

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Spirit of Responsibility

Editor, Daily Worker:

Last week I mailed you a letter criticizing Lester Rodney. My main point was that we should not jump to conclusions based mostly in what the enemy is saying. That we should not judge a situation by isolating it from the surrounding situation.

I have been surprised to notice that my letter was not published, specially when the D. W. have printed so many opinions contrary to my own. For instance, today David Solomon writes sneeringly about one member of the National Committee and nominates Lester Rodney for his place.

Now, freedom of expression is a great thing and everybody should say his honest opinion. But it seems to me that the spirit of comradeship and responsibility that we owe to our cause is lacking in some of the letters.

There was a time when we used to have discipline, keeping in mind the necessity to close our ranks against the enemy. But it is clear that now some people are acting like anarchists, or a worst kind of disruption—presuming, at the same time, to advise us on what they call “the American interpretation of Marxism?”—MAURICE

Do Hungarians Want Soviet Aid

Editor, Daily Worker:

CHICAGO

Just picked up my last week's D.W.'s, and I must write to thank and praise Lester Rodney for his fine piece on Hungary. This is the true voice of socialism, cutting through sophistries, justifications, and half-truths with facts, passionate in its love for people, remembering that socialism is more than steel output, grain acreage, or military might, but the hope of mankind for justice, freedom, and brotherhood. I think this is perhaps the best of the many good articles you have published. Please keep them up—from all sides—and here's a small contribution to help.

I have been distressed by many of the letters from our Party members, and by none more than the statements of comrades Eugene Dennis and William Foster. These two leaders of the American Communist Party defend the Soviet intervention in Hungary and base their defense upon an outright lie—that the Red Army came in “upon the request of the Kadar government” (Foster, DW, Nov. 21, “in response to the newly formed Hungarian Workers and Peasants Government” (Dennis, DW, Nov. 12).

This is impossible because there was no such government when the Red Army intervened on Nov. 4. At that time the Hungarian government, confused and inept as it was—was the Nagy government, which protested urgently against the intervention. There was no Kadar government until it was established by the tanks of the Red Army, after the former government had been overthrown “by force and violence.”

The Red Army did not intervene—so far as I can see from any statement in any paper—at the request even of the Hungarian Communist Party, which never, to my knowledge, even when its members were in danger of their lives, called for a foreign army to take over its country. The complete silence of the Hungarian C.P. since Nov. 4 would indicate something less than fraternal welcome to the Soviets, a fact other C.P.'s are entitled to take into consideration.

For our own Party, when the two acknowledged leaders of the American Communist Party cover up historical facts known all over the world, rather than criticize the Soviet Union or evaluate its actions according to socialist morality and international law, what chance do we have of becoming a party of the American working class? How can we rebuild ourselves, or claim the respect and devotion of reasonable men and women? How can we defend ourselves against our attackers? Unless this sort of thinking is decisively fought at the coming Party convention, I see little future for the American Communist Party.

A. HARIS

'It Is Defeat Which Educates'

Editor, Daily Worker:

The letter Calm Reason and Science from Paula H. (DW 12/6) is a good example of the kind of sober attitude and temperate language one should maintain and use when dealing with so complex a problem as the one which arose from the disclosures of political abuses of the government of the Soviet Union committed flagrantly violating the principles of socialism it was duty bound to uphold with irrefragable deeds.

Mistaken is the attitude of thinking, talking and acting the way many individuals here and abroad have been doing, heaping denunciations at the government of that country that imply that socialism can do no good.

Someone said long ago, “Free and fair discussion will ever be found the firmest friend to truth.” And Emerson said: “It is defeat which educates us.”

To profit from these wise words let us calmly try reason and science if we want to do justice to the promise of better ways of life. Socialism, honestly practiced, is capable of fulfilling, and not allow ourselves to become its nullifiers or wreckers by persisting in regarding that which wrong in the Soviet Union, in Poland and, most tragically, in Hungary, is proof incontestable that socialism is a failure.

