

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Disagrees With Bessie

Editor, Daily Worker:

Alvah Bessie's reconsideration of Andre Marty in his article on Hemingway in today's paper pretends to be a truthful appraisal of the late French Communist.

Bessie says that we were never entirely honest about this man. But it seems to me that Bessie is less than honest when he fails to note that Marty was expelled by the French C.P. in 1952. I suspect that this fact, rather than any new respect for truth, accounts for Bessie's reconsideration.

It may be, as Bessie claims, that no American Brigader who met Marty ever liked him. Marty certainly had an impossible personality. He was a demanding, old-school disciplinarian. He was a devoted revolutionist who commanded respect and loyalty, rather than love—and this proved to be his fatal weakness. But to mistake these characteristics for egotism, as Hemingway and now Bessie do, is to ignore his life as a selfless militant from the time

from the time he led the Black Sea revolt until his death.

Nor is it accurate to call him sectarian. He was expelled from the French C.P. because he opposed the adventuristic line the Party took there in 1952, when the fiasco around the Ridgway demonstration led to the arrest of Duclos and almost forced the Party underground.

Marty, in a French version of Beriaism, was accused of being a police spy. Expelled with him for similar charges was his close collaborator Charles Tillon. The recent readmission of Tillon shows that these charges were admittedly trumped up. Stalinism dies hard, however, so the posthumous rehabilitation of Marty is still awaited. If it should come, will we then see another Bessie "reconsideration?"

In the meantime Bessie's contention that Marty "undoubtedly bolixed up the works on more than one occasion," might as well be dropped. One could demand that he cite evidence before attempting to out-slander Hemingway.—HANK
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