

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

GE Election in Schenectady

SCHENECTADY, N.Y.
Editor, Daily Worker:

A very significant event took place in the Schenectady GE plant last week. In the biennial election of the large IUE Local 301 (15,000 members) the entire slate of incumbent officers was defeated except for the business agent, L. Jandreau, who won re-election by 58 votes of over 7,000 votes cast. Jandreau who has been business agent of the local for 20 years and who has, at various times, been an important national trade union figure, had been almost a legendary leader in the Schenectady local.

The principal issue in the election was the question of how to beat back the company's aggressive campaign for more production at the expense of the workers. Continued encroachments by the company on established practices had provoked numerous stoppages throughout the great GE plant here.

The manager of the plant charged that there had been 57 such stoppages in a little over a year. The company proposed to establish penalties up to discharge for these stoppages claiming that they were a violation of the contract and established grievance procedures.

The membership of the union felt that its leaders were not combatting company's actions vigorously enough and also that they had not availed themselves of the national strength of the union in a united fight against GE's arrogant practices.

The unusually large turnout for the election, almost twice that of any previous election, indicated the concern of the members.

In the course of the election campaign, Jandreau characterized the opposition as "little men" trying to take on a job that was too big for them. The opposition seized on this phrase and campaigned as little men fighting in the interests of little men. It was true that no one person or group could be characterized as leading the opposition. It was a broad coalition united around the single issue of fighting the company's new policies.

There was no election scheduled for the 40-man executive board until next year. However, it is likely, in the face of the clearcut vote, that all forces will join in the coming fight against GE. (As a result of action elsewhere in the GE chain and of this election, it may be expected that a vigorous campaign will be opened up nationally against the new GE policies.)

—Schenectady Worker

Friendly Discussion

Editor, Daily Worker:

Last week you printed a letter from T.S.F., which in a respectful and comradely fashion pointed out that Ed Strong, in an otherwise valuable article, had not given consideration to the problem of speaking to the masses, especially to the Jewish masses.

T.S.F. also took the occasion to plead for a discussion that sticks to the issues. He suggested that it was not helpful when Strong picked on what was at most an inexact expression and called it "chauvinist." T.S.F. did not "denounce Strong as mistaken" but in friendly fashion showed that Strong himself had used an inexact phrase, "Islamic civilization," which could be criticized from the point of view of Marxism, but which in comradely discussion of bigger issues one simply does not jump upon.

So here comes S. Finkelstein, and in most uncomradely fashion labels T.S.F. as arrogant and ignorant and reads us a lecture to educate us in culture.

I will not waste the Daily's space to debate the history of culture with someone who knows all about it because he knows enough to look it up in a book. I will, however, appeal once more for comradely discussion. It is not much use to talk against the sins of sectarianism when people like S. Finkelstein continue to give the impression that Communists are smart alecks who are so well informed that they do not have to listen to anyone, or to read their letters to see what they actually have to say—T.S.F.

P.S. — Enclosed is \$5. Will make it more soon.

Detroit Writes On Hungarian Situation

DETROIT, Mich.
Editor, Daily Worker:

As a member of the American workingclass movement, I have decided to raise my voice in protest against the actions of the Hungarian government of Janos Kadar, which as of today has ordered the dissolution of the workers' councils in Hungary, charging that they are infiltrated by counter-revolutionaries, and has declared martial law. It appears that a new general strike will be carried out.

Though it seems that we know very little about these workers' councils, the Hungarian workers apparently have no other spokesman or organization through which they can express their will; at least I have not read of any; and if the highly effective general strike previously carried out, the persistent refusal of the workers to help in restoring industry and to give support to the Kadar Government, is not an expression of the most pro-armed intervention on the part of the main body of the workers, I would like to know what else it can be.

Do those who claim, or imply, that the main body of workers does support the Kadar Government, as in the Pravda article and that of Eugene Dennis, have the slightest evidence to support this view?

The Soviet Union and the other neighbors of Hungary have a right to insist that any Hungarian government shall not be fascist; shall not become a base for new troop concentrations of other powers; shall not pursue a policy hostile to any of its neighbors; shall not exercise terror against the Hungarian workers and the masses; and shall honor its international obligations.