An ideological shock as the one which believers in socialism have suffered this year should serve to educate us to exert caution, tolerance, patience, not to turn into despisers and accusers of socialism. Anger, frustration and desperation are unmistakable signs of weak character lacking firm convictions and sternly disciplined political integrity.

—Broadminded.

West Phila. CP Maps Election Activity

—PHILADELPHIA.

Editor, Daily Worker:

The West Philadelphia Area Committee of the Communist Party, met last week for the purpose of discussing the results of the 1956 elections, and preparing a post-election program, which in effect, would begin our 1958 Electoral program NOW.

Our discussion led to concrete proposals as to what to do here and now, based on our community, the Negro liberation movement, and how to strengthen Negro-labor unity.

We took as our starting point the fight for amending Senate Rule 22 as of greatest concern and immediate importance in the fight for civil rights.

We felt that the campaign for Negro representation must be discussed . . . beginning now—that this campaign should be reviewed and analyzed, examining all areas in Philadelphia, and not just the 4th C.D., for the

possibility of helping to build a movement which will send a Negro to Congress. The various campaigns in the past election, Roberts, Dales, Scott, and the 6th C.D., should teach us that the Negro people want to choose their own candidate and not vote for just any one decided upon by groups outside of and divorced from the main stream of Negro life.

Other issues of importance were discussed, not the least of which was the whole question of peace. A committee was formed to prepare a program for the adoption, to meet and act as rapidly as possible. (At this writing the committee has already had its first meeting and has set the date for another.)

This event happened in November, 1956, in the midst of pre-convention discussion, serious political difference, bitterness over Hungary, and with many questions on the minds of many comrades as to whether or not the Communist Party should even exist.

These differences were pushed in the background in the recognition of the urgency to get into the fight for the immediate needs of the people, as our surest guarantee of getting back on the train traveling the American Road to Socialism.

We urge similar discussion in all party organizations, ending up in the adoption of workable programs for immediate action. While our differences are important, still, unresolved, and bare much discussion, programs such as the above will help us keep our balance and guarantee our existence.

—West Phila. Committee Communist Party.

Should Quote Entire Sentence

Dear Lester Rodney:

Here's \$6 for the DW fund drive sent in your honor. But don't think I'm voting for you for member of the National Committee. Not by any means. I'll back you as an alternate member, maybe, but that's as far as I'll go.

In my opinion the central thesis of your recent column on Hungary, that “the Soviet intervention is indefensible,” given thus absolutely and without qualification and without reference to time or place, is hardly tenable. The individual arguments you advance are all good as far as they go, and must be taken into account, but they don't show that “Soviet intervention is indefensible.” period.

Your dislike of any kind of modification of a statement extends also to quotations, and I'd like to ask you your real opinion of such a practice. For example, you quoted part of a sentence of mine (without mentioning my name) in support of one of your points, because, I suppose, if you had quoted the entire sentence, it wouldn't have helped to make your point. You said: “Picture if you will the reaction of a Hungarian worker to the statement by a Daily Worker reader the other day, ‘I for one don't want the Soviet troops withdrawn.’”

Now let's look at what I said: “I for one don't want the Soviet troops withdrawn UNTIL THIS DANGER IS PAST.” That's different, isn't it?

Now, let us picture the reaction to this of a Hungarian worker, a class-conscious and informed worker, who has stood helplessly by while well-armed fascist gangs lynched Communist and Jewish comrades. I'm inclined to think he would agree with me—that mistakes had been made, that intervention was wrong on Oct. 23, but that, after the Soviet troops had

started leaving and the terrorist gangs had got going, something drastic had to be done, and that as soon as the socialist-minded workers had things under their control, the Soviet troops should be finally withdrawn and a fresh start made (without Soviet troops and with the X-armed gangs).

However, you made a good argument, on the whole, and as I said above I'm willing to back you as an alternate member of the N.C.—and I urge everybody to help keep the Daily Worker going!

—Oakley C. Johnson.

Charney Article Held Unscientific

Editor, Daily Worker:

George Charney's article in the Daily Worker of Monday, Dec. 3, reveals more about George Charney than it does about the subject under discussion. Mr. Charney is no longer restricted by Stalinism or Leninism or Marxism or dialectal materialism or social science of any kind. His thoughts are now guided instead by intuition. Some have been accused of culling those facts which support their predilections and disregarding others. But Charney scorns all of the facts and substitutes his unexplained personal impressions formed from afar.

