

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Classes and Consciousness

Editor, Daily Worker:

On March 7, Erik Bert reviewed a book about Veblen by Bernard Rosenberg. Among other things, he quoted Marx on the French peasantry. He pointed out that Marx "offered a three - dimensional view of what constitutes a class."

If one reads the passage as quoted from **The Eighteenth Brumaire** of Louis Bonaparte (Selected Works, vol. 2, p.415), it is quite clear that Marx uses the word "class" in two senses.

The first sense is the objective description of a relationship to the means of production. This is what Marxists have always considered to determine the character of a "class."

The second sense involves adding to the objective the subjective. The subjective has customarily been referred to as "class consciousness."

Mr. Bert's presentation would have been more enlightening, it seems to me, had he made the distinction explicit.

Further, it is worth noting that in material later than this document Marxists have generally used the word "class" only in the narrower sense, the sense confined to objective conditions. The third dimension has been expressed by using the phrase "class consciousness."

Whether or not a class and its consciousness are "separable" seems to me an unreal issue. Dialecticians will have no trouble understanding that they both are separable and are not separable, depending upon the conditions and aspects examined. Those interested will find it profitable to read Mao's "On Contradiction."

—STANLEY ARCHER

A Debating Society?

Editor, Daily Worker:

It seems to me that Hank, in his letter which appeared on March 12, put his finger on the heart of the dangers inherent in some of the revisions of party structure when he poses the question: "But what is very much at issue now, or in any future unified socialist party, is whether there is room for differences of view, even on interpretation of basic Marxist principles. . ."

I don't think we have yet decided what kind of party we want and need. I don't think there is clarity, as yet, on whether there is need for a Communist vanguard. I don't think we have as yet determined the role of our party of "scientific socialism."

I say that because I believe that when such questions have been clarified we won't have an apparently honest and soul-

searching writer like Hank saying with regard to the 1946 expulsion of Browder, "But at issue is not whether Browder's theories revised some aspects of Marxism. Nor is it even at issue to discuss whether, having 'revised' Marxism, he was right or wrong from the viewpoint of revolutionary, scientific socialism."

This is the issue! Shall we become a debating society and a shelter for all kinds of "socialist" views? Or shall we be a party capable of democratically hammering out what we conceive to be a correct line and program of action dedicated to the best interests (as we see and understand those interests) of the workingclass, the Negro people and the farmers of America — and then measuring our own members against that line and their fulfillment of it?

I am all for the earliest possible formation of a coalition of Socialist organizations — within which the CP would retain its own organizational identity while joining in whatever common program can be agreed upon.

I am opposed to that concept which would have the CP itself dissolve into such an organization by welcoming and keeping within its ranks all shades of views simply because they are anti - capitalist. This is not enough of a bond to assure the needed program of action and leadership.

Browder placed more faith in the "progressivism" of American capitalism than he did in the CP and other forces for socialism—and we are well rid of him. Others, from time to time, have embraced ideas which also would have misled workers in their struggles. Some accepted the will of the majority (right or wrong) after convention discussions. Others couldn't accept such decisions—and they too are gone.

It is true that we have sometimes been too hasty in ridding ourselves of dissidents. But I still believe there is a time for discussion, a time for a vote, and a time for action. How long should we carry those who do nothing but sit back and criticize while claiming they are "for socialism?"—P.D.N

"Dictatorship of The Proletariat"

BUFFALO.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Someone suggested that a corner in the paper should be devoted to discussing Socialist ideas in plain language that any worker or Party member could understand. I heartily endorse this idea and would like to start it off with some comments on the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." Everyone shies away from this term. The intellectual

shudders. To the worker it is genuinely distasteful, because who wants to have, or to be, a dictator. This runs counter to every good American instinct. Yet I think if we translated this term into ordinary language, we would get a very different response.

The term refers to the State, the government. It means simply control of the government by the workers. Everyone agrees that today we have control of the government by big business. Walter Reuther referred to President Eisenhower's first cabinet as nine millionaires and a plumber (Sec'y of Labor Martin P. Durkin, head of the plumbers union). Sec'y Durkin resigned in disgust because Eisenhower refused even to pretend to fulfill his campaign pledge to amend Taft-Hartley. That left a complete set-up of millionaires.

Dictatorship of the proletariat means by contrast control of the government by the workers. Such a government would have on its cabinet Meany, Reuther, Hayes, Roy Wilkins, etc. probably a scientist, a historian, at least two women. Their concern would be not to give out huge contracts to Mr. Wilson of General Motors, but to raise the workers wages and give them decent health insurance etc. If Mr. Wilson said: "OK boys, if I can't make my 25 percent profit, I won't play. I'll close my plants," the workers would remember that these plants were largely built with the withholding taxes of workers. They'd just repossess them—nationalize the plants. Would they shoot poor Mr. Wilson? Why should they? He could go play golf on a coral island, or hunt with his favorite bird dogs in a nice Southern swamp. Or continue to run the plants.

What would Congress be like if the workers controlled the government? (As their large number of votes give them a right to do). Dixiecrats? Retired. Fewer lawyers, more workers, more farmers, more women, more Negroes. And we could get rid of this bastard committee system born of the desire to place property above people and grab while the grabbing's good. Congress is the only set-up in the country that can raise its own wages simply by voting to do so. On March 2, 1955, by voice vote, they gave themselves a 50 percent increase from \$15,000 to \$22,500 (plus expenses). They did not have to go out on strike to get it either. If workers controlled the government they too could vote themselves an increase and a 30-hour week besides. Does it sound so hard to take? Should big business control the government—or should we have control of the government by the workers?—A.S.T.