

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## A Letter To Howard Fast

NEW YORK

Editor, Daily Worker:

Enclosed is a letter to Howard Fast:

Dear Mr. Fast:

Having read in the N. Y. Times the exchange of correspondence between you and a fellow author from the Soviet Union I would like to make several remarks. Please excuse me for not addressing you through the Times. This is not because I dislike the Times, although they do indulge in an occasional distortion of truth. What I fear most from the Times is having a drawing put over my letter showing Khrushchev, Stalin and Lenin placing the fear of God in me, such as appeared in the article about your correspondence.

In your letter I think you raise fundamental and important questions which can not and should not be passed over lightly by the progressive movement in this country let alone throughout the world. So the main point of this letter is not the questions you raise but the organ in which you choose to do so, the New York Times.

As a believer in the right of dissent I certainly would not squelch your questions but I can ask what have you gained in your fight for truth and justice by presenting your thoughts to the public through the Times in an article entitled by Harrison Salisbury "Under the Shadow of Communism."

I would not deny you the right to criticize it in a most sincere and honest way. But the question is, through whom are you doing this?

Let us view the question this way: It is true that many errors were made and extremely serious ones at that. But can one say that Socialism was not built in the Soviet Union? Would you deny the great advance made by the Soviet people in the past forty years? All these advances were made in spite of errors! During World War II the people sprang to the defence of Russia and Soviet power in spite of these errors! After the war the Soviets quickly reconstructed and advanced to an atomic power, the second greatest industrialized country in the world, in spite of these errors!

Now just what does this prove? It proves that Socialism was deeply imbedded in the minds of the people.

If you still think there is Socialism in the Soviet Union then I believe there is a contradiction in your thinking. I feel that you mean your criticism in a sincere and honest manner. But allow me to point out to you that criticism is meant to strengthen the forces of Socialism, and when you speak through the Times one must raise an eyebrow and ask: since when does the Times wish to strengthen the forces of Socialism?

To put it more bluntly, although you probably mean well you do more harm to the peace and working class movements than good.

May I also raise this. To your Soviet friend you say several things which are not correct. For example you said that Mr. Foster and the people who support him are in your own words "bad". Now just why are they bad? Because you disagree with their ideas? Is this the basis upon which you label people "BAD". You certainly would not like it if in this letter I labeled you bad because I disagree with your thoughts, actions and the manner in which you presented them.

I would like to venture to say that I think you have a good plot developing for some future

novel. That is: A man who fights for truth and justice but isolates himself from the most progressive elements in the country and instead joins (with his high ideals) elements that can never have any real interest in the fine things he believes in. I wonder how such a story and its hero would end in real life.

I hope in the future that you will give the left wing press the opportunity to present your thoughts to the public.

Yours in the hope of future sincere, friendly debate and mutual criticism.

F. B.

June 11, 1957

## "People's Capitalism" And Cancer

Editor, Daily Worker:

Last week a rumor swept Wall Street to the effect that a major drug company had found a cure for cancer. What was the reaction? Did the Wallstreeters celebrate the end of this horrible disease by going out and "lifting a few"? Or did some of them spend a few minutes in thought of loved ones who had been killed by cancer? These are two of the many possible reactions by average people to this news.

But the inhabitants of Wall Street are not average people. They are among the so-called leaders of our country whose opinions are quoted to us by our newspapers daily; leaders in the great "moral" crusade of "people's capitalism against the evils of socialism and communism." The reaction of Wallstreeters was to immediately call their stock brokers to feverishly order the purchase of stock in the drug company. After all, under capitalism there is a tremendous potential profit in a cancer cure.

By the end of the day the rumor had proven unfounded, and not only was our country poorer for the loss of the cancer cure, but some of the speculators were poorer too!

This incident reminded me of an old plan of mine. Let's reverse the current procedure. Instead of the government spending billions for atomic war research while the American Cancer Society solicits the public for funds, let the government appropriate the billions for cancer research and ask the people to contribute for atomic war research. I predict the adoption of my plan would bring a speedy end to both cancer and the perils of strontium 90.

Yours for Socialism,

BERNIE

## Issue of Jury Trials

New York

Editor, Daily Worker:

How can we meet the objections of liberals who favor civil rights legislation but whose "consistency" compels their support for the jury trial amendment? In segregationist communities, jury trial for civil rights offenders would be farcical and would defeat the objective of such legislation.

This amendment, conceived by "clever" segregationist forces, can effectively be countered by the addition of this quoted phrase: The right to a jury trial shall be guaranteed in all Counties or Districts where the Federal Judge certifies that juries are selected without bias and where full voting and educational rights are respected."

Revise the words but use the sense of this proposal and we might yet win some effective legislation in this session of Congress.

A. K.