

Letters from Readers

Claudia Jones Discusses The Tobacco Habit

We have received many letters referring to the columns we ran of Joseph North's that dealt with the dangers of excessive smoking. We are glad to publish excerpts here from an illuminating letter we received from Claudia Jones, Communist leader and one of the Smith Act victims, now recuperating from a serious illness.—Editors.

NEW YORK

No, Joe. No! My negatives refer to the feminine title of "lady" given to Nicotine, (I argue not that it be dubbed "lord" either) but because this substance or element is of the neuter gender—nameless—once it has you in its clutches.

First, I must establish that I speak from the vantage point of one who has ceased to smoke (boldface, please, CJ) for some three months now. While you claim no credit for the whole furor over "the habit," as is your modest self, let me thank you for your initiative in starting the debate in our press, not only because The Worker does and must deal with every phenomenon and concern of the people, but because your articles helped to strengthen my own

resolve in my personal fight to abstain from the habit of smoking—a fight which had shortly preceded your original article by about a month or so. It was, however just about then I was about to return to it—(but once having abstained, one longs to return to that happy state). Believe me! Even greater authority than myself may be added in favor of your position. Did you know that both Gus Hall and Ben Davis were advocates of non-heavy smoking and in fact did not smoke for long periods of time.

Now I don't want to sound immodest at all, but as my friends and comrades know I was a little trying on their nerves (and my own!) during my incipient period of abstinence which was self-imposed. During this time, I loudly announced my decision to quit, fanned the air vigorously in presence of a cloud of cigarette smoke, firmly requested windows be opened if the air got too dense etc. All this is remote to the point though.

Now, apparently, in your volume of mail (an interesting fact, all right that it was greater on this issue than on any of your recent pieces—which only proves

CLAUDIA JONES

how popular and political if you please, is this matter of health!) no testimony has yet come from an actual case of one who has literally thumbed their nose at the nicotine habit. Because I used to smoke a pack and a half a day and don't any more, I hasten to give this testimony voluntarily. . . .

How did I stop is what every one wishes to know!

Well, first of all, I'm not the first person in the world to have stopped. Second, like all struggles it was not easy. Bad habits have a way of being tenacious as is also the case on the level of bad ideology. Even after quitting, sometimes I am still assailed by the urge to smoke. But as the saying goes, "once burned, twice shy." Also need I add, that when progressives and particularly Marxists decide to take on a struggle they usually make their efforts count. Well, when I saw your reference to Dr. Lieb's study on "Safer Smoking," I decided it was time to add to the store of collective knowledge and I was reminded of the study I made and actually used to assist me in overcoming the nicotine habit. Prior to its use, I had exhausted all the "known" steps—decision to stop on arising with the awful morning taste, berating myself when I lit up after the cup of coffee for so-called "lack of will," using a cigarette holder, to "sift" the nicotine, getting a cigarette case and rationing myself, etc., but then would come some additional pressure of work or emergency—and there went my resolve!

Then, in my search for other

aids, I found the weapon that did it. It's called "How to Stop Smoking" by Herbert Breen, published, I believe by Vanguard Press. What it is is a useful collection of facts based on the author's experience himself a former heavy smoker who accidentally found himself on one occasion without cigarettes tested himself to see how long he could do without smoking and became a non-smoker. He went back to smoking after long periods of abstinence but as he shows, in a witty way, once having experienced the pleasure of non-smoking one longs to return to that peaceful blessed state. It's something like our fight for peace against war. We must show in our debate that there are definite advantages to non-smoking as to peace, as well as to expose and pin-point the evils of smoking and war.

(Miss Jones deals in some detail with the arguments and facts in the book and concludes that its secret lies "in helping the smoker to anticipate what his—or her—day-to-day reactions will possibly be. And what's more it also shows you don't die from non-smoking, as many smokers may think, but rather your sense of well-being, to say nothing of the fact that you are really 'free' not to smoke—because you are not bound by the habit—make great compensations for your effort.")

"I needn't mention the economic angle, the pull on your pocketbook, which you have already emphasized which underscores why the tobacco monopolies are promising their pie-in-sky version to take the 'nic' out of nicotine."

She proposes that Joseph North write a pamphlet on the subject "in his usual crusading habit but, to also himself cease to be a semi-slave of nicotine and thereby become a foremost example of journalism by example."

Miss Jones adds a P. S. "For those who will say her health made me stop, let me add, I am allowed eight cigarettes a day

but went over as I voluntarily stopped all smoking. I agree with your framework that ordinary light smoking is not what we're talking about. I forgot to add that four of my friends and colleagues have stopped smoking since they followed my method—one a couple—an attorney and his wife, another a Smith Act victim, Dorothy Forrest of Missouri and a New York mother."

Ryan's Articles On Soviet Union

New York

I am dismayed at the situation in the capitalist Soviet Union. William L. Ryan has just come back from a 6,000 mile tour of the country, and is reporting what he saw daily in the New York Times. On 11-29-53 he tells about the new "powerful middle class with an instinct for ownership."

They are "just as interested as their Western counterparts in maintaining their status and passing on the good things to their children." But the only thing which prevents their wishes from being government policy is the "bureaucracy built, up under Stalin's dictatorship." But we must have no fear.

As Ryan says, "the Soviet government had to educate the masses." After doing this vital deed against the will of the people, it will eventually be the Soviet's downfall. Already the Soviet government "is tempting the broad masses with more and better goods for their own private ownership." This previous statement of Ryan's proves that the Soviet government is turning capitalist.

I am glad to see that the Soviet people are not running the government like the one of the socialist United States, where the farmers are going broke because they're not getting full parity, and where an "orthodox recession in '54 is forecast by top economists." (New York Times—11-29-53.—Front page—same issue).

R. R.



By JO LYNNE CRANBERRY SEASON

By Federated Press

Roll out the barrels—maybe over a million—for the cranberry crop. This season's crop will be the first to pass the million-barrel mark.

Menu-makers are including cranberry sauce, jelly and other favorites with the holiday turkey, as well as with chicken, ham and other foods for which

- ¾ cup seedless raisins
- 2 lbs margarine
- Dash of salt
- 9 in. baked pastry shell
- 3 eggs whites
- 6 lbs brown sugar

Combine sugar and water; bring to boiling point. Wash cranberries; add with raisins and nutmeats. Cover; cook slowly until berries stop popping. Add margarine and salt. Cool without stirring. Pour into pastry

Your Health

CARE OF MOTHER DURING PREGNANCY

(Second of Two Articles on Pregnancy)

By Federated Press

If the mother has any physical disorder, the doctor will examine

