

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Agrees With Changes in D. W.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I've taken note of the changes in the DW and agree fully with the reasons obviously behind the changes because I would like to see the paper become more popular with the American people.

I imagine the paper has suffered more or less the same isolation as the C.P. Few people outside of Party members consider it their paper.

I feel that the paper, in the period up to the C. P. convention, can play a real solid role in aiding the pre-convention discussion. We need more letters to the paper, more discussion articles, more factual information about the American scene, more analysis of current world events.

There are two main functions which I think the paper can serve with its eight precious pages:

1. Attract a wider readership to a workingclass paper.

2. Aid in clarifying the ideas of its present readers

For the next few months I favor the second, because I feel that the paper is so far from meeting the competition of the big city newspapers that it becomes a pitiable thing for it to try—by filling a whole page with general sports news, or a half a front page with news of ship sinkings and fires. This the commercial press does 100 times more voluminously and adds besides a page or two of comics, many pages of advertizing, shopping news, cartoons, classified ads, etc.

I hope that some day large numbers of people will look upon our paper as the only one they need to satisfy their needs. As things stand now, most of them read another daily newspaper in addition to the DW in order to get fuller coverage and the features they want.

I think that the Daily can arrive at this goal more rapidly if it first helps (for this relatively short period at least to develop the base for such an envisioned role, through Marxist thinking by its present readers.

Enclosed you will find \$10 to help make the Daily a better paper.

—BROOKLYN READER.

[Ed. Note: All other readers are invited to give their ideas plus \$10 for the same purpose.]

A Worker's Credo

Editor, Daily Worker:

This I believe!

1. I believe that we are living in a class society and that there is a class struggle. This struggle will inevitably continue until classes are abolished by the establishment of socialism and ending the dominant control of the exploiting class.

There are some Communist Party members, I think, who are in effect denying this basic fact, just as Earl Browder eventually did when he got so sadly off the track and undid much of the great good he had earlier done.

2. I believe that in an industrial class society the workingclass must become the leader of the whole people in the struggle against monopoly and the exploitation and discrimination practiced and fomented by the profit-makers.

3. I believe that there must develop political, as well as economic struggle. That to this end a political party of socialism is a necessity—a party that is capable of acting with sufficient decisiveness, developing as fast as possible knowledge and understanding and skill and close contact with the workers and common people.

I note voices today calling for the dissolution of the Party of socialism. This would be very

comfortable, since it would be a way of evading the savage attack of reaction on many of us as individuals. But it would be the way of death—of betrayal (even if unintentional)—betrayal of the interests of labor and the people. It would be travelling again the blind-ally side-road we were hearing into 12 years ago.

4. I believe that this discussion is of great value. It is improving in content and tone.

I am deeply moved at reading the name of James W. Ford at the bottom of several brief but outstanding discussion letters. I remember well the days when Ford and Foster led the fight for bread and socialism in the stormy days of the great depression.

Yes, I am indeed proud of our party—proud of its outstanding contribution to the struggle of the people, proud of its many heroic members and leaders from bottom to top.

Have there been mistakes? Of course, there have! And there will be more. "He who never made a mistake never made anything."

But let's keep them as few as possible, and as small as possible, and as brief as possible.

We will strengthen our inner democracy, and clasp hands with all good people who are going forward.

The headquarters of world reaction in Wall Street, USA, slandering socialism and the parties of socialism, will not get very far very long unless we, through ignorance or thoughtlessness, or by arrogance or indolence—give the enemies of America aid and comfort.

RANK-AND-FILER

Communists' Contributions

On Aug. 8, two letters in the DW were very critical of criticism. One maintained that the critics do not take into account the vast contributions made by the Communist Party to the lives of the American people in the past, and hence tended to spread demoralization. The second argued that repression, not errors of the Communist Party, explained the Party's current isolation.

Both letters, in my view, contained a germ of truth. Yet I feel that both were off base.

To take the first, it is certainly essential to keep in mind that the CP has made enormous contributions to the lives of the people of the U. S. But as one who was in the middle of the great labor battles of the late 30s, I have always been troubled by the fact that many hundreds of militant, socialist-minded workers I knew at the time never viewed the C.P. as their organization. A few joined, and soon left. Many did not join at all. They were friendly, even fraternal in their attitude, but it was not their organization.

