therefore be it resolved: That each and every member of the Party engage in more intensive study and mastery of the fundamentals of the science of Marxism-Leninism to guarantee correct applications of these principles to our work.

Be it also resolved: That there be development of greater inner party democracy and rejection of bureaucracy at all levels of leadership.

Be it also resolved: That our present methods of work and cadre policy be sharply revised to insure a genuine application of democratic centralism, including recognition and election of all Party leadership.

Be it also resolved: That immediate steps be taken to execute the policy of industrial concentration.

Be it further resolved: That we reaffirm our devotion to the concept and practice of international working-class solidarity, ever conscious that the main enemy is U.S. imperialism.

Be it finally resolved: That we reaffirm our pride in the achievements and contributions of our Party in the struggle for peace and progress of the people of the U.S. and throughout the world.

Unionist Praises Rodney Article

MILWAUKEE, Wis.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I would like to express complete agreement with Lester Rodney's article in which he takes the position that the action of the Soviet Union in Hungary was indefensible and wrong.

I cannot send a contribution right now due to a strike in our industry. Will get some in as soon as we get back to work.

If possible how about reprinting Rodney's Nov. 20 article in the Sunday paper?

Chairman, Trade Union Section, Milwaukee C.P.

Disagrees with Open Letter

Editor, Daily Worker:

Considering the dissatisfaction of wide sections of the Communist Party membership over the Daily Worker editorial of Nov. 5 and the National Committee statement of Nov. 7 on the Hungarian events, one would have thought that the National Committee would have heeded this dissatisfaction in its letter to the party membership on Nov. 19. On the contrary the Letter does just the opposite. The majority of the National Committee associates the entire party membership with its notoriously incorrect policy on the events in Hungary. The Letter states: "We are deeply grieved at the bloodshed and destruction in Hungary and are profoundly concerned with the causes and meaning of these events for Socialism—as are all Party members and other Socialist-minded Americans." (Emphasis, mine, JWF).

I for one do not gloat or predict dire results for socialism as a consequence of the events in Hungary. In the historical sense these events are going to strengthen socialism. When fas-

cist bandits and reactionary clericalism having long ago taken counsel of Hitler and now imperialist intriguers and in the name of Order and the restoration of feudal and capitalist Property, chose the propitious moment to march into Hungary and spread bloodshed and destruction—it is they, the fascists, who bear the blame and will perish in history's eyes. Not socialism.

In its latest statement the majority of the National Committee has made only one shift in its original position. It names Knowland, Eastland and the State Department and says that "we recognize the dangers created by the unscrupulous exploitation of the Hungarian events." But why doesn't the National Committee delineate in detail the imperialist class forces and certain monopoly interests in particular who are bent on war and want to do in Hungary what is being done in Egypt and who want to destroy the People's Republic of China? Why doesn't the National Committee say that these avaricious monopoly interests want to use Hungary as a steppingstone to war on the Soviet Union?

It is precisely the monopoly interests in our own country who threaten peace. After all, speaking at the UN the other day, Indian representative Krishna Menon stated publicly for the world to hear that certain American monopoly interests should go "to a psychiatrist." So we don't have to draw figurative embellishments from Hitler alone!

Neither is it required that socialism look backward. It exists before our eyes. It covers over a third of the world. It is strong despite mistakes and errors. The forces of national-liberation in former colonial and dependent countries are growing and are strong.

I think the National Committee makes a gross error by its apparent failure to understand these relation of forces in its evaluation of the events in Hungary. It places the forces of imperialism in the background, and the forces of peace and socialism in the forefront for condemnation.

Without perhaps realizing it, the National Committee is helping to split the forces of socialism into Soviet and pro-Tito, that is, playing up Titoism into a new world current of socialism.

Tremendous changes are taking place in the world, and all Communist parties of the world are undergoing change. But every Communist Party, if it wants to follow the path of Marxism, must make its changes on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

It is my view that neither the current Letter nor the previous statements of the National Committee and Daily Worker editorials approached the events in Hungary from the standpoint of the world relation of forces. The analysis should have begun with the end of World War II and considered the aims of socialism and the aims of imperialism including the stages of development and variations in each of the People's Democracies. And we have therefore not had a real Marxist analysis of the events in Hungary.

—James W. Ford.

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