

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Lee on TV, Not Negro

Dear Dave Platt,
 Although I have followed your column pretty carefully since Jan. 20, I have found no reference to a program that was presented on Sunday, Jan. 20 on Omnibus (ABC): "Lee at Gettysburg."

Here in the style of Greek tragedy was a psychological study of Robert E. Lee and the other Southern generals surrounding him as their plans are worked out for the thrust North at Gettysburg. We see Lee as a noble figure, speaking against slavery and only leading the Southern forces because of his profound belief in the supremacy of states' over federal rights. (I believe I read in newspaper references that this year is the 150th(?) anniversary of Lee's birth and that a movement is on foot to restore his citizenship to him posthumously,—hence, the significance of the broadcast).

With so much rich material ripe and waiting to be picked from the pages of American history, for example, concerning the role of the Negro in the Civil War, why one and a half hour broadcast to create sympathy for the "noble" Lee? In recent years, the Civil War has become "the War Between the States" and Lee is a slave-hating general (of course, fighting like all-get-out for the slavocracy). There is a definite movement to sentimentalize the Southern cause and "equate" the Southern with the Northern side. (This is apparent also in Bruce Catton's "Hallowed Ground" to some degree. Catton also disapproves of the Radical Republicans and their Reconstruction program.)
 —M.N.

On the Saud Story in DW

Across the top of page two of the DW on Thursday, Jan. 31 you ran the following headline: "PRESIDENT GIVES KING SAUD A ROYAL WELCOME." The story underneath gave a factual description of Saud's arrival and the various comments Eisenhower made.

Do you really think that this story rated top billing, especially when you left out the most important and interesting parts? The news of Saud's arrival in Washington, as it was handled by whoever wrote the piece (who did, by the way?) would win first prize in "Who Gives a Damn" contest. But in this particular case, the fascinating aspect of the story is that most New Yorkers DON'T give a damn for visiting FEUDAL, ANTI-JEWISH, ANTI-CATHOLIC, SLAVE - TRADING KINGS . . . and that is why the headlines and stories in the rest of the metropolitan papers were more interesting and factual than your headline and your story. Why, even today's Mirror mentioned Wagner's snub and some of the reasons that forced him to pointedly ignore Saud. As for our Mayor's political motivations, far be it from me to impugn his devotion to democratic principles. The fact that our fine, upstanding, selfless Mayor would have been given the bum's rush next fall by New York's millions of Jewish and Catholic voters if he had not slighted Saud probably had nothing to do with it.

To change the subject: All those people who have not closed their minds to further investigation and discussion of the Hungarian situation (and this should include everyone, Foster, Dennis, Davis, Gates, Clark, Rodney, Lannon, Ford, Nelson and so on notwithstanding) would perhaps profit by reading: "HUNGARY: MYTH AND REALITY" by John O'Kearney in the Feb. 2 issue of THE NATION. In fact, I would like to

see someone on the paper comment editorially on this on-the-scene report.

Fraternally,
 —Dave Solomon.

On Howard Fast Interview

Editor, Daily Worker:

Howard Fast's announcement that he has "disassociated" himself from the CP and no longer considers himself a Communist came last Friday as no surprise. He has given logical reasons for his decision.

But the manner in which Mr. Fast revealed his disenchantment is a surprise, a surprise indeed. He gave an exclusive interview to Harry Schwartz, The New York Times' "Communist expert."

It is to Mr. Fast's credit, as Schwartz acknowledges, that he "at first was reluctant to be interviewed." I understand the reluctance. I do not understand what broke it down and permitted a front page scoop for the anti-Communist Times and a chuckle for men of ill will everywhere.

Why couldn't Mr. Fast have made known his dissent in a journal of the left, the DW for instance? Why did he give his former enemies a propaganda peapon?

I assume that Mr. Fast remains a socialist. If at some future time he wishes to become a part of a new socialist force more to his liking than the CP, he will be hard put, I'm afraid, to convince his new comrades that he won't once again air dirty linen in an anti-fraternal manner.—F.B.

Don't Obscure The Issues

Editor, Daily Worker:

For some time it has seemed to this writer that the issues around which the lines have been drawn in the Communist Party have not been clear. The basic issue has not yet been adequately defined. In retrospect, one can now see that the issue that seemed to most people the most fundamental, that between continuation of the CP as a party or as a political action organization, has unfortunately obscured the deeper issue. In the minds of others, the real issue was the approach to the Hungarian events, which again, this writer thinks, is mistaken.

The fact of the matter is that on the issues named above and on many others, there have been no clearly defined lines. For instance, while this writer has generally adhered to the "Gates position," he nevertheless disagrees with many holding that

position on Hungary, for it seems to me that the second Hungarian intervention was a tragic necessity. And one can find adherents of the "Foster position" who agree with the other side on many changes that must be made in the party of it is to resume its role as a vital component on the American Left and among the American people.

What then is the real issue? It is this: should the party continue to take the same basic approach to the problems of the American people as before, or should the party undergo a radical transformation in its mode of thinking and focus on the reality of American life and history? In other words, the issue is between those who continue to act as if Marxism is a dogma (even if they verbally acknowledge the need of changes) and those who are prepared to utilize Marxism as a guide to action. There are many who believe that the party form should remain, as well as those who look toward an action association, who are prepared to shed dogmatic and arrogant approaches to our problems. At either extreme one finds poor Marxists: on the "left" are some who apply Marxism so rigidly as to constitute a caricature of it; on the "right" are some who are so anxious to abandon dogmatism that they have relaxed their hold on Marxism altogether.

It seems to me important that the real issue should not be obscured, as it seems to me it has, by a stand taken on this or that question. While this writer does not endorse everything that has emerged from the "Gates position," he believes that on the whole the necessary overhaul in our approach has been best represented by that position and that resistance to the radical readjustment has been put up by the "Foster position." But whatever position, one may formally hold, party members will serve the future of the American people and the party itself by not allowing itself to be diverted from the most basic issue of all: shall we shed the unscientific, essentially anti-Marxist approach of dogmatism, of trying to impose formulas on the American reality? The outcome of this issue in the party will determine whether we shall sink into an ineffectual sect or play our part in the realization of socialism in this country. If the coming national convention sets the party on the new road, the change will not be realized overnight. It will take time to adjust our minds to a ruthlessly scientific approach that sees reality as it is. That way lies freedom—"the recognition of necessity."—L.H.

Feb. 2, 1947

6 UNIONS PROTEST AWARDS OF ST. LAWRENCE POWER

MASSENA, N.Y., Feb. 4 — A committee representing six unions has objected to awarding state power contracts to Reynolds Metals Co. and Niagara Mohawk Power Corp.

The trade union committee on St. Lawrence power maintains that the pending power contracts must be rejected "to save St. Lawrence-Niagara power for the people."

The committee lists as members: The International Ladies Garment Workers; the International Brotherhood of Papermakers; the United Auto Workers; the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers, and the Textile Workers.

The Reynolds and Niagara-Mohawk contracts, calling for delivery of 315,000 kilowatts of power from the St. Lawrence project, will be up for a public hearing in Albany Wednesday.

The State Federation of Labor, the State Council of Building Trades Unions, the United Steelworkers and the United Aluminum Workers are all backing the proposed contracts.



No need to look it up! The address of Chateau Gardens is: 105 E. Houston Street, nr. Second Ave., NYC. That's the place of the Daily Worker Ball — Feb. 9th.