

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Earl Browder On Night Beat

Editor, Daily Worker:

I watched and heard Earl Browder on Mike Wallace's Night Beat program the other night. I was assailed by many thoughts as I looked at and listened to this man who was so large a part of my life and of literally millions of Americans who fought the good fight for democratic advance during the years of the New Deal. My reactions were mixed, sometimes confused and even contradictory. I set them down here because I think it of value, for myself certainly, and possibly for others, to place coherently my reaction to what Earl Browder said. These things I believe:

I think it was good for Americans to hear again—from Earl Browder—that the Communist Party was not the conspiracy of mc carthyite myth. It was good to hear recalled the contributions that Communists made—sometimes the major contributions in particular phases of American life, like the winning of social security and the passage of the Wagner Labor Relations Act.

It was good to hear Browder tell the TV audience that this country will never be right with itself in its understanding of its own history until it accepts the fact that the New Deal, along with the Communist participation in the democratic united front movement, was a proud and vital part of its heritage; and not a conspiracy against it.

Browder said he is no longer a Communist. He said that he considers himself a socialist. He believes the Communist Party, to be "bankrupt," its adherents "pathetic."

It seems to me that there are at present within the Communist Party many people who disagree more sharply with each other on some things than they disagree with Browder.

It seemed to me—as I watched Night Beat—that the time was long overdue for the Communist Party to acknowledge that it was terribly wrong to have expelled Earl Browder and to have heaped obloquy and abuse upon his person. Wrong to Browder, and certainly of no service to the cause of socialism.

It has been said before, but as I watched Browder the other night, I reflected again on the irrational stupidity with which Communists have driven from their ranks men and women who maintained political disagreements with them on one or another aspect of policy.

I do not agree with Earl Browder about many things. But I cannot conceive of a united movement for socialism in this

country—one broad enough to include the many diverse strands of socialist thinking now extant—which would not include Earl Browder as I would suppose it could include me.

Mike Wallace did not query Earl Browder about the present discussion inside Communist ranks and in the pages of the Daily Worker about the future of socialist activity in this country, nor did Browder offer more than to declare the Communists bankrupt and to see hope in a resurgence of the Socialist Party.

I would have liked to hear Browder's views on this question. For if the future cannot, as I believe it cannot, exclude an Earl Browder from the ranks of socialist-minded Americans (as if any group could, by fiat, announce that Browder is not socialist-minded), neither can Earl Browder exclude other Americans, no matter how fully he may have for himself determined their bankruptcy.

Earl Browder never heard of me. But my political being was molded during the years he was a major political influence in this country. I would have liked to hear him say—along with his proud defense of the Communist Party's contributions to American democracy and victory in the anti-fascist war—that he feels some continuing responsibility toward the thousands of men and women whose mistakes—no less than their services to American and to socialism—were at least molded during the years of his stewardship.

I would have asked this, not merely to set records straight, but because I believe that a logical conclusion to such an attitude would prevent Earl Browder from writing off his former associates—en masse—as political bankrupts.

I do not believe that I am politically bankrupt, nor do I judge Earl Browder so. I ask a like opinion from him, not as a return courtesy, but because I think the future of American socialism requires a willingness to explore, to exchange, unfettered by the bitterness and follies of the past.

—ROBERT FRIEDMAN.

## Tammany's Stranglehold

Editor, Daily Worker:

The American Communist Party, through discussion, debate and soul-searching, shows itself capable of undergoing political transformation, but the Tammany tiger is no more capable of changing its stripes than it is of jumping from the wigwam to the

moon. It has been too long at the public trough, with its meat hooks dug into the local treasury. Its conception of government is just the reverse of Lincoln's government OF Tammany, FOR Tammany and BY Tammany.

A great deal has been said and written in this country about dictatorship but if there was ever a more obvious dictatorship of the many by the few than that of Tammany and its city hall cohorts over the citizens of New York, we have yet to see it.

Upwards to a million or more people have left this city in the last decade to seek refuge in the suburbs because Tammany was more interested in witchhunts than in housing or in schools. The city itself is filthy. Times Square may look glamorous at night through rose colored glasses but in the sunlight its synthetic dreariness is apparent to even the most optimistic eye.

The subways are a menace to health and public safety and the streets above, especially in the summer months, are noted for monoxide breezes. Just as the waters about the city have been so polluted that the very fish of the sea go elsewhere, so the air above the city has become so foul with poison/gas that the birds now give it a wide berth. Visitors see only the tall buildings or the gaudy lights; only the native knows the charnel house within, presided over by Tammany ghouls.

Yes, it's time for a change and we are in a much better position now to make our contribution to that change than ever before, when everything we said or did was arbitrarily dismissed with the made-in-Moscow appellation. If the Democratic Party of New York state is to amount to anything more than the powder to blow it to hell, it must make a decisive break with Tammany and with all that Tammany represents. Otherwise we shall only be relegated to the political doldrums for years to come. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the future political leadership of the Democratic Party of New York state lies in the hands of those individuals or groups of democratic persuasion who fight the Tammany tiger tooth and nail.

The Post, chief organ of the liberal faith, is no more happy about Democratic prospects than Lehman himself. Now is the time for Worker readers to start the ball rolling and to speak their piece on local politics, inasmuch as no other candidate than Wagner now appears on the political horizon.

—A.T.

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