

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Proposals for Socialism in U.S.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Mass public opposition to socialism among groups a socialist working-class will have to have as allies is based partly on unwillingness to accept Soviet solutions to certain problems that are actually not fundamental to socialism in this country.

Examination of our class and national structure indicates that socialism in our country will not require collectivization of farming, uncompensated seizure of middle-size and small businesses, or an essentially territorial ("segregated") solution to the Negro question. If the following reasoning is correct, imagine the effect, in the long run, of the inclusion of following proposals in the Constitution and daily publicity of the Communist Party or any other American socialist organization:

1. 200 to 300 corporations now own most of America's industry, transportation and finances. Nationalize their property and most of the economy has been socialized, most exploitation eliminated. But there are hundreds of thousands of smaller manufacturing and commercial businesses. They hate Big Business, while envying it. China has won over these smaller capitalists by guaranteeing them 5 percent on their nationalized property, and using their management experience in salaried executive posts. Why can't American socialism make a similar promise, particularly if this can help prevent a civil war or destructive sabotage?

2. The USSR and China needed to collectivize agriculture for two reasons: (a) to prevent capitalism from being born out farming in countries where the farmers are the great majority; and (b) to set free labor forces, and create surplus farm products, for industrialization. We have neither problem. We are industrialized.

Our farmers are a small minority, and produce enough for our cities. Why can't our farm program today, and under socialism, be based on government help to farm cooperatives in the American tradition, letting the farmers thus get rid of capitalist relationships in their own good time? This applies to family-run farms, while farms operated chiefly by wage labor, migratory

or year-round, should be treated in the same manner as businesses, with distinction between corporation-owned farms and those owned by farmer-operators.

— It is taken for granted, under (1) and (2), that the interests of the workers in small business and in wage-labor farms come first, and that these workers would have the main say in running their nationalized or "co-operated" places of employment. But a useful place can be found for their employers, who are not the main enemy, in our country where a handful of monopolists control the economy.

3. Instead of thinking in terms of the national question in such multi-national countries as the USSR, isn't the American Negroes' expressed desire for integration an extension of our wonderful and unique tradition of the melting-pot, which includes the long-term existence of language newspapers, cultural institutions, nationality organizations, and, voluntarily, for generations, marriage chiefly within one's own group or at least religion? Why not pose the solution in this American context?

WILLIAM MANDEL

The Transition to A Broader Party

Editor, Daily Worker:

Letters in The Nation and Monthly Review have called upon us to drop dead. A letter from a comrade has appeared in Party Voice urging dissolution. There is relatively little — but nevertheless, some—discussion of liquidation in Party ranks.

Such liquidation would hurt the interests of the working class, of our country, and the cause of socialism.

It would scatter the excellent trained, experienced, devoted membership and organization that we now have—the biggest by far of all socialist-minded groups in our country.

Any proposal that we go off the scene denies what is a settled matter for the Marxist movement. That is, that we need organization to multiply the abilities and efforts of like-minded individuals.

Such a proposal tries to deny the substantial credit Communists still have among workers, Negro people, and others. This good will was established by our helpful role over the years in

our country's life, our dedication to the working class and to socialism, our courage.

I have heard no proposal to dissolve our organization—without reorganizing it, from any people in leadership. All the leaders of our Party I have spoken to, seek to strengthen our Party at the coming convention—though there are different ideas as to how it can best be done.

I think it's too early to blueprint the form the Party should have. Certain changes are clearly needed now. We must make it democratic; our policy-making committees should consist mainly of people who are in positions of influence in shops, unions and popular organizations; local autonomy on local matters; secret ballot elections after open nominations from the floor and study of the candidate's record; the right to publish dissenting views in Party publications, and many others.

The reason that I think more detailed, or even more general, planning is premature, is this: organization is designed to further program and outlook. Lenin shaped the CPSU as the instrument to win socialism in Tsarist Russia, expecting violent repression and civil war. He says that for civil war, you need a Party with almost military discipline. (By the way, if you have a military-type Party, you have bureaucracy. The army is about as bureaucratic as you can get).