Looking back, I believe a major reason lies precisely in the almost mystic attitude toward the USSR and toward Marxist-Leninist theory. Both were viewed in an absolute sense which belies our own scientific understanding that everything is in motion, constantly changing. This attitude was repugnant and foreign to these workers.

Moreover, we can never rest on laurels of the past. It cannot be doubted that now, today, the socialist Left is isolated and as a movement largely impotent. This, certainly, needs to be changed, and we need bold, creative thinking to change it.

This takes us to the second letter. Is our isolation due solely to the repressive measures and false propaganda of Big Business? Unquestionably, this is no small factor and ignoring it would be wrong.

But is it not a fact that the impulse for the current self-ex-

amination was exposure of a profound error that we had made, our glorification of Stalin and the USSR, and our refusal to accept what most Americans did accept about the tyranny of Stalin's rule?

Can anyone seriously argue that this monumental error, and what it revealed regarding our attitude toward the USSR, did not play some part in helping to isolate us from the American people? Failure to examine this, and other wrong thinking and practice flowing out of this, would condemn us, I'm afraid, to permanent isolation and sterility.

I think some people have a point in expressing fear that the discussion, because of its "free-wheeling" character, may leave the impression that the Communist Party has no place any longer, that the whole concept of a strongly-organized working-class party, devoted to the immediate struggles of the U. S. workingclass and educating for socialism, is wrong.

This does not seem to me to follow from the discussion. I do think we might begin to give more attention to where we go from here, what can be done to overcome the weaknesses described.

In passing, let me note that if the "Speak Your Piece" column has been helpful to the Communist movement, it has also helped DW circulation to some degree. Customarily there has been a sharp drop in DW circulation during the summer. This year, the drop did not take place. And so, for the first time in many a year it has remained this July at about the same level as last July, when a summer drop did take place. It is still pitifully small, and literally thousands who consider themselves readers and followers get the paper only very rarely. Some intensive circulation promoting by readers would doubtless produce results.

MAX GORDON.

Power for The People

BROOKLYN.

Editor, Daily Worker:

In Gil Green's book, "The Enemy Forgotten," he states: "For as strong as is the power of entrenched wealth, stronger is the power inherent in the people. This greater power, however, has not been applied in its full strength against the main enemy."

Today entrenched wealth is working in an area, discussion of which has become widespread: dams, use of water power for electrification, as in Hell's Canyon, Niagara—to say nothing of Aswan.

Greatest unity, coalition of broad forces could be achieved in New York State if progressives helped initiate committees and action to break the stalemate over Niagara.

Lehman has led the way in his fight against Moses, Harriman and Alcoa in preventing the giving of a contract to Alcoa for 50 years. He believes the Niagara should be harnessed for the sake of the average consumer. Now that the Senate passed the bill to have the State Power Authority, and not five private firms, do the work, the bill died in House Rules Committee. Moses, (whom Lehman forced to change his original position) and whose views are not always on the side of the people, talks of suing to start the work going. Canada has already started on her side.

We used to have Consumer and Tenant Councils. Not only did they work for rent control, lower prices for coffee, etc., but they used to speak out on consumer problems of a wider nature. Today these councils are all but gone.

The time is RIFE for those

interested in consumer problems, and the unions did fine job on these questions, to get into action rewarding Niagara—speed in building, lower electricity rates for DOWNSTATE as well as upstate, for use by plain people and not for ENTRENCHED WEALTH.

—R. E.

American Traditions

Pietro Nenni, secretary of the Socialist Party of Italy, in his comment upon the U. S. State Department's version of Krushchev's secret speech at the 20th Congress declared: "Now the whole problem of Soviet society—the whole problem of the popular democracies that have followed in the footsteps of Soviet society—is reduced to the necessity for internal democratization, for the circulation of ideas, in a word for political liberty."

