

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

The Steel Agreement

Chicago.

Editor, Daily Worker:

As a steelworker, it is my opinion that George Morris and The Worker are going overboard in their characterization of the Steel settlement. With some of the most important chips still to be counted (incentives, seniority, etc.) our paper is able to see "historic breakthroughs."

It seems to me we have to have a sane approach to such things and not go off half-cocked or fly in the face of the steelworkers own logic.

The steelworkers, happy to be back to work, do not regard this contract as "historic" or too outstanding at this point. We got a number of demands granted or partially granted that the union outlined in '52. The steelworkers are satisfied, not stunned. And they're waiting for the fine print.

In addition, many of the gains have been long a part of the contracts of other unions.

Wouldn't it be a sounder position to present an analysis of the gains and gimmicks in the settlement, giving a true picture of what is known at present and wait for a full evaluation until we see the "conditions" part of the agreement.

If as is hinted there are certain concessions or guarantees by MacDonald on production our whole estimate could be changed.

—A Midwest Steel Worker.

Criticism of Other Marxist Parties

Editor, Daily Worker:

What seems called for in the Communist movement on both the international and national levels is the expression of differing lines of thought which can vie for majority acceptance. Meaningful disagreement usually encompasses many specific issues on which known leaders formulate divergent approaches.

Such differences should be worked out not only in a Letters to the Editor column but through published reports of the discussions and disagreements taking place among the membership and leadership of the Party and, if need be, by referendum. This, above all, would give substance to our pleas for the inner-party democracy which can transform our organization into a independent and positive force on the American scene.

Within this context, I want to register my deep disapproval of the theories put forward by Max Weiss in his report to the National Committee, "The Meaning of the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union." Despite a perceptive analysis of the forces which pushed us into blind defense of the Soviet Union, of the shortcomings in our party democracy, of our responsibilities for the party's isolation from the American people, Weiss is unable to propound a qualitatively new approach.

Regarding the crucial issue of relations between Marxist parties, Weiss formulates this line, "Whenever the theory or practice of the Marxists of other countries become issues which threaten to affect adversely the relation between our party and friendly masses we must subject these questions to the most careful study in order to define . . . a correct attitude to such theory or practice" (p. 36). Such a proposal, I regret, smacks of an opportunism which returns us to the "old" way of dealing with troubling questions. If Weiss means what he is apparently saying, he presumably would not protest against any future Socialist errors or injustices unless they bothered masses of people first.

Let us face reality. As Marxists, we postulated an automatic, self-regulating economic and social system through which social justice would be guaranteed. However true this may be in the

long run, bitter experience has revealed that as now constructed that system, in the short run, is susceptible to serious perversions. Changes are called for in the socialist model; changes in essence that are similar to those called for in basic Party procedure. Unless we develop these new forms and, at least in the case of our party machinery, prove them by our practice now, the American people will have no reason to turn to us for leadership toward Socialism.

—H. L.

Americans Need The Daily Worker

MILES, Mich.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Enclosed please find \$10 for the emergency fund. I wish you the best of success. Americans do need the Daily Worker and The Worker.

When will Americans, led by Communists and real Socialists, form a political party pledged to the socialization of the means of production and distribution? But, above all, when will such a political party attain a place on the ballot? When will the Democratic and Republican "representatives of the people" allow this to take place?—C. J. W.

Workers' Rights Under Socialism

Editor, Daily Worker:

On the question of civil liberties under socialism:

I think that much of the discussion is abstract. Worse than that, some of the discussion is misleading. It blurs the real meaning of the recent revelations about civil liberties in the Soviet Union. The Soviet abuses, which properly shocked us, were abuses of workers' rights, not capitalists'.

Moreover, some of the writers—and speakers—blur over the distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat (or "workers' state") and a complete socialist, classless society. And

still others blur over the difference between a capitalist state with a "socialist" congress, and a workers' state in which not only the parliamentary orators, but also the soldiers and policemen, judges and juries, are the instruments of the working class.

It is healthy and necessary, of course, to chart the road to socialism in the United States. But the U. S., although very different, is part of the same world as the Soviet Union. If we ignore the strategic importance of the world-historic experiment in the Soviet Union, including both its successes and its failures, we do so at our peril, and at the peril of the whole American working class.

There were violations of civil liberties in the Soviet Union and some very bad ones. But some comrades react to this by saying that the workers in power should give great liberties to the deposed capitalists during the transition period, almost as a matter of principle. I think this is a liberal reaction, not a communist reaction.

But, there should be the utmost democracy within the working class, as Lenin so eloquently pleaded in "State and Revolution." There must be the maximum safeguards of workers rights. Lenin pointed out in 1920 (in the famous trade union discussion) that the workers needed unions to protect themselves against "their own" state. There was no sarcasm or pessimism in this blunt statement of Lenin's, but the simple recognition that utopia does not come all at once, and a "workers state" is not necessarily a bureaucracy of angels. Therefore, he looked for "checks and balances" within the working-class against just such a violations as have now been revealed.

I think the workers should have the right to political differences with their own state. It is true that the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary parties,

although originally workers-parties, became transmission belts for capitalist influences. But they were only illegalized under conditions of civil war. It is true that organized factions within the Communist Party were outlawed about 1920 (for the first time in 17 years). But again, only under conditions of civil war.

We have often been told that such inner democracy was not necessary—the unanimity of the leadership, their devotion, etc., etc. But I now think it was and is necessary to have a workers political organization—a faction, or even a party, if necessary, to express important points of view within the proletariat, which may be at variance with the proletarian leadership. (And this does not contradict the basic necessity for a broad working-class dictatorship—a stern attitude to proven saboteurs, etc.)

For example: the problem of the industrialization of China is a gigantic problem—and not only because of its technical aspect. Depending on the tempo of this industrialization, the Soviet masses may have to sacrifice to a smaller or greater extent.

The question of further sacrifices for the masses is involved here. And this being the case, the masses must be consulted. There must be a "dialogue with the masses." It is not always a matter of simple, mechanical, socialist construction. It is not always a matter of simple technology.

Marxists are often inclined to laugh at the phrase. "His majesty's loyal opposition," and rightly so. But if you do not go beyond the limits of capitalist democracy in a capitalist state, the concept is a perfectly valid one. The loyal opposition can be both loyal and a genuine (capitalist) opposition. Why is it not possible and beneficial to have a "loyal Socialist opposition" in a worker's state?

—V. C.