

# Dear Editor

## Letters from Readers

The views expressed in the letters printed below do not necessarily reflect our own. However we are glad to present their opinions and invite others to write to this column.

### Need More Study On Family Life

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

Dear Editor:

It seems to me that the article in the Sunday Worker on the "Housewife: The U. S. Worker with the 100-Hour Week" came nearer than any approach to explaining what forms oppression has taken in the U. S. But it seems to me Miss Lawson missed the boat when she explained the phenomenon and the result of gadgets and a back-to-the-home movement by certain unknowns.

It seems to me that here the CP must do some real profound thinking as to what forms family life can be expected to take in a society where the means of production are socialized.

My thinking is that had there not been political repression, Taft-Hartley, Smith and McCarran Acts, workers would have fought for and won a 30-hour week. The home and family it would seem to me would have been greatly enriched by this, and much of the oppression of women described in your article would not be the case.

Besides Taft-Hartleyism being a cause, another cause is the difficulty of raising children in a society which has a corrupt government, where the mass media are largely corrupted, where confusion exists among people as to right and wrong. The tremendous job of straightening out this situation for the new generation often falls on the mother. Also because of the false ideologies so prevalent mothers and babies become unstable. What forms this instability takes and the results needs to be investigated.

The "Ladies Home Journal" article referred to emphasizes the need for the community and street to be a greater collective. I would agree with this, but from a Marxist point of view I would say that the factors which have slowed down working class unity and class feeling in this country are also responsible for the situation.

It goes without saying that male supremacy ideology on all levels contributes. It might be worthwhile continuing articles on the role of a father in our present society.

Very sincerely,

S. M.

### Sound Off On Steel Articles

GARY, Ind.

Dear Editor:

I just finished reading the Worker Supplement with Andy Onda's program for the steel workers contract negotiations. The immodesty and arrogant tone of the article made me so mad I just had to get this off my chest. One would get the impression that not David J. MacDonald and the United Steel Workers of America, but Andy Onda is about to enter negotiations in behalf of the one million member union.

I was always under the impression that in order to find out what demands should go into a contract, it is best to consult and listen to the workers on whose behalf negotiations are to take place.

Well, MacDonald convened Operation Sound Off with several hundred steelworkers' readers present men who come from the mills and know well the desires and wishes of the steelworkers. Hundreds of local unions have already acted and adopted resolutions on this subject, yet even MacDonald was not ready to say that this is the program of demands. He left it open for another meeting of the Wage Policy Committee, so as

to allow more time to think as well as for the steel workers to act.

As matters stand now it certainly appears that the Steel Workers Union this year will have a wonderful program worth fighting for and I can assure you that the steelworkers are very much for it and are united in their determination to back it up.

Under these conditions it would seem to me that people in the labor movement, including the Communists should pitch in and help to unite and back the steelworkers to beat the steel corporations and win these demands. But what does Andy Onda's article do? It is plain that he did not consult with any steel worker in writing it. He based all his proposals on a steel corporation ad which appeared in the newspapers and built his whole program on the ad.

A new and streamlined way of creating programs, but certainly of little help to the steelworkers. And even less help to an understanding of how to improve relations between the trade union movement and the left. Andy proposes a \$100 weekly wage minimum demand. The steel workers are certainly entitled to every bit of that and more, but what steelworker or trade unionist would take such a proposal seriously when it would require a demand for \$30 a week (or more) increase over the present pay.

When in every local union, the demand for wages and premium pay for Saturday and Sunday is placed FIRST in its importance, Andy tells the steelworkers to make the Guaranteed Annual Wage item No. 1. By the way, the union is calling it supplementary unemployment benefits, which is an accurate description of the demand.

I could go on and on. One thing is sure, that's no way to make friends and influence people. Do we always have to insist on proving our superiority by manufacturing unrealistic programs, which are interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of other organizations and are resented.

