

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Result: \$75 For The Worker

NEW HAVEN.

Editor, Daily Worker:

A group of us gathered the other day to honor a loyal Daily Worker supporter visiting us from Florida. Result: \$75 for the Worker's \$100,000 fund appeal. —S. T.

Proving There Is An American Road

BUFFALO.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Much has been written lately about the inherent qualities of a Socialist society as if by arriving at some conclusion on this question a final evaluation of Socialism can be made.

Of course Socialism means many things to many men. The New York Times, for instance, prefers to discuss the inherent evils under Communism instead of Socialism since its conception of Socialism probably resembles British "Socialism." On the other hand the Daily Worker insists that these evils are not inherent in a Socialist society and with this position I agree.

Where we have gone wrong, I think, is in confusing inherent qualities with actual conditions of development.

Socialism is a generalization, like Man, and just as we can get to know Man only by knowing men, likewise a concrete understanding of Socialism and its various forms of development can be obtained only by studying the conditions under which it has arisen and will arise in various countries.

That Socialism in general must have inherent qualities is a requirement of logic. The question is, what are these inherent qualities? I would say, going back to the source of the world Socialist movement, that "the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property." To this degree, at least, the Communist Manifesto is as valid today as it was in 1848. From this formulation all others flow like the river and its tributaries from the source.

The confusion enters into the picture after the Russian Revolution. Certainly Socialism was established in the Soviet Union, i.e., private property was abolished and the Soviet people started striving toward the goal of building the first truly democratic and free society in history. The goal was inherent in the system but in contradiction with it were the concrete conditions existing in the Soviet Union at the time. To think that these conditions—centuries of oppression, brutality, ignorance—could be wiped away with the broad arm of the Revolution was, perhaps, historical naivete on our part, especially since the Revolution actually compounded the difficulties through civil war, capitalist encirclement, the Stalin cult with its bureaucratic appendages and monstrosities! We were forced to realize that certain negative features did exist but we considered them of minor importance and proceeded to take the "positive" or "inherent qualities" approach. This was our error.

I think had we evaluated the Soviet Union historically, the advances which the Soviet people have made since the Revolution would have become evident as they certainly have today.

In our approach to the Soviet Union we have been vulnerable to attack because in our zeal to advance the struggle for Socialism we have identified Socialism, the generalization, with Socialism as it has developed in one country. As a result we have isolated ourselves from the American working class and its allies.

The big question today is, what is the next step for the American Communists. One of the answers to the question is that we must become in one form or another a truly independent mass party of socialism which maintains fraternal relations with the Soviet Communist Party and other Communist and Socialist parties throughout the world.

But in order to do that we must put ourselves on firm theoretical grounds, otherwise we wither on the vine of history. What is needed to develop this theory is scholarship, a meticulous, scientific adherence to the truth no matter how much it hurts. Granted that particularly on the question of Socialism there is an abyss between its advocates and detractors, we must take the challenge of the defenders of capitalism—particularly those in the United States—and prove, if we can, to ourselves and to the American working class and its allies with facts, figures, logic, persuasion, art and organization that there truly is and should be an American Road To Socialism.

—STEELWORKER.

The Road Not Yet Built

LEETONIA, Ohio.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Perhaps one reason we have not yet found the way to Socialism in America is that for too many years, we labored under the delusion that the way had already been found. After a while, the general assumption seemed to be that Socialism is something they have in the Soviet Union, but only remotely possible here. Now that we have finally awakened to the fact that we can have Socialism here and that it behooves us to find the way, it is gratifying to note that the Daily Worker is devoting daily space to the subject.

What is the American road to Socialism? I should say that there is no such road. A road is a highway that someone has built. Certainly, no one has built such a highway for us.

The 20th Congress, rather than as some people think, a signal to engage in an orgy of criticism of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was a signal to every working class party in every land to seriously criticize itself, to find its own path, to build its own road to Socialism. That certainly applies to the U.S.A.

