

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Asks Balanced Criticism

Editor, Daily Worker:

We of the left are not responsible for the attacks of reaction, even though we may have somewhat more skillfully have blunted them than we did.

If there are any leaders of the Communist Party who think they have done the Party and the people of the United States more harm than Truman, Eastland, Eisenhower, Dulles, McCarthy, Brownell et al let them step aside and make room for better leadership. But I don't think they have! This orgy of "confessions" of failure is possible only because the details of the objective situation of the last 10 years in our country are being ignored.

Sure we made mistakes. But our mistakes were not the raising of such issues as the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, the need for peaceful co-existence. Our mistake was our failure to develop our tactics in such a way as to make it more difficult for our enemies to isolate us from the people—even when (as was often the case) the people agreed with us!

Those who argue against our having raised such issues are in effect saying that the left has no leading and principled role to play. And if that's the case they should be prepared to liquidate the left as having no usefulness except when the people somehow and at sometime are "ready" to accept it.

Let us boldly itemize, first for ourselves, and then for the people, a list of our very real and positive contributions to the betterment of America. Then let's prepare a list of the "unpopular" positions we have taken and show how life itself has forced movement towards them. And only then let's list the issues we raised that were wrong ideologically. We can be sure that the last list will be the smallest!

Then let's go on from there and decide what's next. We want full civil rights for the Negro people. Let's make our voices heard in our communities and our organizations! We — and most of the American people—want a secure peace. Let's do what we can to help our less

articulate neighbors express their desires. We want many things — including Socialism. Let's decide, not by blueprint but by local conditions, how we can best win the support of the many who want the same things. And then, for gosh sakes, let's get to work!

—D. N.

## Urges Election Discussions

PHILADELPHIA

Editor, Daily Worker:

This is an appeal for readers to use Speak Your Piece for an exchange of views on how Communists and other advocates of socialism can work most effectively in this election campaign.

Of course, the best method for arriving at a decision would be through organized discussions, resolutions, etc. But obviously time does not permit this. In the meantime, what do we get? In today's DW (Aug. 15) for example, half of the Speak Your Piece space is given to an article on "Workers' Rights to Socialism." Another letter, almost as long, dwells on that theory of Max Weiss' dealing also with the future.

All that speculative theory, not tied up to the problems facing us, can get somewhat tiresome. This no reflection on the letters, most of which (certainly the two of today's I mentioned) show much thought and could be very stimulating.

But there must be many DW readers working in this election campaign who must be learning from the healthy criticism now going on of our past election work. In view of the fact that we have not yet gotten into the swing using normal organizational channels for sharing each other's thinking and experiences, it's so important to use the forum made available to us through the Daily Worker.

I have already explained in a previous letter why, in this particular election, I am working openly for Democratic victory.

—JOSEPH POSNER

## Who Is a Socialist?

Editor, Daily Worker:

A general invitation to all socialists to join with us in a convention to end the present divisiveness is excellent providing we

make clear what we mean by the term socialist.

Every true socialist believes that he who makes a profit out of the labor of others is a thief. Since capital goods were developed through the labor of the workers and represent a "surplus value" withheld from them, in taking possession of these capital goods the workers are recovering stolen property.

The sort of mock socialism found in Great Britain, which loads upon the backs of taxpayers compensation for mines and factories expropriated from the capitalist, is doomed to failure and is ethically unsound.

The thief must disgorge his booty. The disgorging can be made relatively painless, as today in China, through a guarantee of a modicum of comfort to cooperative capitalists. But the expropriation itself, to which we as socialists are committed, admits of no compensation.

Every person who believes that he who makes a profit of the labor of others is a thief, provided he is prepared to act in disciplined accord to implement that belief, belongs within our ranks.

That does not mean condoning error in those other Marxist doctrines that have borne the test of history. Rather, it indicates that we recognize "surplus value" as so much the outstanding article of our faith that we consider the person who accept it to be truly a socialist with a contribution to make to a common cause, and that for the sake of unity we do not wish to make an issue of his deviations from majority opinion on points of less importance.

Too long have our divisions brought comfort to the enemy. The laugh is on the enemy when we stretch out our hands to welcome fellow socialists who in the days of our divisiveness were driven from our midst. Let us forgive and forget so as to get on with the task of building a socialist America. But let us not compromise this basic doctrine.

—JAMES STINSON

## On a Deputy Secretaryship

Dear Editor:

In my opinion, James W. Ford's proposal to establish a Deputy Secretaryship post headed by a Negro comrade, is an urgent plea

to Marxists to abolish justified fears and doubts as to whether the Communist Party is genuinely committed to the fight for Negro liberation.

While I believe the proposal has much merit, it cannot be considered apart from the main problem, which is the creation of a real working class party with internal democracy.

No honest person can deny comrade Ford's statement that the "Communist Party has played an honorable and historic role in raising high the banner for Negro liberation. . . ." This is fact that even those who differ with Communists cannot refute. But from my personal experience and observation, it is my opinion that for a whole period of time, CP leadership abandoned the struggles of the Negro people after arrogantly deciding for many years what their destination should be.

While James W. Ford's special proposal is a good one, it doesn't meet the problem for these reasons:

1. The CP is headed mainly by leaders whose working and living experience is too unrelated to the American norm. These leaders speak a strange and sterile language. They feel that they are the appointed saviors of all mankind. Many of them have not punched a time clock for years and I am sure do not look forward to such a prospect. Being so far removed, it is nigh impossible for them to identify and be genuinely sympathetic with real problems and dreams of working people. Further, these leaders who demand that the membership be self-critical, have surrounded themselves with friendly, uncritical lieutenants, a sort of impregnable family circle. This cult which prevents membership will and correct policy to emerge, can be termed The Cult of the Bureaucrat.

2. Most Negro leaders suffer from the same failings. Under such a proposal as James W. Ford's can those who presently have no real contact with the Negro people — who haven't worked in years—who bowed to chauvinism and bureaucracy—permitted the Negro liberation movement and Negro Marxists to go by the board—CAN THEY QUALIFY FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY?

Is it possible for such leaders,

Negro or white, to change overnight? If so, why have we not heard any profound self-critical statements for the long chain of admitted errors? If so, why are national committee differences still kept from the membership? I do not wish to imply that these leaders cannot eventually change and play a worthy part. In fact, for their long years of past service, they deserve no less than frank, friendly criticism which may help to return them to the American mainstream that originally nourished and gave them birth.

I further think that the present status of the party is not one wherein the best special proposal can work but only serve to prop an already condemned building. Nor is there any current evidence that any groundwork is being laid which will return the party to the membership at the coming convention. Will those who have honest differences be permitted to speak? Will those who were unjustly booted out—or deserted be allowed to take the floor? And if the majority so desires to make changes in leadership, will these be honored and respected?

I believe an American Communist Party with Socialism as its goal IS A MUST. Such a party from the top to bottom should be typical of the American people. Its leadership should adequately represent workers, women, Negroes, Puerto Ricans and intellectuals, etc. . . .

My salute to James W. Ford for his vigilant letters in connection with William Patterson and Nadine Brewer. I write this letter not to differ with comrade Ford's proposal but because I too am concerned about my people and the fate of any group which has helped—and can help again to achieve a better life for Negroes and their fellow Americans.

—D. J.

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