

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

John Gates' Article

Editor, Daily Worker:

In my opinion John Gates' article on the resignation of Joseph Clark from the Daily and CP is a valuable contribution in our discussion. Two important points stand out in it. These are: How to find proper policies and methods of leadership to check the decline in our ranks and second, to work toward fulfillment of policies worked out at the 16th National Convention of the CP. These two problems deserve our utmost attention. However Joe Clark's letter of resignation published in the Sept. 9 issue of the DW merits some comment. His letter covers a host of fundamental questions. Clark states that "the Party became a sect primarily because history rode roughshod over dogma." Our Party openly admitted that its work in the past suffered from dogmatic interpretation and application of Marxism. No one disputes this. But to say that the Party became a sect primarily because of dogma is again something else. Since dogmatism apparently always existed in our Party, then how can one explain the successes made by our movement during the period of 1932-47. Ours was never a mass party, but it was on the road of becoming one. During that period its ranks and its influence constantly grew. There are a number of factors that can explain our present state of affairs. I don't know which one is a primary factor. But can anyone minimize the frenzied assault conducted against our Party in the last 10 years, by a combination of the capitalist government, labor officialdom, employers and their gigantic media of communication. Dogmatism contributed to our becoming a sect, but is not primarily responsible for it.

In Clark's view, "proletarian internationalism in 1956 required solidarity with the Hungarian workers opposing Soviet intervention." No matter what views one holds on Hungarian events, the fact is that the majority of the Hungarian workers did not participate the rebellion. The majority of the Hungarian workers were without arms and without effective leadership. Clark is correct in saying that "the only effective posture from which American Marxists can work for American-Soviet Friendship — is that of independence." But in formulating positions on foreign policy, our point of departure should be the interests of our class and our people, but not at the expense of other peoples, and certainly never to allow our-

selves to play into the hands of the imperialists. If the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, is a peace policy, we shouldn't be apologetic in supporting it, at the same time explaining how it coincides with the peace interests of our people. But our position doesn't necessarily and at all times have to be identical with that of the Soviet Union, or non-critical. The 1939 Non-Aggression Pact gained for the Soviet Union some time. Our Party at that time should have supported the military struggle against Hitlerism, particularly when Hitler was conquering and subjugating the people of one European country after the other. Clark errs in thinking that our Party is no longer a vehicle for socialism, but the last Party convention promised to seek new paths, through which the American people would arrive at socialism. Such search should be resumed and continued, and new ideas should be freely advanced and explored. This can and should be done while the Party is engaged in various activities. The N.Y. Times in its editorial on Sept. 11, shamelessly and maliciously lies when it says that American Communists fought against the interests of our nation and our people. While its editorial writers were comfortably sitting in the chairs, hardly concerned, the American Communists were fighting and sometimes dying in the struggles for the unemployed, organizing and improving the conditions of the workers and for the rights of the Negro people. Their devotion to the people will not cease and sometime in the future will be recognized by many.

ROBERT FREEDEN

Mike Gold and Howard Fast

Editor, Daily Worker:

I should like to answer Joseph Posner (Letters, Daily Worker, Sept. 11, 1957) regarding his criticism of Mike Gold's column on Howard Fast.

I don't believe Mike has "tricks." In my opinion he rightly expressed distaste and indignation for a man of Howard Fast's stature, who chose the N. Y. Times for his forum—the N. Y. Times, second only to capitalist governments, the most powerful watch-dog and protector of our economic system of exploitation; especially is it an organ and symbol of capitalist hypocrisy!

It strikes me as though Howard Fast, like a man whose house broke down temporarily, were content to accept his master's outhouse for accommodation.

There are better ways of protesting injustice in one's ranks

We reprint below the Labor Day editorial by Max Steinbock, editor of the Record, official magazine of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (AFL-CIO) in the Sept. 1 issue.

Mr. Steinbock, it seems it us, is raising some timely questions as he takes a critical look into our labor movement of today.—The editors.

NEEDED: A NEW CRUSADING SPIRIT

Labor Day is, by what is now a 75-year-old tradition, a time for extolling the virtues of the labor movement, summing up its past achievements and making glowing predictions for the future. In that flood of oratory generated by this holiday, there is seldom any effort to grapple with the real issues of the day. Instead, we get generalizations and clichés.

Well, maybe it's flying in the face of tradition, but we think this is a good time to get down to brass tacks and talk about the real situation that confronts labor today. So here goes:

American labor has a lot to boast about: The merger of AFL and CIO, now nearly two years old, unites 16 million workers in one great organization. The standard of living of American workers is far and away the highest in the world—and so is their productivity. American unions are, for the most part, strong, honest and democratic. The rights of labor are acknowledged—though sometimes grudgingly—by even the most reactionary businessmen and politicians.

But despite all this, the American labor movement today is on the defensive. For example:

New organizing among the 25 million unorganized workers is down to a mere trickle. . . . "Right-to-work" bills and other anti-union laws are on the books of many states, and active campaigns are under way to extend them to still more. . . . Labor has been unable during the past two years to win extension of coverage under the federal minimum wage, and little if any of its remaining legislative program has gotten serious consideration by Congress; on the contrary, most of labor's legislative efforts are devoted to staving off restrictive bills. . . . In the political arena, labor's recent accomplishments can scarcely be called spectacular, while on

than to capitulate to master-minds of injustice.

I know the temptations to align oneself with an opulent organization. I know too the almost insuperable difficulty of holding on to one's principles under capitalism. Mike Gold has done it.

LEAH AXELBANK