Letters from Readers

Claudia Jones Discusses
The Tobacco Habit

We have received many letters referring to the column we ran of Joseph North's that dealt with the dangers of excessive smoking. We are glad to publish excerpts here from an interesting letter we received from Claudia Jones, Communist leader and one of the Smith Act victims, now recouping from a serious illness—Editors.

NEW YORK

No, Joe. No!

My negatives refer to the feminine title of "lady" given to Nicotine, (I argue not that it be dubbed "lord" either) but because this substance or element of the neuter gender—nameless—once it has you in its clutches.

First, I must establish that I speak from the vantage point of one who has ceased to smoke (I refer to the point "though.

Now I don't want to sound immodest at all, but as my friends and comrades know I was a little trying on their nerves (and my own) during my incipient period of abstinence which was self-imposed. During this time, I locally announced my decision to quit, fanned the air vigorously with a cloud of cigarette smoke, firmly requested windows be opened if the air got too dense etc. All this is relevant to the point though.

How did I stop? Is what everyone wishes to know!

Well, first of all, I'm not the first person in the world to have stopped. Second, like all struggles it was not easy. Bad habits have a way of being tenacious as is also the case on the level of bad ideology. Even after quitting, sometimes I am still assailed by the urge to smoke. But as the saying goes, once burned, twice shy. Also need to add, that when progressives and particularly Marxists decide to take a struggle they usually make their efforts count. Well, when I saw your reference to Dr. Lieb's study on "Safer Smoking," I decided it was time to add to the store of collective knowledge and I was reminded of the study I made and actually used to assist me in overcoming the nicotine habit.

Prior to its use, I had exhausted all the "known" steps—decision to stop on arising with the awful morning taste, berating myself when I lit up after the cup of coffee for so-called "lack of will," using a cigarette holder, to "sift" the nicotine, getting a cigarette case and rationing myself, etc., then would come some additional pressure of work or emergency—and there went my resolve!

Then, in my search for other aids, I found the weapon that did it. It's called "How to Stop Smoking" by Herbert Broom, published by Vanguard Press. What it is a useful collection of facts based on the author's experience himself, a former heavy smoker who accidentally found himself on one occasion without cigarettes tested himself to see how long he could do without smoking and became a non-smoker. He went back to smoking after a long period of abstention but as he states, in 1957, once having experienced the pleasure of non-smoking one longs to return to that peaceful blessed state. It's something like our fight for peace against war. We must show in our debate that there are definite advantages to non-smoking as to peace, as well as to express and pin-point the evils of smoking and war.

[Miss Jones deals in some detail with the arguments and facts in the book and concludes that its secret lies in helping the smoker to understand what his or her day-to-day reactions will feel be and what's more it also shows you don't die from non-smoking, as many smokers may think; but rather your sense of well-being, to say nothing of the fact that you are really free not to smoke—because you are not, bound by the habit—make great compensation for your effort.

"I needn't mention the economic angle, the pull on your pocketbook, which you have already emphasized which under the rule in the olden times and the taking of medicines and promoting their pleasurable version to take the 'nic' out of nicotine.

She proposes that Joseph North writes a pamphlet on the subject in his usual crusading habit but to also himself cease to be a semi-slave of nicotine and thereby become a foremost example of journalism by example.

Miss Jones adds a P. S. "For those who will say her health made me stop, let me add, I am allowed eight cigarettes a day but went over as I voluntarily stopped all smoking. I agree with your framework that ordinary light smoking is not what we're talking about. I forgot to add that four of my friends and colleagues have stopped smoking since they followed my method—one a couple—an attorney and his wife, another a Smith Act victim, Dorothy Forrest of Missouri and a New York mother."

Ryan's Articles
On Soviet Union

New York

I am dismayed at the situation in the capitalist Soviet Union. William L. Ryan has just come back from a 6,000 mile tour of the country, and is reporting what he saw daily in The New York Times. On 11-29-53 he tells about the new "powerful middle class with an instinct for ownership."

They are "just as interested as their Western counterparts in maintaining their status and passing on the good things to their children." But the only thing which prevents their wishes from being government policy is the "bureaucracy built up under Stalin's dictatorship." But we must have no fear. As Ryan says, "the Soviet government had to educate the masses." After doing this vital deed against the will of the people, it will eventually be the Soviet's downfall. Already the Soviet government is tempting the broad masses with more and better goods for their own private ownership." This previous statement of Ryan's proves that the Soviet government is turning capitalist.

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I am glad to see that the Soviet people are not running the government like the one of the socialist United States, where the farmers are going broke because they're not getting full parity, and where an "orthodox recession in '54, is forecast by top economists." (New York Times—11-29-53—Front page—same issue).

Your Health

CARE OF MOTHER DURING PREGNANCY

(Second of Two Articles on Pregnancy)

By Federation Press

If the mother has any physical disease, the doctor will prescribe a diet to keep her in good condition. The physician will also advise the mother to have a good weight gain.