

Dear Editor

Letters from Readers

2 Important Court Victories

PHILADELPHIA

Dear Editor — I have just read - (alas, in other papers), that favorable court decisions have recently been won in two important Philadelphia cases, in which The Worker played an active role.

One was the Supreme Court decision ending jimcrow at Girard College. The other involved Aaron (Treetop) Turner, framed-up for murder, and tried five times over the past 11 years.

Both these historic cases won community as well as legal support for the civil rights and constitutional questions involved.

Please let us have a round-up on the issues and personalities involved, including the lawyers—Harold Rome the court-appointed white attorney for Aaron Turner, and Raymond Pace Alexander, the Negro attorney in the Girard College victory.

W. L.

Answers Rodney On Howard Fast

Dear Editor:

In a letter to the editor in the Worker of June 16, 1957, Lester Rodney takes issue with Mike Gold on comments that Gold made concerning the defection of Howard Fast.

Rodney comes to the defense of Fast with the statement "Criticize Fast as one may, he is still someone who stated in his interview with the Worker on his reasons for leaving the CP (March 10) that he remains more deeply than even for Socialism."

Rodney has before him the unmistakable evidence that Fast has allowed his differences to be used by the anti-Socialist New York Times as a weapon with which to strike at the already confused and shaken Socialist forces in this country, but to him that is not inconsistent with Fast's "socialism." Rodney prefers to believe the words while ignoring the deeds.—B.W.

A Forum On Fallout

BUFFALO

Dear Editor:

Church people and pacifists in Buffalo have increased their activities in behalf of halting bomb tests, since the recent fallout hearings in Washington and the appeal by Dr. Linus Pauling signed by 2,000 scientists and are circulating a Quaker petition calling for an end to tests.

First concrete demonstration of their activity which hit the local press was a forum held Friday night, June 14, attended by about 125 persons at the Unitarian-Universalist Church here. It was sponsored by the Christian Social Action Committee of Riverside Salem Evangelical and Reform Church, whose minister, the Rev. Robert T. Adams, was moderator.

As reported in the Buffalo Evening News of June 15, participants who spoke, a radiologist, a minister and professor of international law, agreed that aroused public opinion throughout the world can stop the testing of nuclear bombs. The professor of law cited the current Russian offer as a beginning step in ending tests.

They were: Dr. Harrop A. Freeman, Cornell University, a Quaker; Dr. Merrill A. Bender, chief of radioactive-isotope research, Roswell Park Memorial Institute, and the Rev. Robert L. Cope, of the Williamsville Unitarian-Universalist Church.

Rev. Cope said real security and peace are not to be found through armaments.

"The curious fact about this age," he said, "is that we are going to have to give up fighting. We are caught in a dreadful search for security."

"We have become the people



who must make the world safe for diversity. We must be mature, understanding and loving enough to accept a plurality of worlds.

"We can be part of the social conscience, part of public opinion that helps drive our time to the maturity that is required."

Dr. Bender said the extent of genetic damage already inflicted by nuclear testing was unknown, but predicted that in the next 10 years, babies born with mental and physical defects resulting from fallout would number 6,000.

Dr. Freeman predicted testing would end within a year, "largely as a result of international politics." He said it "couldn't be ended until the British tested their bomb" as the U. S. wanted to make sure there were "two countries able to make the bomb on our side before we stopped."

Fast Asserted Belief In Socialism

NEW YORK

Dear Editor:

I was very proud of the fervent stand in behalf of internal democracy taken by the recent convention of the Communist Party. I regret that this stand has not been echoed by one of its most venerable spokesmen, Michael Gold.

He says that Fast has "just been converted back to New York Times democracy." In an interview with A. B. Magil, Howard said, as a matter of fact, "The very fact that forty years ago there was in Russia a population of the most oppressed and poverty-stricken and backward human beings on earth bears stunning contrast to what we read every day in the New York Times." Magil asked if Howard Fast still believed in socialism. His answer? "Yes, more deeply than ever. It's only since the Khrushchev report that I've begun to think more deeply about Socialism itself."

