

A Communication

TO THE EDITORS:

Since criticisms of every dimension and variety seem to be the fashion of the hour, will you permit me to make one?

As one who has long enjoyed reading your magazine, and as a writer myself, I found your editorial note on Shirley Graham's review of *The Stalin Era* not only gratuitous but somewhat objectionable. I assure you I do not say this simply because of my wholehearted agreement with Anna Louise Strong's and Shirley Graham's viewpoint; nor merely because I cannot claim to be one of those erstwhile Sovietphiles who now consider it the height of style to take grave exception to everything in the Soviet Union, from plumbing to the polbureau, and cry *mea culpa* over the sins of the Russians, while the debris of their own misadventures in the United States mount on every side. I say it because, whereas it seems eminently fitting for the radio networks painstakingly to disassociate themselves from the political opinions occasionally expressed on their programs by radical speakers, it appears to me peculiarly inappropriate for the editors of a magazine like *New World Review* to exercise a similar sort of circumspection.

You may not have intended the apologetic flavor of your comment that it is a "sign

of the times" that you now present "more varied opinions" than in the past, or the condescension inherent in your pronouncement that your "differences" with the author and reviewer of *The Stalin Era* are "of course, friendly." But I really don't understand how you could consider it sound editorial policy, respectful either to your contributors or readers, to publish such an appendage to a review.

If the editors of the magazine want varying comments on subjects with which book reviews deal, such comments can appear in other articles. No one will be hastened to perdition if you fail to attach editorial postscripts to the heels of reviews with which you disagree. After all, as you yourself point out, you are now publishing "more varied opinions." And wouldn't it be a salubrious "sign of the times" if such "varied opinions" were presented without the editors feeling the compulsion to hurry into print with their disagreements?

I don't doubt that Miss Graham was told in advance of your intention to run an editorial note to her review, and that, being the sort of tolerant person she is, she agreed to it. However, that makes it no more palatable, in my opinion, nor lessens the impertinence to her.

ALBERT KAHN