

J. V. Stalin

Worker Correspondents

Interview With a Representative of the Magazine “*Rabochy Korrespondent*”¹

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The importance of workers’ participation in the conduct of a newspaper lies primarily in the fact that such participation makes it possible to transform this sharp weapon in the class struggle, as a newspaper is, from a weapon for the enslavement of the people into a weapon for their emancipation. Only worker and peasant *correspondents* can bring about this great transformation.

Only as an *organised* force can worker and peasant correspondents play, in the course of development of the press, the part of mouthpiece and vehicle of proletarian public opinion, of exposé of the defects in Soviet public life, and of tireless fighter for the improvement, of our work of construction.

Should worker correspondents be elected at workers’ meetings, or should they be chosen by the editors? I think that the second method (choice by the editors) is more advisable. The underlying principle must be the correspondent’s independence of the institutions and persons that, in one way or another, he comes in contact with in the course of his work. This, however, does not mean independence of that intangible but constantly operating force that is called proletarian public opinion, of which the worker correspondent must be the vehicle.

Worker and peasant correspondents must not be regarded merely as future journalists, or as factory social workers in the narrow sense of the term; they are primarily exposés of the defects in our Soviet public life, fighters for the removal of those defects, commanders of proletarian public opinion, striving to direct the inexhaustible forces of this immense factor so that they help the Party and the Soviet power in the difficult task of socialist construction.

This gives rise to the question of educational work among worker and peasant correspondents. It is, of course, necessary to give worker and peasant correspondents some grounding in the technique of journalism; but that is not the main thing. The main thing is that the worker and peasant correspondents should learn in the course of their work and acquire that intuition of the journalist-public worker without which the correspondent cannot fulfil his mission; and which cannot be implanted by any artificial measures of training in the technical sense of the term.

Direct ideological guidance of worker and peasant correspondents must be exercised by the newspaper editors, who are linked with the Party. The censorship of articles must be concentrated in the hands of the newspaper editors.

Persecution of worker and peasant correspondents is barbarous, a survival of bourgeois customs. The newspaper must undertake to protect its correspondent from persecution, for it alone is capable of raising a fierce campaign to expose obscurantism.

I wish *Rabochy Korrespondent* every success.

Notes

1. *Rabochy Korrespondent (Worker Correspondent)*—a monthly magazine, published from January 1924 to June 1941. In January 1925 its title was changed to *Raboche-Krestyansky Korrespondent (Worker and Peasant Correspondent)*.

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