Michael Gold then goes on to attack the writer: "Everyone is always being very noble in the usual Fast novel . . ." But, to the best of my knowledge, Mike Gold has never before, anywhere, anyplace, anytime, uttered one word of criticism of the words of Howard Fast! While he was in the party, he was the epitome of everything noble in progressive literature. Gold's criticism has validity taken by itself, but more than anything else, it points to the blatant hypocrisy that has existed in the party and which, as is evident, is difficult to discard overnight.

Howard Fast has been bravely in the forefront of the progressive movement for many years. His doubts are the doubts of every one of us. I do not personally feel that his decision to leave his party was a wise one. I think it was more an emotional response to international conditions, rather than a logical reaction to the fervent democratization process in the U.S. CP that has taken place.

But we have no right to attack Howard, falsely or otherwise. His faults are our faults. His virtues, I am proud to say, are our virtues. If we preach democracy, we should practice it.

Instead of attacking blindly, let us try to build a democratic

party of Socialism. I think we are becoming capable of it today.

YOUNG PROGRESSIVE

'Un-Americans' Damned With Faint Praise

ALPINE, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

I really must protest Al Richmond's review of Alvah Bessie's novel, *The Un-Americans*. The review, with its faint praise (damnation,) would be quite enough to discourage a follower of the paper, who would thereby miss the first full-bodied novel of the McCarthy period.

So many poor books have been praised in *The Worker* and *Daily Worker* over the years and so many unreadable ones have received faint praise because the author's heart was in the right place and his politics correct that it is perhaps difficult for a reviewer to handle a really good book and at the same time to express his opinion about a fault without making it sound as if the work is the product of another hack.

Over the years a formula for a left-wing novel has been built up through the influence of the Communist Party. The hero may be a worker or a professional; if the latter, it must be made clear early in the book that his father was a worker. The villain may be most anything, but if he is a worker it must be shown that the taint of the bourgeois is in his blood.

Somewhere about the hero's darkest hour, unexpected — to him, not to the reader — aid or sympathy must come, perhaps from a declassed worker in the dregs of life, perhaps from his persecutor's wife or mother, maybe even from a cop. This must be accompanied by a speech as, "Us working stiff's gotta stick together," or "My father used to work for the S.C.B. Company and I know what s.o.b.'s they can be."

There must be a minor character, a Negro worker of the caliber of Paul Robeson or Dr. Carver in overalls. He is blessed with invincible courage and near infinite wisdom. All hope is outlawed for the hero as a person, but he goes to jail or death cheerfully, knowing that someday the workers of the world will unite.

It can't be a very good formula, since it has been used countless times and hasn't produced a really good book yet. Howard Fast, who remains our foremost American novelist—at least until Bessie fires again—tried three times to give it life (Clarkton, Silas Timberlane, Lola Gregg) and even he couldn't make it breathe.

Bessie might have done a pretty good job with the formula but he would have had two strikes against him. As it was he defied it and produced a book that I dare say will be read more in 2007 when people are trying to understand what made us tick in the years of our madness. And I hope that many Worker readers will reconsider and buy the book in spite of Richmond's review.

GEORGE COOK

Also Recommends Chinese Document

Dear Editor:

Of course, Al Lannon is right in praising and recommending the circulation of the Chinese



CHANGE the WORLD

michael gold

San Fernando Cherry Orchard

CHEKHOV'S play, "The Cherry Orchard," is surely one of the most beautiful ever written on a social theme. In it, an old Countess sits with her romantic entourage in the garden drinking endless glasses of tea and discussing life and love and the heart break of change.

Meanwhile, the sound of chopping is heard in the background. The cherry orchard of the estate is being cut down. One of the Countess's former peasants is now a speculator in land, and he bought the cherry orchard from his mistress and means to turn it into suburban lots.

He symbolizes the class of merchants and traders then coming to the fore to displace the feudal landlords. The Countess and her melancholy friends sit around and pity themselves in poetic phrases. But the chopping goes on. One sympathizes like Chekhov with the gentle, romantic Countess and her cherry orchard. Yet change is necessary to the world. Change is the first step to progress. Better that a cherry orchard perish in its beauty and turn into an ugly bourgeois suburb than that a slave system shall live on.

