

COAST 'PEOPLE'S WORLD' ANSWERS SOME CRITICS

The following editorial entitled, "A Reply to Critics," appeared in the *People's World* of San Francisco, on June 18:

By correspondence and word of mouth some readers have disputed the wisdom of publishing the text of Nikita Khrushchev's speech on Stalin, as released by the State Department.

Our editorial comment on the Khrushchev text has also been challenged.

Two principal questions have been posed:

- Was it proper to publish a document which the State Department obviously released to further its own ends?

- Did not our editorial continue an old vice in a new form by uncritically accepting what Khrushchev is supposed to have said, just as in past years there was an uncritical acceptance of declarations by Stalin and other Soviet spokesmen?

We published the text because, to us, it seemed authentic. (By now that is an academic issue, because if the document was not authentic then the Soviet government has had more than ample time to expose it as a forgery or a distortion.)

Whether one agrees or disagrees

us adopt a principle of rotating some of our leadership each year. If Stalin had been rotated some of the U.S.S.R. troubles might have been avoided. They would not have been worse. Ditto with Browder here. Let's not have a repetition of Centralism with no democracy. Only real party democracy now and in the future is the guarantee of avoiding the type of errors we have made in the past and correcting those we may make in the future. —M.

Asks Airing of Differences

Editor, *Daily Worker*:

I have learned that differences exist between Joseph Starobin and other Marxists on various aspects of current policy.

Since these differences have not been aired, and apparently there is no thought that rank and file opinion might aid in a correct resolution of the differences, I suppose I'll have to wait until Henry Schwartz, or some other "expert," writes an expose on the differences, giving me the opportunity of learning what they are and giving me the possibility of forming my own judgments. —B. C.

with Khrushchev, his estimate of the Stalin era constitutes a document of major importance, which cannot be ignored by anyone who wishes to understand what has happened in the Soviet Union, what is happening now, and what it means for the future, not only of the Soviet people, but for all mankind.

Indeed, without knowing what Khrushchev said, it is impossible to assess it critically. Thus, we were convinced we were performing a service to our readers by making the text available to them.

That it had come from the State Department was not our fault. We believe (and we said so) that the Soviet leaders blundered by not releasing the text to the world, thus permitting the State Department to exploit the release for its own ends.

Indeed, one of the primary aims of our initial editorial was to counter the State Department propaganda, an aim which could not be served by an ostrich-like approach to the Khrushchev report.

If the impression was created of an uncritical acceptance of the Khrushchev text, that is misleading. By all means, read that speech critically.

We read it critically, and it confirmed two conclusions: that grave and sweeping injustices were committed during the Stalin era, that excessive power and glory was vested in one man. Believing these conclusions valid, we were duty bound to comment on their implications.

Some portions of Khrushchev's speech struck us as questionable or incomplete. Under that heading we would include his explanation of what he and other Soviet leaders were and were not doing, his description of Soviet unpreparedness on the eve of the Nazi invasion, his omission of any reference to the fate of Jewish leaders and institutions, and some of his innuendoes.

Having said that, the main thing still remains. The Khrushchev speech represents an attempt to cope with and to eradicate evils that flourished in the Stalin era.

The speech also placed a heavy burden on us who not only defended the achievements of socialism, but also apologized for all the specific evils that developed in the Soviet Union. It is incumbent upon us to re-examine critically our own attitudes. That is a responsibility we cannot and will not shirk.