So far, the "roads to Socialism" as projected in the articles in the Daily Worker remind me of the traveler from the east who when in the neighborhood of the Mississippi River inquired the best road to Southern California and received the answer, "When you get to Yuma, Arizona, you just cross the Colorado River bridge and there you are." Nothing was said about how to get to Yuma. So it is with those who have projected the idea of a peoples' front government. Nothing has been said about how to build a sufficiently significant organization to merit the consideration of other political parties.

Eugene Dennis proposes a new "mass party of Socialism." That sounds good to me, but again, just how are we going to build such a party? For certainly, such a party must be built. We can't just wish it into existence or create it out of thin air.

One thing is certain. The path to Socialism in America must lead from where we are now.

Can we not ask then in good American language of the street, "Where do we go from here?" I don't know all the answers, but if Socialism is our goal and we keep our eyes on that goal and keep moving in that direction, we can't get far from the path.

We lost the path because we didn't keep our eyes on the goal.

Since to establish Socialism necessitates the winning of the majority of the people to the support of a Socialist program, we can say that to move in the direction of Socialism means to win ever greater numbers to the cause. That sounds to me like building a mass party of Socialism. If we mean to do this, I would suggest the following as immediate steps:

1. The first thing to do, it seems to me, is to get together in one organization all the people willing to work for the common cause. This would include a number of thousands who either quit or were kicked out of the Communist Party because of their inability to accept the line or the discipline of the high priests of "democratic centralism" in New York, and countless others who though sincere Socialists, never believed in a "Soviet America." In fact, I can think of no group or individual now speaking in the name of Socialism that such an organization can exclude, excepting those more interested in slandering the Soviet Union than in promoting Socialism in America.

2. The establishment of a national propaganda weekly edited and published somewhere in the industrial midwest where its editors and writers would daily rub shoulders with workers in overalls and farmers who bring the results of their labors to the city markets.

3. Finally, we need a renaissance of the spirit of the old agitators; of the great Debs and of the lesser lights such as George R. Kirkpatrick, Kate Richards O'Hare, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Kate Sadler, Mother Bloor and dozens of other less spectacular but most effective "soap boxers," Tom Clifflors, Tom Lewis, Ed Lindgren, Marguerite Prevy, Jack Berry. Their name is legion, and though they spoke with varying degrees of effectiveness and emphasized various facets of Socialism, they had one note in common, "Socialism the hope of the world"—the answer to all the problems that beset mankind.

They hold and gave away millions of pamphlets, some good, some mediocre, some probably bad. Among the best, were written by that paragon of pamphleteers, Oscar Ameringer.

—J. M.

Bureaucracy The Cause

Editor, Daily Worker:

I for one do not accept the Marxist (?) explanation by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in answer to questions raised by other Communist parties on Stalin and the "cult of the individual."

The reply didn't give clarification but only served to gloss over or hide the role and responsibility of the leadership of the CPSU in these mistakes.

They weren't in the dark concerning Stalin's shortcomings. Lenin amply forewarned them. They saw fit to disregard the warnings. Why? Couldn't Stalin have made a contribution from a lesser position? Didn't they contribute to the "cult of the individual" by, in effect, insisting Stalin retain the post of general secretary?

The reply states that the successes of Socialist construction were attributed to Stalin. Who attributed them to Stalin? Who allowed the credit to be heaped on Stalin? The party controlled the communications' media. Why didn't they explain the role of the masses, the party, the collective?

The reply states there were certain periods, for instance during the war years, when the individual acts of Stalin were sharply restricted. How were they able to restrict these acts

then, and why didn't they seize the opportunity to extend "restriction to elimination?" . . .

If they were not in agreement with Stalin and constituted a threat to him it seems logical to me that they wouldn't be here today. After all an individual with such an ego and shortcomings gathers around him those who would toady to his whims. If Stalin was so popular as they claim how come their criticisms of Stalin were accepted unanimously at the 20 Congress? . . .

I don't believe mistakes of this kind and bureaucracy are inherent in socialism. I do believe bureaucracy is inherent in the present form of organization of the Communist Parties.

I feel that in attacking the cult of the individual and blaming all other mistakes on this is putting the wagon before the horse. The main problem, or contradiction, as Mao Tse-tung would say, and the breeding ground for the theory of the cult of the individual and the other mistakes, is bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy is the main fundamental question which has to be resolved in Soviet life, in our Communist Party and all other Communist parties.

