

Letters on the 20th Soviet Congress

Following are more letters in the current discussion of American Marxists and the Soviet Union. Letters over 300 words cannot be printed in full.

Workmen's Circle Member Writes

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have been a Socialist for 42 years and a member of the Workmen's Circle. I am now a retired cloakmaker. One of my three children has been for many years active in Left Wing, or, as he calls it, "progressive movement."

I often had sharp discussions with my son, for whom I always had regard because of his honesty and sincerity. Our area of sharp disagreements was mainly on questions of Stalin's iron rule. I asked my son many times in the past 25 years what kind of socialism is it when you kill so often and so many, including old leaders who fought together with you for the revolution.

After all, the country was big and strong and even if leaders had different opinions than Stalin do they have to be killed? Couldn't they just be disciplined?

In spite of my disagreement with the Jewish writers in Russia, some of us had to agree that the treatment of Soviet Russia toward building the Yiddish language and its culture had no equal. So was the crushing of anti-Semitism. That was one point where my son won a strong point.

I and other old Socialists in Cleveland used to have sharp arguments at meetings of the Farband and used to write protest letters to the "Forward," especially during the war when we asked for Russian War Relief.

But what happened right after the war? There were times that

my son couldn't look me in the eyes, and frankly I was broken to the depth of my heart that I myself had pity on my son because of the Jewish question in Soviet Russia.

After the Jewish people suffered the greatest catastrophe in all history another anti-Semitic catastrophe befell our Jewish people in Russia. The whole of Jewish culture, books, theatres, Yiddish papers, schools, were uprooted and closed down.

After the war there started a campaign against cosmopolitanism. But it became quite apparent that it was Jew-baiting. The New York Times quoted hundreds of names from the Russian papers and they were all Jewish names.

It is said that a policeman Beria was responsible. What nonsense. Where was Stalin? Where were the other leaders. I am of the opinion that if Lenin would have lived on Russia would in the long run have been a great socialist and democratic country and would have been an outstanding examples for socialists all over the world.

My son showed me the current discussion in your paper. It is sure something new and good. My son asked me if I would want to write, that it will be printed. I tried to be as cool and objective as possible. Good luck to you.—M. D.

Reaped Whirlwind

Editor, Daily Worker:

Cartoonists, columnists, commentators, representing the press, radio and TV, exult and rub salt in the raw wounds of our disillusionment. Never before, within our memory, have they had such cause for universal joy. Let us face it; we

have reaped the whirlwind. "As ye sow so shall ye reap," the old admonishment, now comes to haunt us. The Stalin legend of 20 years standing has been dispelled by harsh reality.

Nevertheless we shall live through this period, and perhaps . . . who knows, even come out it immeasurably strengthened by the ordeal. For our main crime, it appears, was not that we did not have faith but rather that we were overzealous in our credulity.

Nor can we take refuge in dodging our individual responsibility by taking pot shots at our leaders, who were as much in the dark as the rest of us; for it has long been an axiom in our political neck of the woods that if one leads at all he or she does so by reason of a generally recognized capacity for self sacrifice. It is small comfort therefore, and still smaller character, that points the finger and proclaims loudly: "Why didn't you do this or that or the other thing."

How many of us have shirked the most obvious and elementary of tasks through sheer craven fear of putting our necks out and incurring economic reprisals, while our leaders have gone calmly and quietly to prison for years, separated from all they knew and loved? Let us truthfully answer this pertinent question before we start throwing stones from the inside of glass houses.

If agonizing reappraisal is the main order of business, let us rejoice that the Daily Worker recognizes it and affords us reasonable space to let off steam about matters in this situation of concern to all of us. Of concern, too, to our country and the world at large.

—S.K.