Our program and outlook are unclear—to say the least. We are entering a new era in world affairs — described in general terms at the 20th Congress. Think how new, how different, how stirring is the world our struggles are winning and can clinch—peaceful co-existence of socialism and capitalism, almost four out of every 10 human beings going toward socialism, the break-up of the world colonial system. And then, the co-operation of the anti-imperialist free former colonies and the socialist nations for peace—giving birth to the possibility of preventing any large scale wars. This new stage in human history has been won by unprecedented mass struggles, at a great cost of blood, sweat and tears.

In International Affairs, Nov. 5, 1956, there is a thought-provoking article by Sobolev, a Soviet theoretician, on transitions from capitalism to socialism. It should be widely read.

The concepts and political outlook of a very short while ago were inadequate for our country and our problems. We are assaying them now, and most of us find them wanting.

Don't we have to develop our political concepts, ideas, theories, policies and outlook for our country, its advancing popular movements, in the new setting of a different world? We do. We haven't yet. When we do, we'll be able to define the kind of organization we need to advance the interests of our working class, and nation, along the American road to socialism.

Some have pointed to the elimination of some barriers between us and other socialist groups, and call for the quick formation of a United Party of Socialism. Conditions are unripe for that, and are likely to ripen only with years.

Others, myself among them, propose radical transformation of our Party—our program, outlook, structure. Some opinions hold for a change of name—and advance at least serious reasons for this. Legal reasons, reasons of our status in unions whose constitutions bar members of the CP; the need to help overcome some of our problems in the labor movement. Other political reasons are advanced—such as the fact that if we change our outlook, our policies, our structure, and mark the end of one era, and the birth of a new—why not change the name? There are many Communist parties with different names: the Labor-Progressive Party in Canada, the Socialist Alliance in Viet Nam, and others.

This is not liquidationist. We must discuss these problems seriously, scrutinize all ideas, and accept or reject them on their merits.

I think we must have a Marxist party, a party of scientific socialism, drawing upon the great store of Marxist theory as developed by Lenin, Mao Tse-tung and others. It must be based upon the working class, charting its own course by the interests of our country and our fellow working people.

Such a party should take part in day-to-day activities and struggles. It should strive to gain a vanguard role; it should speak for, and fight for, Socialism.

Big class and popular strug-

gles against Big Business are going on, and will grow. We must not allow this discussion now going on to keep us from fully taking part in them—particularly as they emerge in the current election campaign. That way, we will strengthen and unify our people so that we, all together, will begin to solve our problems, develop a political program best suited for our country in our times; and speed the transition to a broader, re-grouped Party of scientific socialism.

SAM COLEMAN.

Interviews with CP Leaders Suggested

Editor, Daily Worker:

Through your "Speak Your Piece" columns, I would like to address myself directly to the national leaders of the Communist Party.

For weeks now, there has a persistent, widening demand from the rank-and-file that they speak up freely as individuals regarding their views on the vital problems facing our movement and that they air their differences publicly.

This demand has taken on a new dimension. For to the previous insistence that they end their secrecy, there is added the new insistence that they pay some heed to the expressed will of the rank-and-file. Their stubborn silence in the face of the clamor for an airing of differences has given rise to greater doubts about their readiness to listen to the rank-and-file.

It is not enough to say a resolution will be published in September. What we cannot understand is their reluctance to talk up openly, publicly, freely now on what they believe. This certainly does not lead confidence that the previous rigid, undemocratic atmosphere arising out of mistaken notions of "monolithic unity" will be dispelled.

Why should not a skilled Daily Worker reporter frame appropriate questions, interview several of them individually, and write a straight- and straight-forward—report on the varied views expressed and who expressed them? Would this not clear the atmosphere, stimulate thinking in discussion, provide a healthier and more productive climate for the discussion on the resolution?—M.