I think these obligations can and must be enforced by the workers and other responsible and decent elements within Hungary; but the Soviet intervention, it seems, actually inhibited these forces from assuming responsibility during the past two months.

I believe that the American Left could have made its best contribution to world socialism on Oct. 23 and 24 by questioning and protesting the Soviet military intervention to bolster a bankrupt and irresponsible Hungarian government (for that is the only kind of government which appeals for foreign troops to suppress a domestic uprising; a Communist government with a workingclass base appeals to the workers to defend it and to restore order.)

—"Detroit."

Gordon Explains "Apologists"

Editor, Daily Worker:

Eugene Dennis, in his article of Nov. 29, and A. B. Magil, in his letter of Dec. 10, charge that

my article of Nov. 23 labelled as "apologists" everyone who justified the Nov. 4 Soviet intervention in Hungary.

I regret they did not read the article a bit more carefully. Though it maintained that we in America were in no position to make hard-and-fast judgments on the Nov. 4 action, it did say quite clearly that "I believe the verdict of history will probably be that this intervention was necessary." Hence Dennis' and Magil's accusation hardly makes sense.

I specifically directed my criticism at a particular theory of history advanced by James S. Allen which, as he and I both indicated, went far beyond the Nov. 4 intervention. This theory claims that all Soviet error flows from the need to safeguard socialism. I argued this theory was unscientific and that it provided a platform for reassertion of apologetics.

I used the term "apologetics" to describe a particular process which I believe we have long applied—in contrast to scientific process—in regard to the Soviet Union. Following the Soviet's reappraisal of its view that Tito was a fascist agent, and following the revelations of Stalin's tyranny, most of us agreed we had been blind apologists.

The term, however, has been considered invective. Since I am strongly opposed to invective in our discussions, I regret it has been so interpreted. I would welcome another term to describe this process, which starts with the assumption that all Soviet action must be championed and then erects its own structure of "fact" to accomplish that aim.

I believe this process — not defense of Soviet action when justified — has done us infinite harm among the American workingclass and people. It has not helped the Soviet Union. Our isolation, for example, hardly puts us in an favorable position to wage effective struggle against reactionary efforts to exploit the Hungarian situation for anti-Soviet purposes. Yet such a struggle is the only meaningful way in which we can express international solidarity in the current situation.

—Max Gordon.

Situation of Egg Farmers

NEWBURGH, N.Y.
Editor, Daily Worker:

Here on the farm the ever-present scissors have just taken an additional snip. Eggs are now wholesaling at 10 to 20 cents a dozen below cost of production. Many poultry farmers are beginning to feel that this time the skids are under them for keeps. Big industry is moving into the egg business by setting up series of units of 100,000 birds each. No small farmer can meet this sort of competition.

Immediate economic struggles in the farm field are vital, yet the best current proposals, such as Brannan Plan type production payments, will at most alleviate rather than eradicate the source of our troubles. While continuing the fight for immediate gains, let's not push too far into the background the basic goals and principles without which we have no understanding of the economic forces at work, and can only drift from moment to moment without direction.

Enclosed is \$10, a Christmas present to my favorite paper. I disagree strongly with the editorial position on Hungary, but welcome such well presented articles as that of Ed Strong on the Middle East. Let's have more of them.

—Orange County Farmer.

Our Own Backyard

ASKOV, Minn.
Editor, Daily Worker:

I was on the verge of writing when James Jackson Jr.'s piece appeared and I want to concur with his article and also with Benjamin Davis' article. I think we're being downright silly when a County Committee of the Communist Party donates \$100 to the Red Cross.

I've never heard any GI speak well of this organization in any of the wars and also some of the sordid chapters in their history, and unless they've changed lately I'm still skeptical.

I certainly agree the Soviet Union made grave mistakes which helped to create the situation in Hungary. But if we have to take full responsibility for those mistakes we must also take full responsibility for the situation that exists in our own backyard.