For instance, he says he is “far from persuaded that there was an imminent and overriding danger of a fascist coup d'etat” in Hungary “or that the Soviet Union had no other alternative.” How sad that the facts presented both by Khrushchev and Tito were so unconvincing to his unreceptive mind! How absurd of the Communist Parties of China and most other countries to draw logical conclusions from the facts! Away with logic, we have Charney's intuition, which needs no facts.

Pravda stated on Nov. 23 that social and economic errors of the Hungarian government had in a number of instances been made over the contrary advice of Soviet leaders. That statement, if true, would tend to exonerate the Soviet Union from major responsibility for the Hungarian difficulties, thus damaging Charney's premise. But Charney easily repelled the attack, saying:

“I find it impossible to accept” the article! Impossible, indeed! Why refute? It is far easier to reject on the basis of intuition.

With unsullied purism, he piously inquires whether socialism did not come to Hungary (and to the other East European countries) “prematurely.” It seems that having once admitted the possibility of achieving socialism by parliamentary means, Charney has now galloped so far on the parliamentary road that he can perceive no other correct path to socialism. He notes that in 1947 the Hungarian Communist Party had obtained only 17 percent of the popular vote, and he concludes that therefore the party should not have accepted governmental responsibility in 1949. It should not have taken power until it had 51 percent of the vote!

This article will be of great interest to the CPSU which was equally “premature” in 1917 and which should therefore take immediate steps to restore capitalism and inaugurate the two-party system. And what shall we say of the Chinese? Chu Teh led his Eighth Route Army to ultimate victory over the Kuomintang without even entering an election campaign. The inescapable conclusion is that the Communist Party of China has no right to lead the Chinese people to socialism. Let them first

satisfy Charney and win 51 percent of the popular vote.

Charney's comments about the Hungarian electoral situation make no pretense of being based on facts. He frankly says:

“I do not presume to know the facts.” But instead of keeping discreet silence in the light of that admission, he warns:

“Hence I can only speak tentatively.”

I should think that he would not speak at all.

Charney deplors that the “premature transition” robbed the People's Democracies of multiple parties and a parliamentary system which reflected different classes. Apparently he mourns the passing of the capitalist class; and I fear nothing will restore his happiness but the emergence of a new capitalist class in Eastern Europe.

I offer no defense of the undemocratic, bureaucratic attitude of the Soviet government and the Soviet Communist Party to the Soviet people and to other peoples as well. Many sober, reasoned criticisms of those aspects of Soviet conduct in national and international affairs have appeared in your pages. But we could do very well without irresponsible, unscientific and utterly embarrassing articles such as Charney's.

—ANONYMOUS.

Political Liberty

Editor, Daily Worker:

Last spring Togliatti urged the CPSU to come up with a better explanation of the errors of the past than “the cult of personality.” Last week, Tito said the same thing. In both instances, the reaction of the Soviet comrades took the form of a horrified rejection of any suggestion that the “cult of personality” itself may have been brought about by any defects in the Soviet system.

So long as the Soviet comrades maintain this basically unscientific attitude they will not convince the rest of the world that they are really learning from their own errors. No one has said that socialism breeds the cult of personality. But a political system which does not contain the fundamental guarantees of political liberty can lead to one-man rule and personal dictatorship—the antithesis of socialism.

Frankly, I am disgusted with those who sneer at “bourgeois democracy.” I am ashamed of the letter-writer who wants to know if we're becoming a bunch of “civil libertarians.” Unless the American Communist movement is prepared to carry on the best traditions of bourgeois democracy and civil liberties, it might just as well close up shop now. We will never win the support of the American people without such a program.

On a world scale, we should use what little influence we have in the international Communist movement to constantly urge the widest possible implementation of a system of political liberty, guaranteed by law and the people, as an indispensable part of socialism. In my opinion, that will be a real contribution to proletarian internationalism.

—I.S.

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