In the U.S.A. among the Communists, as well as among Marxists who, being non-Communist, differentiate themselves as Socialists, and among others who range from non-Marxist and anti-Marxist liberals to ultra-Leftists and anarchists, there are many who hold in common the belief that American "political liberty" is but a hollow distortion of genuine democracy most aptly termed Bourgeois Democracy or, at best, only a paper (mythical) People's Democracy nullified by Bourgeois Democracy. This nullification has been achieved, they assert, despite traditional re-affirmation of the principles laid down by Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and F. D. R.

The identification of American people's democracy with bourgeois (capitalist) democracy, with capitalism or private property interests, is one of the most distorted interpretations of the foundations of American political liberty projected in the U.S.A. and abroad. Its most destructive effect, deepened by the rise to dominance of the concept of Bourgeois Democracy as the real essence of our political life, has been the almost total negation of the existence of American historical People's Democracy. This

negation has, in fact, weakened the true American democracy and political liberty which arose in colonial America before a crystallized American capitalist class came into existence. . . .

Only when we work through the source documents of American democracy in the 17th and 18th centuries can we grasp the vital nature of the political liberties our revolutionary forefathers were fighting to establish, political liberties which they sought to safeguard against usurpation by and for special or class interests, profits or privileges!

These documents, their meanings and the struggles to realize and perpetuate them, are our specific and great American heritage. They not only have nothing in common with Bourgeois Democracy but they are the very historical foundations for that political liberty which much now be integrated in the life of the peoples in the lands of Socialism and the People's Democracies in Europe and China. These same political rights are the living heritage of peaceful transition to Socialism.

Those mechanical Marxists and blind liberals who do not understand this have failed to grasp the significance of the revolutionary American democracy which gave birth to our nation.

The rise to dominance of American bourgeois democracy is a failing of the American people, including not only the working class but the Left-sectarian, bureaucracy-riding Socialists and Communists and which takes in, also, the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Workers Party. This failure of the American people to safeguard people's democracy is matched by the failure of the Soviet people to safeguard Socialist democracy in the Stalin period. The price of these failures has been the loss of liberties of the people.

But these losses do not prove political liberty is mythical or unattainable. It only proves they can be won and held only by conscious struggle.

JEEFER SONIAN.

OHIO SURVEY BARES WAGES UNDER 25 CENTS AN HOUR

COLUMBUS, O., Aug. 16 (FP).—Many Ohio workers are being paid 25 cents or less an hour, and many are working 48 hours or more a week with no overtime pay, a survey by the Ohio Industrial Relations Department revealed.

More than 50 percent of the women working in Ohio restaurants, bars, taverns, etc., are paid less than 75 cents an hour and 81 percent receive under \$1. About 70 percent of the men working in restaurants and bars and over 50 percent of the women work 48 hours a week or more.

Almost 60 percent of the women working in department stores earn less than \$40 a week. About 20 percent of the workers in hotels, motels and laundries earn less than \$25 a week.

tragedy in a restaurant

By LESTER RODNEY

It was after two o'clock in this big chain restaurant near the office and there weren't too many customers. Near where I sat eating lunch, a woman of about 30 with a little girl was standing in the aisle talking to two waitresses, apparently asking after someone.

The waitresses summoned another waitress who immediately said, "Oh, her? They found her dead in bed, they found her in her room . . ." and then after a second, hesitatingly, "Why, are you some kind of relative or something?"

The young woman's reply was inaudible and she turned to leave. As she walked swiftly toward the exit, holding her left hand to her bent face and pulling the child along with her right hand, the waitresses and a cleaning man who had joined the group stood

mouth agape. A startled insucking "Uhhh!" came from one.

The waitress who had given the news said agitatedly, "How should I know it was her daughter? Someone comes in and asks, how am I supposed to know? You don't think it's a daughter if she doesn't even know. . . ."

"Maybe she came from far away," another waitress rebuked her, "Maybe she came to find out, a long trip. That's no way for a daughter to hear it."

Ten minutes later as I left the restaurant they were still talking about it as they went about their duties. The waitress who had given the news was defending herself. "I don't understand a daughter who doesn't see her mother," she was saying adamantly. She was a gray haired woman, probably in her sixties, with a toil-lined face. "I just can't. A son maybe, but not a daughter. . . ."