What's in our own backyard? The terrible conditions the Negro people live under the repression against them and the ghettos for the Negro, Puerto Rican and Mexican people. The Indians we put on reservations in hovels, suffering malnutrition and disease ridden, and close our eyes to what's happening to them as a race. The Un-American Committee is trying to deport our best sons and daughters. Smith Act victims languish in jail for years. The FBI hounds and harasses people. An example, they went to my neighbors and to a lot of people in the county asking if they knew me. That failed to bring any great results. They send an official from the Immigration Dept. to see my husband, who is a naturalized citizen. I told him he has nothing to say to him. I missed my cue, should have asked them if something was rotten in Denmark since they perhaps want to send him back there.

Eisenhower and his friends have the gall to open their mouths about Hungary. They took such great care there wouldn't be any refugee problem from North Korea by napalm bombing women and children. . . .

I think if we used a little of our energy which we used on the question of Hungary we would be able to make a dent in amnesty for the Smith Act victims and against the sordid spectacle of the Un-American Committee hearings against the Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born.

I feel that only if the American people know what American imperialism has done all over the world will they be able to give real help to the people of Hungary. CLARA JORGENSEN

Vagueness

In Polemics

Editor, Daily Worker:

It might have been better, one would think, had Ben Davis resisted the temptation to write his letter which appeared in the Daily Worker Dec. 3.

Sometimes it happens, that one's thoughts awaken and start to run without stopping to put on their shoes. At least with me it does, especially in the morning.

It is not difficult to picture Ben, reading the Daily Worker, and gulping his first cup of coffee. It might even be too hot. He reads the article by Alan Max. This calls for a second cup. There comes into focus the letter of Lillian Gates, and any doubt makes its departure.

For he detects a certain irony behind the fact that Comrade Gates and Alan Max share a common viewpoint on the Hungarian events. And he must strike while the irony is hot. Hence a letter is written which is the end result of an everyday routine. But the end is only the be-

ginning. For me, his arguments possess a wonderfully fugitive equality. No matter which direction I turn, their conviction seems to escape me. Let us consider for a moment, his picturesque statement, "Their position is supremely typical."

I am impelled, against my will and somewhat embarrassingly, to ask the question: Supremely typical of what? Let us assume that their position is typical of their individual viewpoints. Of what else then, is it typical? Comrade Davis does not say. Or rather leaves to the reader to divine, since a hint to the wise is thought sufficient. Can it be that Max's position is typical of the Daily Worker? Is it possible that Lillian Gates' views are typical of New York? If this is the case, their articles make no such claim. I prefer to believe that they were expressing their own opinions, just as I am certain that Ben was voicing his.

No doubt, harried by time and tide, Ben forgot one thing which is, so to speak, the small change of polemics. That is the direct quotation. Failing that, he gives us only his interpretation of the ideas which he disapproves. Such a method is always subject to error. If the premise is possibly mistaken, can the conclusions then be correct?

I confess that I was unable to find the position reported in his letter, after a most careful searching of the Max article and the Gates' letter. Nowhere did they state or even imply that "we must purge ourselves of all errors before we take any action against U. S. imperialism. . . ."

One might even say with Ben: ". . . this is truly fantastic. Where does it lead?" The answer is, I think that, a faulty premise leads only in a faulty direction. For who would argue that the "Negro people purge themselves before they demand full citizenship?" Only simpletons, and Comrades Gates and Max are hardly that. Again the question is hurled at the reader: "How can such good comrades get themselves into such a ridiculous and impotent posture?" The response literally writes itself: They never were.

In all candor, I cannot avoid the impression that the unavowed purpose of Ben's letter is to prove he is right. This, despite the merits of one or another question. His pursuit of this uncertain goal brings into discussion, among other things, the Negro Question, liquidationism, subjectivity, etc. All of the questions which he considers, are absorbed and transmuted according to his own political chemistry. Thus he appears to ignore the existence of an important section of philosophy called logic.

I am prepared to concede that Ben may be right in the viewpoint which he expresses. I should not know it, however, from his letter.

HERBERT L. WHEELDIN

Joins the Party That Will Be

Editor, Daily Worker:

The enclosed \$200 is from the Belle section of the Communist Party of Queens. The paper's great! Keep it up. "Speak Your Piece" is wonderful!

There is a new recruit to our Party, too. Not joining the Party as it is now—but the Party that will be.—C.