It is high time we cut out this foolish nonsense. We are kidding nobody. Let's stop kidding ourselves.—W. S.

### On Keeping Up With the Joneses

ABERDEEN, Md.

Dear Editor:

Thanks for your very fine article on the housewife and her problems.

You reveal a number of the causes which are keeping the city housewife's day so long and even lengthening it, in spite of "labor-saving" gadgets—the fact that these gadgets lighten the labor and make it possible to do a better job, but do not shorten the work; the high prices of ready-made clothing and foods; the crowding of the urban home; the need for more presentable clothes in city life; and the increase of do-it-yourself programs.

There is another cause which I think is also of great importance: Propaganda. The woman's place-is-in-the-home idea is belabored, whispered, dinned and whined at us from every side. What is her function there? She must keep her family happy and healthy.

How? She must always ply time with their favorite dishes while at the same time she provides a balanced diet, attractively arranged, "attractive," that is, by the standards of the television kitchen. She must maintain hos-

pital-type cleanliness of dishes, beds, furniture, curtains, floors, walls and clothes, and this is so, so easy, with the right cleaners. And so on and on.

Keeping up with the Joneses used to mean doing about as well as your immediate neighbors. Today it means meeting the fantastic housekeeping standards pictured by the advertisers, while Mrs. Jones keeps an eye on you to see that you toe the mark, and you do the same for her.

Anyone who doesn't try is betraying her duty as a wife and mother, and at the same time proving the claim of woman's laziness and incompetence.

Is the goal set an impossible one? Unfortunately, not quite. The standard can be met, in a 100-hour week, by a woman in top physical condition as long as she has a steady, predictable, adequate sum to spend, no sickness among the children, no helpless old people in the family and no tendency on her own part to desire adult companionship or a share in the big world outside the home. Those who have a problem or two, well, they can at least do their best.

It is male superiority thinking that says woman's place is in the home and it is commercial propaganda based on it that prescribes the vast extent of the American woman's task today. I don't think we will get far toward an answer until we have examined very carefully what is the basis of male superiority thinking in the concrete life of today, whose interests it serves and how, and what is its manifold content.

EMILY PRESCOTT.

★

### On Advertising Socialism

SEATTLE, Wash.

Dear Sir:

On the intriguing subject of agitation for Socialism there seems to be an aspect of American life to which we have paid too little heed, except for an occasional sneer. I refer to advertising.

This reveals an interesting contradiction in the capitalist economy. It must or does spend millions of dollars on TV, radio, newspapers and slick paper magazines telling us we should want that vast variety of good things our economy produces. They do a very fine job making us want them. But they fail miserably in being able to tell us how to get them.

Thus we alone of the peoples of the world, are daily made familiar with the latest in modern housing, in appliances, in automobiles, and gadgets of all kinds. We are never allowed to forget that such things exist, that the stores, agencies and warehouses are bulging with them. Most of the American people are also actually aware of the disparity between what they could have and what they do have.

And it isn't because the American people, by and large, are not trying to heed the persistent appeals in the ads. I think we make a big mistake if we believe that the growth in two income families is merely to keep body and soul together. Rather it is an understandable and justifiable attempt by way of installment plans, mortgages and other debt producing gimmicks to get what they know they are helping to produce and what people can and should have for a better life.

Should we not ask ourselves if our approach to socialist propaganda is not only archaic (dating from the time socialism as a theory and not an economic reality) but that it also have more than an element of "pie in the sky" overtones? If a glance about us proves anything it proves that the people don't want to wait—they want the good things now.

Why should we not enthusiastically take advantage of the



"SURE YOU HAVE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION... WRITE ANYTHING YOU THINK OUR ADVERTISERS MAY LIKE."

fact that we socialists are the only ones who can honestly tell the people how they can get the things they want—the wonderful things the ads dangle before their eyes?

