

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Does the Steel Trust Like Peaceful Path?

Editor, Daily Worker:

In all this talk we've been having about peaceful roads to socialism, I think there are interested parties who have not been consulted. And, in the new democratic spirit, I think they should be.

By this I mean that we haven't asked the Duponts, the Mellons, the Morgans, the Huttons, the Lamonts, the Fords, the McCormicks, the Pattersons, et al, how they feel in the matter.

There's never been a single minute when I've been for anything but peaceful change, and peaceful organizing of unions.

I'm not sure that the Steel Trust can say the same.—F.P.T.

'Discovery And Liberation'

Editor, Daily Worker:

Today I read a poem, reprinted in a newspaper, by a man who used to be my friend. It was a moving work of art. It did not deal with current political struggles. In fact, I must confess that I have not fully gotten what the poet was driving at, but the poem had such a magic and powerful sense of life that I think it is well worth reading and thinking about until I find out.

I used to be an avid reader of our contemporary poets, but I pretty much gave it up about ten years ago when I joined the Communist Party. Part of my giving it up was a genuine disillusionment with the emptiness and anti-humanism of a good deal of our contemporary American poetry. But another part was abdication, as an artist, a reader, and simply a person from the responsibility to understand what my contemporaries were honestly striving for in this and other arts. I relaxed into the comfortable rigidity of a dogma.

I conveniently narrowed my sense of reality in this area. And I lost a number of friends. Not that the poetry produced by the Left was a happy substitute! Too often our Leftist writers sacrificed lyric imagination to "saying the right thing." And that applies to our painters and composers too, though I think to a lesser degree.

As I read this poem, I felt not enormous regret that I had lost all friendship and communication with its author, that I had literally scoffed at earlier works of his, often preparing to scoff before I read them.

The elaborate preparations many of us made to exclude all ideas in the arts but those we mistakenly believed conformed with "socialist realism" have done us and American culture, great harm.

At the same time, I do not in the least regret having been a Communist all these years, and I fully intend to remain one. It's been a wonderful experience, for all the dogma, bureaucracy, sectarianism, and, forgive me, cold-bloodedness.

Because among our comrades and friends I have found a passion for justice, and a fundamental concern with and love for their fellow-beings that has outweighed even our most grievous faults. I think this period of discussion and confusion and swinging between extremes can also be a period of discovery and liberation, in a very personal sense, of ourselves as human beings, giving us freer eyes, ears, and hearts to perceive the world with.—Allegria.

Reevaluation Begins at Home

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have been moved to write this letter because it seems to me that the recent speeches, reports and articles of Dennis, Weiss and Foster, dealing with the published and unpublished reports of the 20th Congress, as well as with their present crisis in the CPUSA, all have one fault in common. They don't apply specifically to us here in the U.S.

For the most part, they all could have been written by Communists anywhere else in the world. Except for a vague passing reference to our "uncritical acceptance" of what was shaking over there, the main burden of these reports seem to me to center around agreeing with the 20th Congress and, in giving "explanations" (in effect—apologies) for their past errors.

In a word, I don't think we have here a self-critical approach to our own past errors. Particularly is this so in the field of

American foreign policy.

Now I don't have any quarrel with the profound theoretical contributions made at that Congress concerning the possibility of a peaceful transition to Socialism in a number of countries, peaceful coexistence, the non-inevitability of world war, the Tito rapprochement, nor with K's—allegations against Stalin. I'll even go for the criticism of him for not coming out with a more profound historical analysis of Stalin's leadership.

But what I would like to see (and what we sorely need) is a more profound historical analysis of what led American Communists to parrot every new line emanating from the Soviet Union since its inception. What effect has this had on the relations of American Communists with the American people? Did workers, students, the middle classes listen or believe our line? No. In fact, half the time these lines were so hard to swallow that we didn't even dare mention them to our own friends and relatives!

When the American workers see us critically evaluating past and present issues as they really affect us; calling a spade a spade and putting out for peace, then I'm sure they'll appreciate our correct Marxian analyses of the predatory role of American imperialism and its heavy cost to our liberties and standard of living.

But if we dodge these issues, then they'll surely dodge us!

O. H. LEEDS.

Why Is CP Isolated?

BROOKLYN.

Editor, Daily Worker:

It seems to me that after these many weeks of the most searching discussion in our Party's history, it is regrettable that the only point that our National Chairman sees fit to make is that we should be emphasizing our achievements as well as our errors in the period under analysis.

With all respect to Comrade Foster's Titanic contributions to the American workers, his great traits of courage, devotion and self-sacrifice in the battles waged by our Party, I feel that he is not facing up squarely to certain truths about our status as

a Party today and the path ahead.

To recite our achievements, and some of them are truly noble, does not exonerate us from our mistakes nor does it help us to understand why we are more isolated as a Party than at any time in our last 20 years. To review the great battles led by our Party, and the many splendid and courageous people who led them, is inspiring, but it does not explain why we reached such a serious low point and "where do we go from here?"

Are we in need of booster shots or are we seeking answers to serious problems? A great reaction is taking place in our ranks. If some of the discussion appears lop-sided and negative, that would be inevitable in such a deep-going upheaval. But it is not a major tragedy. We want to find out how such gross errors in national policy could occur in a Marxist party (not just another workers' organization); how can we get to the root of the trouble and correct line; how can we find our way back into the progressive movements of the American people, some of which we helped to develop.

I wish Foster would discuss some of these points.

ARDENT READER.

Steel Striker Speaks

BALTIMORE.

Editor, Daily Worker:

The steelworkers are on strike. The steel trust is trying to shove a five year contract down the throats of the Union so the companies can abolish one or two hundred thousand jobs with automation, speedup and new machinery. The steelworkers' families must be fed and public opinion must be won to back the strikers.

Let the readers of the Daily Worker pitch in as the best organizers of every kind of support for the steelworkers. Let the real fruit of the last months of "speaking our piece" be real down to earth help in this fight.

—STRIKER.

Democracy And Patience

If we believe in Communism than we also believe in majority, in democracy. If we believe in

majority than we must learn to be patient as well as persevering for economic forces do not work overnight. If we lose patience than we resort to expediency and expediency leads to distortion, deception, cunning, force, the debacle of Stalin.

Doesn't it now become clear why so many people have dropped away from Communism throughout the years, including myself; and why so many others have turned traitors.

Let truth and honesty be honored as the important pillar and foundation that it is.

—J.B.S.

Comments on Foster Article

Editor, Daily Worker:

I would like to make what I believe to be some constructive criticism of William Z. Foster's article on the Stalin cult. His explanation for the fantastic history recently revealed in the USSR is three-pronged: lack of democratic tradition in the Soviet Union, constant capitalist encirclement, and Stalin's prestige and semi-military discipline which he maintained. These attempt to explain how Stalin's cult could have developed in a Socialist country. But they don't.

Foster has begged the question badly in his third and supposedly most important reason. He explains that the cult could grow because of Stalin's tremendous ideological prestige—which is like saying water is wet because it's a liquid. He must explain how Stalin could achieve ideological prestige in a Socialist country to the extent that all other leadership is blinded.

We are also told in one place of a semi-military discipline in the USSR but we read elsewhere in the article that Party members and the Soviet people in general did not realize anywhere near the full extent of Stalin's excesses. How can one live in a semi-military discipline without realizing it?

We certainly have no difficulty recognizing repression here in Maryland with its Ober Law and the ever-present FBI stalking supposedly free citizens in the name of the Smith Act.

I believe Foster should give us some second thoughts on this important issue.

—CONFUSED.