Bureaucracy is the Marxist explanation for what happened in the Soviet Union. Let's put the spotlight on the cause and don't let our criticism be diverted to the effects of this problem.

—C. D.

Leaders' Silence

Editor, Daily Worker:

It's not only my feeling, but many of us, that the silence of the top leadership of the Communist Party is a grave error to all.

We feel, like many other writers, that only by participating in this discussion among CP members and non-Party people can we bring out the best in the differences and start working on the issues with which the people in our country are concerned.

It seems to me the discussion in the paper repeats itself. I agree with the letter from Buffalo that our paper needs a broader scope, reaching other than Communists and Socialists.

I have sensed in many letters and from people I have listened to a certain negative attitude and pessimism since the 20th Congress. Some reports by leading people have not helped. In criticizing our mistakes of the past they often tend to be one-sided, leaving out the positive contributions of our party in America. This doesn't help the morale of our members one bit.

I would like to point out that this doesn't negate my feelings that certain past conceptions of work have to be drastically changed.

—Distributive Worker.

Creativity of Expression

Editor, Daily Worker:

Some of the rank and file criticism of Communist leadership has been a little ridiculous and even, in a few cases, outrageous. For example, the characterization of the defense of Social Security rights by William Patterson as "huckstering" seems to me an inexcusable attitude, difficult to account for or understand on the part of a supposed leftist.

But there is one aspect of criticism of our leadership in which I wish to join the chorus. It is an old song and I am certainly far from being a solo voice. In fact, the song has been heard so often, it sounds a little hackneyed and there is a tendency not to listen.

But fresh views and fresh approaches are the order of the day and I believe the importance of this problem today, warrants

trying to make an old song live again.

Our leadership lives close to world occurrences and Marxist scientific thinking and their lives are deeply permeated with the thought, action, and approach such lives demand. The expression of that thought and approach is therefore strongly determined by the traditional craftsmanship of scientific language. And this, in the nature of things, is, to the greatest degree, as it should be. But language, besides being an artifice of scientific expression, is also a supreme creative art of human communication. And it is in this area, that public expression of our leadership fails much too often.

The importance of unity of theory and practice demands, in addition to all else, a more poetic expression of Marxist scientific thought. Creativity of expression is certainly not foreign to the development of new areas of thought, or even the teaching or communication of democratic and humanist feeling, outlook and aims.

A fresh examination of approach and practice will demand by Marxist thought, a closer appraisal of immediate and long term results. Many problems come to mind, all, I believe, capable of, and worthy of the effort of solution. But I do not wish to encroach on my rights as a contributor to Speak Your Piece so I will leave to others possible amplification of these thoughts.

SAUL GROSS

Motion in The South

ST. LOUIS, Mo.

Editor, Daily Worker:

After reading several articles in George Morris' column about the South I decided to write about some positive aspects of the South.

I think we agree on the terrific struggles of the Negro people that are taking place in the South today. These have received national publicity. Also, from the opposite point of view, the formation of the White Citizens Councils, Eastland, etc. But I also believe we agree that to change the South we must build a coalition of Negro people, labor, small farmers and liberal whites.

The main point I want to make is that I think we have failed to present the positive aspects in the labor movement of the South in its role in the fight for democracy.

Although the South is largely unorganized the fact is that there are strong organizations of labor throughout the entire South and these are being increased. I know for instance that the IUE in the past couple of years has organized several large plants, one in Llenville, Tenn., another in Columbus, Miss.

There are three important cities that in the main are already organized—Memphis, with 40 percent Negro people, Birmingham with about 35 percent Negro population and Atlanta with about 30 percent. I think we must find out the many little things that are going on in these areas toward building Negro-white unity.

For instance in Memphis I remember the fight to end jimcrow toilets in CIO buildings, also the Negro-white unity in strike struggles. I remember many incidents in Mississippi of Negro-white unity which were never made public.

Things are in motion in the South today. People are doing a powerful lot of thinking and I think it would be a mistake to see the South through the eyes of the White Citizens Councils.

—W. D.