

Letters from Our Readers



Suggests Analysis Of Egri's Book

New York.

Editor, Daily Worker:

It's hard to keep quiet when such stirring literary feuds are scattering buckshot around!

May I butt in just enough to suggest that right now would be a good time for you to do a rather thorough analytical piece on Lajos Egri's *How to Write a Play*? It was brought out in 1942, in the midst of the war, by Simon & Schuster, and its author, as you know, teaches in the Jefferson School.

The reason I suggest this is that there are two obvious questions that the current discussion ought to seek answers to:

(1) Can working class writers consciously produce their works in the interest of the class to which they belong? This is really the old "art versus propaganda" battle that the John Reed clubs fought out, except that today you have rephrased it and raised it to a higher level, removed it from sectarianism and at the same time heightened critical class-consciousness.

(2) Can working class writers out of Marxism itself develop technical soul-engineering aids in the production of their works? It is this second question which is usually neglected, and it is just

this question to which Egri tries to form a positive answer. (As Garaudy said, "The party expects its intellectuals to be militants," but "it is no longer just a question of fighting: they must create.")

The main difficulty that might confront Egri is the danger of being mechanical, too doctrinaire, because of his very effort to apply his analysis to concrete aims in order to be "helpful" right away to young writers. But he's suggesting and stimulating.

OAKLEY JOHNSON.

Warns Of Dogmatism

New York.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I was very glad to read Isador Schneider's contribution to the controversy over Albert Maltz's article. It is time that we understood that we are dealing with a serious Marxist issue, one which cannot be easily dismissed by labeling and name-calling.

Too many of the replies formulated by Sam Sillen, Mike Gold and Joe North were of a dogmatic nature, and I think we must beware of such an approach. We should welcome the fact that Albert Maltz has opened the flow of discussion on the question of Marxism and Culture, a subject long in need of deep analysis.

The Editors welcome your opinions and contributions to this page. Due to lack of space letters should be limited to 150 words so as to permit the printing of as many as possible. Please include full name and address with your letters. We will withhold names upon request.

Above all, we must not instill an atmosphere which will inhibit this kind of discussion around any issue.

I personally feel that the major portions of Albert Maltz's criticisms were legitimate, despite the fact that the entire Communist movement was not guilty of them. Many of the dogmatisms which Maltz criticizes were most strongly advanced during the Browder period, and I think that the very atmosphere of free discussion which Maltz engendered is what has been lacking in our party for many years.

I. SILBER.

Study of Lenin Will Help Writers

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Editor, Daily Worker:

The discussion of the role of left wing writer now taking place in *The Worker* and the *Daily Worker* as a result of Albert Maltz's article in the *New Masses* is timely. The Editorial Board of *The Worker* and *Daily Worker* are to be congratulated on giving space to such a discussion. If it will but spur an interest in the

study and practice of Marx, Lenin and Stalin it will serve a purpose. The present left wing writers would do well to read some of Lenin's classics.

In his pamphlet, *Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* Lenin answers all arguments of his opponents from the results of the elections in the Soviets, and then proceeds to show how the new state apparatus will take power and how it will be reinforced and from where the new forces will come. He uses sarcasm and humor in a dry, yet effective manner. Now it seems to me that all left wing literature, yes, even in the present discussion, suffers from lack of any humor or satire. Therefore, it is my honest opinion that no left wing writer can be successful and ignore the humorous events that take place in a worker's life.

D. CASSIDY.

'Daily' Clarifies Issues to People

New York.

Editor, Daily Worker:

In a recent issue of *The Worker*, George Morris, speaking of American workers, says: "The fact is that confidence in capitalism has fallen very much in recent months." This statement accurately reflects the opinions of many New York East Side people

whom I contact while canvassing with *The Worker*. I hear, "I know there's something wrong, but what can I do about it?" We take them the answer in *The Worker* and in concrete measures like the Ferguson case petitions, etc.

One woman said, "My husband is always talking about the Soviet Union." Well, I returned later when he was home and sold them a *Worker* sub. No one had ever been there before for that purpose.

When one sees on the table of a worker copies of the *Forward* and the *Mirror*, or the *Daily News* and *Nevy Swiatt*, providing the "cup of anti-Soviet poison day in and day out" (to quote from a recent *Daily Worker* letter), it is clear that we must bring the American people the clarity of Marxism through the pages of the *Daily* and *Sunday Worker*.

