

Letters on the 20th Soviet Congress

Following are more letters in the current discussion of American Marxists and the Soviet Union. Letters over 300 words cannot be printed in full.

Respect But Not Blind Faith

Editor, Daily Worker:

Alan Max and the whole editorial staff of the Daily Worker deserve our thanks for the provocative articles that have been carried helping us to deepen our understanding of the 20th Congress. Nothing but good can come from this kind of discussion.

It seems to me that the questioning of the present leadership of the CPUSSR regarding their own role during the period of Stalin's alleged one-man rule must extend to a questioning of each and every one of us about our own roles. The fact that the Soviet Union was surrounded by enemies plotting to overthrow the workers' state was an historical fact, and accounted for the necessity of security measures being taken there. There were certainly very few of us who were aware that this necessarily led to abuses of civil rights.

But understanding where such abuses stemmed from is quite another thing from actively defending such abuses, as most of us did. Alan Max quite right in noting that this accomplished the opposite of what we wanted, for it only alienated many honest workers from our position. Not only did we actively defend abuses where we had no proof of guilt, merely a statement from the Soviet party, unsubstantiated by fact—where, with perhaps some justification, we gave the leaders the benefit of the doubt

and assumed they had good reasons why they couldn't make such proofs public—but we even went so far as to defend things that we knew were outright lies.

The case of Bela Kun is a good example. The N. Y. Times, the other day, printed an interview with Matyas Rakosi, wherein Rakosi stated that he was in jail at the time Bela Kun was arrested, and therefore knew nothing of the charges made against him. But he did know, he said, that Kun, for all of his mistakes during the Hungarian Revolution, had been the leader of that Revolution and had done good work.

All well and good, as far as it went. But on a trip to Hungary for the Youth Festival at Budapest in 1949, I visited the Museum of the Revolution. There was not a single mention of Bela Kun there. I asked about it, and one guide told me he never heard of him, another said simply he was a Trotskyite traitor. I have to admit, I accepted that.

When a man is accused of a crime in a socialist country, we can no longer (nor should we ever have) assume(d) that he is automatically guilty. We didn't accept the framed evidence against the Rosenbergs — we should far less accept simple accusations without evidence.

Long live the restoration of Marxist-Leninist principles to the Communist movement!—A.G.

A Second Letter

My dear Alan Max:

It appears to me from all that I have read about collective leadership and self-criticism in

the letters that have to do with the Soviet Union's late metamorphosis do not deal with the subject directly from socialist theory.

You can't have collective leadership without a collective following, and self-criticism in a body comparatively small to the rest of the population is comparable individual self-criticism.

What I am referring to here is the collective leadership and self-criticism in the early years by new workers recently brought out of serfdom and learning to work with machinery and technology for a working-class education. Their energies were spent on labor and militarism for their own defense and they had little time for over-all leadership of the country.

Being still infected with traditional "great men theories" and hero worship, they left the governorship of the nation in the hands of one man—Stalin.

This condition WAS a dictatorship and not Socialism, but what kind? I have tried to name it. Maybe you can try. All one can do is to go back to Marx and call this period in history the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This state of affairs may happen in other countries before their arrival to Socialism.

GEORGE ALLEN

Farm Bill Passage Seen by Rayburn

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 1.—Speaker Sam Rayburn (D-Tex) predicted Congress will approve the compromise omnibus farm bill despite administration threats of a veto.

Rayburn will lead the fight next week for final House approval.