

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

The Path Lighted By Howard Fast

Editor, Daily Worker:

Howard Fast has left us—the words are cruel but true a hole has been left in my heart. My body aches with the sorrow of his loss. It is as if a brother has left me. For was he not my brother in the battle for all that is good and right? But though he may march in different ranks all that he has taught us will march with us. Whatever road he travels Spartacus, Tom Paine and old Altgeld are with us.

The words and deeds of Judah Macabere and Gideon Jackson will forever remain a part of our lives and acts.

He has lighted a path towards singing tomorrows for all—and though his own flame has grown dim—it will burn within us.

Hail and farewell Howard Fast. We cherish you for what you have written. We love you for all the fights for justice you have fought. We weep that you have left us. We hope you may return soon.—But we remember when you wrote of the Soviet Union. "I wonder how it is that we could have been so patient and understanding of the long long night and then have so little of patience with the sunrise. Perhaps we have lost sight of something basic put so well by Lincoln Steffens when he said, 'I have seen the future and it works.'"

This we will never forget, and as you said in "Peekskill U.S.A.," as we held the line at Peekskill we will hold it everywhere.

L.A.C., Feb. 5.

Ed. Note: The author of the above, along with others, may have missed our editorial about Fast because of the news delivery strike. We are therefore reprinting it here:

HOWARD FAST

We were sorry to read in the New York Times that the outstanding novelist and former columnist for this paper, Howard Fast, feels he can no longer work or write in the Communist movement.

We are firmly convinced that Fast is mistaken, just as we have felt that Joseph Starobin and John Steuben, who publicly took somewhat similar positions, were mistaken. If ever there was a time when people could present and fight for their point of view within the Communist movement, this is it.

We also regret that Fast, like Starobin and Steuben, went to another publication to present his views on the party, rather than taking advantage of the free discussion prevailing in the columns of the Daily Worker. The attitude of the New York Times towards socialism hardly needs describing here.

Fast says that he is "neither anti-Soviet nor anti-Communist" and we have no doubt that he

and others who have taken similar steps will continue on the side of progress and socialism. We disagree with anyone who may be inclined to look upon them as "enemies" of socialism, as was often done in the past. This does not lessen our strong disagreement with the step they have taken.

Lenin and Engels Quoted

Editor, Daily Worker:

I was indeed happy to observe Joseph Clark's carefully prepared answer to our Russian Comrades' evaluation of the tendencies in conflict in our own Party, particularly his reference to the need for full adequate representation of contending viewpoints.

Clark based his reply on Lenin's preface to the Russian translation of "Letters to F. A. Sorge and Others" by F. Engels, K. Marx, etc. In this volume Engels, particularly in his letters to Florence Kelly, dealt with the burning questions of the American labor movement from the standpoint of the contemporary task of Communists.

Therefore, it is no less than amazing that Clark should not have included Engels' letter of Nov. 29, 1886, in which he wrote to F. Sorge:

"The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the constitution of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party."

Engels continues:

"The masses must have time and opportunity to develop, and can have the opportunity only when they have a movement of their own — no matter what form so long as it is their own movement — in which they are driven further by their own mistakes and learn through their mistakes."

From the above observations and much more available in the American edition of "Letters to Americans" by F. Engels and K. Marx (International Publishers, 1953) Lenin concludes:

"In countries where there are no Social Democratic workers parties, no S-D members of parliament, no systematic and consistent S-D policy at elections or in the press, etc. — where the working class is in complete subjection to bourgeois politics — Marx and Engels taught the Socialist at all costs to rid themselves of narrow sectarianism so as to rouse the proletariat politically, for in the last third of the 19th century the proletariat displayed almost no political independence in England or America."

So — in light of these crystal clear observations, available to Joe Clark and our whole leadership and membership — how can we reconcile our 1956 election policy for one thing and the com-

plete absence of programmatic agitation for a Farmer-Labor party as the next step on the road to liberation for the American working class. If any amendment is warranted to the Draft Resolution it is the adoption in full of the Engels to Sorge memorandum indicating "the first great step of importance . . . is the constitution of the workers as an independent political party . . . as a distinct workers party."

I agree with Clark and Lenin that (quoting Lenin) — "But what is more interesting, of course, is to dwell not so much on American-Russian parallels, as on the fundamental characteristics of the American Labor Movement."

I would appreciate further discussion on the political, programmatic question involved, as I see it: Class struggle vs. Class collaboration.

— L. DEATY

Feb. 6.

Fatalistically Inevitable

Editor, Daily Worker:

The impression prevails that the 20th Congress more precisely defined the new relationship of world forces when it blessed the marriage of the word **fatalistically** with the word **inevitable**.

Some are pleased to think that non-inevitability has been emphasized — as though the words **absolutely-positively** had been added to the original sentence. But most believe that what the word **fatalistically** added was a wee bit of hedging—a sort of escape clause.

What is the real meaning of **fatalistically inevitable**—if any?