★

I AM writing these lines at a friend's house in a Los Angeles suburb. The place is like a big, hustling, shiny new American copy of Chekhov's gentle fable. This San Fernando Valley was once a region of endless groves of flowering orange, walnut, lemon and tangerine trees. I saw it twenty years ago in spring, and was enchanted by its beauty and fragrance.

Now almost all the groves have perished. A few last bedraggled clusters remain, like the one across the road here. Beyond it, however, hundreds of carpenters' hammers rise and fall in a raucous song of American change, progress and real estate speculation.

Another great tract of new homes is being developed there. It is all like a story in the Arabian Nights. A Genie has transformed in a few short years this green country of fruit and farming into the Detroit of American airplane production. Hundreds of thousands of people flocked into the region for jobs, and houses had to be built for them. Thus, death of the cherry orchard multiplied a hundred thousand times!

Five years ago you could still buy an acre of orange grove for about a thousand dollars. Now a small lot, 60 by 100 feet, costs four to seven thousand dollars. You can buy building lots cheaper than this on some of the busiest streets of New York. That city is declining; Los Angeles is pushing up the ladder. Every day 200 new pilgrims arrive to look for the Bluebird of perfect happiness. They need homes—so another typical American land boom is on.

★

THE BOOM has many familiar features. Speculators secure big

tracts of groveland on a shoestring. The banks and insurance companies lend them money on another shoestring. A host of subcontractors step in and work with the same shoestring. A hundred different wolves, pirates, bankers, financiers and gamblers put their fingers in the pie. The homeowner pays for it in the end, naturally.

The average home in this region runs from 17 to 20 thousand dollars. Three or four years ago it would have been five thousand dollars less. The land speculators have sent the price up with their frenzied operations.

On these "tract" operations hundreds and even thousands of small dwellings are built at the same time. They have developed a new style of work. Everything has been broken down into a super-specialization. The old-fashioned carpenter or plumber is no more. The worker performs a single operation then moves on to the next home. The houses go up on a belt line system, as in a factory. It isn't art, yet it shows the way to mass production of good homes for everyone some day.

There's much shoddiness and swindling in these constructions. The houses will not outlive the mortgages plastered all over them. Their outside walls are made like chicken coops of tar paper, chicken wire and plaster and the inside walls are flimsy-beaverboard. Just the same, the houses have much style and comfort. They have living rooms big and sunny; and patios and flowers and all the ingredients of spacious California living.

The kitchens would delight any housewife in the world, so scientifically handy, with their triple ranges, automatic dishwashers, garbage-grinding sinks, automatic washing machines. Say what you will, O feudal poets, against the modern machine, but such kitchens help preserve the good health and cheerfulness of the mothers of today, hence, are better life-poetry than all your laments!

★

BUT of course, only engineers and other professionals, and the highest paid skilled workers, can pay the \$170 to \$200 a month required for such homes. And their income here in the Los Angeles area comes in the main from the airplane industry, which lives in turn from the government budget for an H-bomb war. So you see there some mighty big serpents in this bourgeois heaven. Any day the sky can fall, bankruptcy or the radio-active horrors!

Nevertheless, with all the modern doubts and fears, such suburbs show a way to the American future. Socialism is coming, if we can avoid total insanity and the H-bomb. The American economy is already so rich and developed it can give every worker such a spacious, beautiful and scientific home.

Also the cherry orchards and orange groves, again, in all their beauty.

document, "Once More About the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

A long, long time ago, I read some excerpts in the National Guardian and waited, until now, for its publication in the "Daily Worker." So far as I know, it was not published in "Political Affairs" or printed for general discussion in the Party clubs.

It seems to me that this is a far cry from the days when we practiced internationalism, trying to learn from the experiences of others parties and peoples. In the name of "Americanism" or whatever you want to call it, we have reached to a great extent to a situation where promoting the study of Marxism is abhor-

ed. It is an undeniable fact, for instance, that the "Daily Worker" and many responsible leaders rushed to print and swallow the so-called "Secret Khrushchev report" when the fact, as some of us smelled at that time, was that the State Department concocted it. But more scandalous yet, instead of recognizing the error, our new theorists deprived the rank and file of one of the greatest dialectical documents ever written.

Maurice the Painter.

The full text of the Chinese document appeared in the February issue of Political Affairs. Prior to this excerpts were published in the Daily Worker.

—Ed.