We can fill in the price tags. For example elimination of the Southern wage differential could mean that new combination washer and dryer . . . to end militarization of our economy could mean replacing the jalopy with one of those new cars . . . a reduction in withholding taxes should at least produce one of those power lawn mowers or a deep freezer.

But most Americans want the jack-pot. They want the works. The price tag on this is SOCIALISM.

TERRY PETTUS,  
Seattle, Wash.

★

### Early Americans On Revolution

NEW YORK.

Dear Editor:

While there is much to comment upon in the current discussion now under way regarding the reports and decisions of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, I would like only to submit the observations of earlier Americans who defended the historic and really great achievements of another revolution—the French Revolution which received such profound inspiration from the American Revolution:

Thomas Jefferson on the French Revolution (from Phillip S. Foner's "Selections from His Writings," International Publishers):

Jefferson wrote: ". . . In the struggle which was necessary, many guilty persons fell without the form of trial, and with them some innocent. These I deplore as much as anybody, and shall deplore some of them to the day of my death. But I deplore them as I should have done had they fallen in battle.

"It was necessary to use the arm of the people, a machine not quite so blind as ball and bombs, but blind to a certain degree. A few of their cordial friends met at their hands the fate of enemies. But time and truth will rescue and embalm their memories, while their posterity will be enjoying that very liberty for which they would never have hesitated to offer up their lives.

"The liberty of the whole earth was dependent on the issue of the contest, and was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood? My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs to this cause, but rather than it should have failed I would have seen half the earth desolated; were there but Adam and Eve left in every country, and left free, it would be better than it now is. I have expressed to you my sentiments, because they are really those of 99 in a 100 of our citizens. . . ."

WILL FARLEY.

### Views On Death Penalty

Strange things I read in Howard Fast's article on capital punishment in The Worker of May 6.

Says he: ". . . capital punishment is basically wrong . . . inhuman . . . unworthy of civilization . . . wrong everywhere and under all circumstances."

But so is war. Yet when a nation is attacked it must defend itself. And millions of people are killed in this process, despite the fact that it is uncivilized, inhuman and wrong in principle. Capital punishment, too, is a measure of self-defense—in a different form—at a different time—but, as long as necessary, perfectly valid.

"Wrong under all circumstances," the way Fast puts it, is a large mouthful no prudent person would try to swallow.

Referring to restrictions in the Soviet Union to traveling abroad and to the refusal of our own State Dept. to grant Fast a passport for traveling outside of this country, he emits the lamenting cry: "How can I go on (justifying the restrictions in the Soviet Union) and fight for my own right to travel?" By this he means, How can he argue against capital punishment in the U.S. and defend it in the Soviet Union?

But if we were to follow the logic of this, then we have to fight for the right to strike in the Soviet Union, because we fight for this right here; we have to fight for the right of multiple political parties in the Soviet Union, because we fight for this unrestricted right here; we should fight for the right to agitate for capitalism in the Soviet Union, because we fight for the right to agitate for socialism in this country.

And where do we go from here? To capitalism itself?

If Howard Fast would remember to keep in mind the basic difference between a socialist and a capitalist state, and that the approach to one must be basically different from the approach to the other, he would not get lost in confusion in dealing with questions arising under both these systems.

But to return to capital punishment. We have a right to demand and expect socialist justice in a Socialist land. But we have no right—from here—to demand that they abolish capital punishment, which only the Soviet people can do on the basis of their own needs and experiences.

If we had the power, by some magic, to eliminate capital punishment in the Soviet Union and, in saving the lives of criminals against the nation, the good Soviet people were harmed by this action, how would Howard Fast, assuming that he were the hero of this episode, go about repairing the damage?

The burst through the past

(Continued on Page 14)



# Letters

(Continued from Page 10)

silencing letters to a freedom of criticism is a wonderful thing. We should criticize the Soviet Union, and not forget that there is work to be done in the U. S. But freedom to criticize will serve us ill if we will not recognize that with this, hand-in-hand, must go also, greater responsibility.—A. S.

---