Inevitable, an adjective, is defined by the American College Dictionary thus:

1) That cannot be avoided, evaded, or escaped; certain or necessary.

2) Sure to befall, happen, or come — by the very nature of things.

Thus, simply to say "world war is no longer inevitable" is enough to imply the thought of those who welcome an escape clause. For in order to avoid, or escape something—some kind of intervention is required. This thought could be made more explicit by adding: if these and those do this and that.

In any case, **inevitable** is clearly one of those either-or words, like **unique**. There are no degrees of inevitability. A thing may be more, or less, **likely** to happen. But a war can no more be just a little bit inevitable than a woman can be just a little bit pregnant.

Fatalistically is an adverb. It appears in the dictionary under the noun form—**fatalism**.

Fatalism is described as a term in philosophy. It is defined as "the doctrine that all events are subject to fate or inevitable predetermination."

The kinship between the

'The Nation' Comments On the Wellman Case

The current Nation magazine (Feb. 9) in an editorial, "The Wellman Case," states its agreement with the Michigan CIO Council and others who petitioned the Attorney General to intervene to permit Mrs. Peggy Wellman to remain in this country. The Nation expresses hope its readers will agree and make known their agreement. The editorial follows:

Saul Wellman, a Purple Heart paratrooper of World War II, and former head of the Communist Party in Detroit, has been convicted under the Smith Act and sentenced to four years and eight months in prison. Mrs. Peggy Wellman, 44, his wife, who has been charged with no crime, has nevertheless been ordered deported under the McCarran-Walter Act because she was born in Canada, although she was brought to this country as a few-month-old infant and has lived here since.

At the deportation hearings, two witnesses testified to having seen Mrs. Wellman at Communist meetings. We have no knowledge as to whether Mrs. Wellman is a Communist or not. What we do know is that if she is one, she is an American Communist and not a Canadian none—unless the party was inducting members at an earlier age than of us thought possible. But the arbitrary nature of the order constitutes one of its lesser

injustices. Of greater moment is its inhumanity. Deportation in this case means the disrupting or the uprooting of a family that has never known any other home than the U. S. The Wellmans have two children; David, sixteen, was an honor student at a Detroit intermediate school and in 1954 won an American award from the American Legion "for qualities necessary to the preservation and protection of our country"; and Vickie, a 14-year-old girl this year won the same prize. We hold no brief for the Legion's Americanism program; we merely note that the awards represent a compliment to the upbringing of the Wellman children from a wildly improbable quarter.

Even lawmakers sometimes recognize that the law is an ass and provide built-in safeguards in the interest of justice. Under the McCarran-Walter Act, the Attorney General can intervene to permit Mrs. Wellman to stay in the U. S. Many prominent persons and various Michigan organizations, including the militantly anti-Communist Michigan CIO Council, have petitioned the government along these lines. "We honestly believe," wrote the council, "that any respectable, fair-thinking American citizen would have a feeling of revulsion against the deportation of a person in Mrs. Wellman's situation." We agree, and hope our readers agree also—and make known their agreement.

partners to this marriage is so close that **inevitable** pops up in the definition of **fatalism**. But the two are not synonymous: what we have in this union is no simple redundancy. On the contrary, one need only make the proper distinction to clear up our whole problem.

Inevitable characterizes a state of affairs, a combination of objective circumstances.

Fatalistic characterizes a state of mind, a subjective viewpoint, a philosophic outlook.

Hence, to say that something is—or is not—**fatalistically inevitable** is like saying that your suit is made of dialectically materialist material. Or that your ideal house is idealistically situated.

If you said such things you would be talking meaningless nonsense. It is just as meaningless and just as nonsensical to speak of world war as no longer **fatalistically inevitable**.

However, those who cling to the union of these two words as to a talisman need not despair. It is possible to bring them into a meaningful relationship. One might, for example, say that mankind need no longer accept, **fatalistically**, the proposition that world war is **inevitable**. Any number of other combinations make sense—if they attribute **fatalism** to human beings, and not

to a relationship of forces.

How this monstrosity got into our hair is anybody's guess. Maybe some poor translator is to blame. Maybe this word combination has a different meaning in the Russian language. Maybe the weird marriage makes no sense in Russian either. Maybe it all happened by accident—because some Soviet comrade, slavishly following our practice here, makes it a point of honor to use two words where one would do nicely.

Anyhow, in this time of great change, I refuse **fatalistically** to accept the continued use of **fatalistically inevitable as-inevitable**.

Those who really value precision will take Mark Twain's advice and learn to choose the right word instead of its second cousin.—Marion Bachrach.

Feb. 3.

Daily Worker

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday by the Publishers New Press, Inc., 85 E. 12th St., New York 2, N. Y. Telephone ALgonquin 4-7854.

Registered as second class matter Oct. 23, 1947, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 2, 1879.

3 mos. 6 mos. 1 year
Daily Worker only \$4.00 \$7.00 \$12.00

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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