HELEN EDWARDS.

Artists Cannot Be Limited

New York.

Editor, Daily Worker:

As Mike Gold has said of a poet, any creative artist has his part to play in the revolutionary movement, and he can do it in his own way. To limit the ways in which he can do it in one way, is to limit art and the artist.

To expect an artist to pour himself into a world adjusted to produce left-wing artists, to fit the bill as specified generally by well-meaning but not so well-informed comrades who feel that what they are used to and understand readily is good art, is unfair.

Certainly an artist is responsible to the working class for what he thinks and how he acts. But also the audience to whom the artist addresses himself in this 20th century is guilty of flabbiness of at least some corners of the mind, if it does not recognize its responsibility to him in offering a receptive attitude and trying to keep up with him.

There is room for new forms in art in the left wing movement, and I don't mean any infantile disorders. We must re-educate comrades who are backward in the understanding of art as we must educate those other members of the working class who admittedly know nothing about art because those art teachers in the public school system whom they met never gave them a chance at understanding or else thoroughly indoctrinated them in accepting reactionary or poor standards of art.

M. DOUGLAS.

Let's Face It

IT is tough to imagine anything more cold-blooded than the smug argument of a *New York Times* editor, who doubtless lives in a swank home, to the effect that since demand is determined by ability to pay, the prices of homes ought to be allowed to go up.

In other words, let the price of a home rise to \$100 a month. That will effectively reduce the demand of our veterans for homes!

Demand determined by ability to pay! The million-odd vets who have come back to crowded apartments, who are living doubled or triple up, who cannot adjust to their families because there is no privacy and because their kids are farmed out, who are forced to take hotel rooms if they can get them and can pay hotel prices—all these will have no "demand" for a place to live if rents and prices are made too high for them to pay!

Such is the method of a *Times* editor for "solving" the housing shortage.

The argument is used to justify the killing the subsidy proposed in the Wyatt program for 2,700,000 low-cost homes for vets in the next two years. Admittedly, even with this program all the vets who will need homes will not get them, but it is a far more ambitious home-building program than the country has ever before seen.



The Times Would Solve Vets Housing Need by Hiking Rent

by Max Gordon

By killing the subsidy provision, the Republican-polltax bloc has made it virtually impossible to get the houses built at any price the veterans can pay.

That, of course, is the aim of the powerful lobby of real estate vultures who are behind the crippling of the program. They are not in the slightest interested in whether the veterans have homes. In fact, they are dead set against their having homes. The housing shortage is a godsend to them and they intend to keep it as bad as they can.

They have even denounced as "Communist" the plan to use demountable war housing in the emergency. It might ease the shortage slightly.

THEY have done a few other things to the program through their ever-willing Republican and Southern Democratic congressional agents. By cutting out the provision for price ceilings on old houses, they have extended a cordial invitation to speculators to take over the field, and have actually eliminated all price ceilings.

Thus, a speculator will buy a new house under arrangements with the builder, at ceiling price. Since it is no longer a "new" house, he can sell it at any price he sees fit. Because of the shortage, you may be sure that price will be mighty high. He will share the

quick profit—gotten at the expense of the veteran—with the builder, and price control be damned.

The congressional reactionaries have cut out the premium payments for extra production, which Wyatt considers a basic part of the whole program. Also, by providing that price ceilings must be set to ensure a "reasonable" profit, the \$6,000 homes Wyatt envisioned are ruled out.

IT IS astounding that reaction would dare do this to our vets. Where are all the promises made to them? In the name of "private enterprise," they have been kicked overboard and the vets left with the prospect of homelessness not for a temporary period but for years to come. As if readjustment to peacetime living were not tough enough! As if the sacrifices already made were not enough!

The "private enterprise" talk is, of course, hokum. It is the usual cover-up for the demand for unlimited profits.

The provisions knocked out of the Wyatt program in the House can still be restored in the Senate. If that happens, there will be a struggle between conferees of the House and Senate to decide whether they remain.

This fight can be won only if the indignation of the people, and especially the vets, is expressed in the most dramatic fashion possible. A repetition of the "bonus march" of 1932 is on the order of the day.