

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Obstacles to Right Answers

Editor, Daily Worker:

Three obstacles among others stand in the way of finding the right answers for the days ahead.

1. Some people seem to have forgotten the reasons, which impelled the Party, after months of discussion, to reject Browder's line in 1945. There is a tendency to identify the pipe-dream of Browder's Teheran with the reality of Geneva, forgetting the 10 years of Cold War, and the Bandung concentration of forces, which helped make Geneva possible.

Browder's line was rejected because he turned away from the class struggle. In his analysis capitalism somehow stopped being aggressive imperialism and turned into a peaceful and progressive system.

Browder was an arrogant bureaucrat. His contributions to the 1945 discussion were almost entirely confined to long excerpts reprinted from his own writings and speeches. His only hint of self-criticism was a conceited whimper that it must be his fault if so many Party people did not accept his version of the line and were going after a semi-anarchist, semi-Trotskyist line (his words).

The suppression of Foster's letter opposing the 1944 Party dissolution was the crowning peak of Browder's bureaucracy (although it appears that Browder's successor acted the same way in the case of JK).

2. Some people, especially some who were very anti-Browder, tell us NOW that all our ills, or most of them, come from the "objective situation" of the past 10 years, prosperity, government repressions, etc.

The ironic thing is that some of these same "leaders" are the same ones who would never listen when we told them in 1949-1952 that the party line was in contradiction with the objective situation.

At the state CIO convention in 1948, left delegates were told that regardless of what the situation was in our union or our industry, we must stand up publicly against the Marshall Plan because we had to show solidarity with the workers of other lands. Some of us wanted to abstain from voting, because we

did not want to be separated from the union membership. No, we were told, we had to vote "against"—and this was right after the union members had voted 5 to 1 against the Progressive Party.

Today these same leaders appeal to the "objective situation" of five years ago in order to oppose any changes to meet the real objective situation of today.

3. The third danger is perhaps the most widespread. It takes two aspects, one its attitude to criticisms, and second, its proposals for remedies.

The attitude toward criticism is simply a refusal to pay attention to it, but pretending to, while twisting the criticism into an absurdity. LK on 9/13 seems to me to do it deliberately. When he alleges that we who want a live movement say that "the Party has done nothing, has never been right," he is resorting to downright falsehood. It can only result in choking off discussion and criticism.

This tactic, of twisting or misstating a criticism, is also used, I believe innocently, by some leaders who have become largely divorced from ordinary people.

For example, Foster tries to tell us that we have not neglected the American tradition because so many books were written on John Reed, on the history of the U. S., etc. Foster could have written 20 more books, but the fact is that on vital occasions he ignored American traditions in a way that cost us heavily. For example, when Thorez and Togliatti, speaking for their millions of voters, said that French and Italian workers would not support an anti-Soviet war, their words carried the weight of popular support. But when Foster, who had no similar authority to speak for American workers, made the same statement, he lost us support of militants who till then had been close to the Party, and who objected to associating with people who were mere echoes of the European parties.

No matter how many books on trade unions are written, no matter how many resolutions on industrial concentration are passed, the effective line of the Party driving its members into activities like the Stockholm Pledge campaign could only ren-

der it impossible for members to be active in the Teamsters Union, in the Machinists Union, in the Carpenters Union.

The fact is that those party members (and Communists who have left the Party only for technical reasons), who have been successful in recent years in maintaining leadership in a union local, or other group, are precisely the ones who find that in present objective conditions they cannot publicly advocate socialism or ask people to join the Communist Party, without destroying their position of mass leadership. Those who are leading activity and struggles on issues of the day, based on their past Communist training and understanding, do not have the pat answers which come so readily from members who do not have to stand up once a year for election in a democratic organization.

R. S. T.

## The Meaning of Marxism-Leninism

Editor, Daily Worker:

In the D. W. of Sept. 9th Arthur Zipser notes that "Marxism-Leninism" is "a lost word" in the vocabulary of the N. Y. State Committee and speculates that they are in favor of dropping it. If that is done it will not be because there is no such thing as Marxism-Leninism, nor will it be out of lack of appreciation of Lenin's contribution to Marxism. But it will be a recognition of the fact that his main contribution was the application of Marxist theory to the situation in Russia.

I am sure that most Marxists share my admiration for the theoretical contributions of Mao Tse-tung but no one insists that there be an American Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party. That is because it is recognized that Mao's contribution was the application of Marxism to the Chinese situation.

I believe that our general theory is Marxism; the application of it to Russia is Marxism-Leninism, and the application of it to China is Marxism-Maoism. Maybe some day, when it has been effectively applied to American conditions there will be a name for that application too.

I notice that the Chinese do sometimes use the word Marx-

ism-Leninism, but I think this is a hangover from the days before it was so clear that each country will take its own road to socialism. However they do not uncritically apply Lenin's proposals for use in Russia to the situation in China so there is no harm in the use of the word by them.

But in the U. S. where we tried to copy the Russian experience; where it can be said (I hope in jest) that a party leaflet once appealed to "the workers and peasants of Brownsville," the use of the term Marxism-Leninism becomes a symbol that we have not yet liberated ourselves from our previous uncritical acceptance, for use here, of Lenin's tactics for Russia. Therefore, I think, the tendency to drop the word shows progress.

BERNARD.

## Opinions in Brighton

Editor, Daily Worker:

At a meeting of the Section Committee of the Brighton Section of the Party on Aug. 29, 1956, the following expressions of opinion were offered for the guidance and consideration of the National Committee:

1. Concerning the forthcoming National Convention of the Party, it was urged after discussion that it was essential that representation to this convention come from every organized group of the Party, beginning at the least, at the section level. Failure to assure this type of representation would be a further repetition of previous mistakes of inadequate rank and file representation at conventions. There are many members within the various clubs and sections who are entirely competent to offer valuable judgments and opinions concerning the future of the Party, its functioning and organization.

2. It was also agreed after discussion that the present procedures being followed by the National Committee in its deliberations were disquietingly reminiscent of previous days, and previous errors. The failure of the National Committee to bring before its membership, frankly and clearly, the differences existing within the National Committee, would indicate that business is being done in the old

way. Inner discussions, no matter how valid, are not enough. These discussions must be shared with the membership, whose opinions in turn must become part of the total Party conclusions.

We urge the National Committee to take the Party membership into its confidence, otherwise it may find that the membership has lost its confidence in its leadership.

## Schenectady Resolution

Editor, Daily Worker:

The following resolution was passed at a conference held in Schenectady on Sept. 9.

Resolved: that the theoretical foundations of the Party be thoroughly reexamined with a view to reorganization along the following lines:

First: to create an organization suitable for objective research into American political and economic life.

Second: to provide the possibilities for a broader political coalition of socialist minded people.

Third: to develop democratic forms within the organization to encourage creative thinking in the ranks of the organization as well as at the top levels, with emphasis on rank and file majority rule as opposed to a monolithic approach.

It is our opinion that this procedure can best be conducted within the framework of the present organization and that no steps toward dissolution of the party be taken at this time or until such time as alternative proposals can be placed before the membership.

The following resolution was by one comrade, who voted against the above resolution, and it was accepted that this go in as the minority proposal:

"I am 100 percent against dissolution of the Party.

"I feel that any changes which we feel should take place should be done within the framework of our present organization.

"I feel this resolution (the majority resolution) is not satisfactory and not in the best interest of the working class and the fight for Socialism."

SCHENECTADY CP.