

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Ben Davis Comments On Chick Mason Letter

Editor, Daily Worker:

Permit me a few observations on Chick Mason's letter in the Sept. 18, Daily Worker, referring to my article in the Sunday Worker of Sept. 2.

Contrary to the implication of Mason's letter, I was quite willing to give him full credit for the pro-Browder document he is admittedly circulating in the Party. I called him by name in the article, but it was deleted without my knowledge or consent.

Name-calling as a substitute for argument is bankruptcy. Most everyone resents it. I didn't call Mason a Browderite, either in the original or in the published version of my article. But Mason seems unhappy about it and, in his letter, proceeds to call him-

self a Browderite—and in capital letters. The responsibility of name-calling is his, not mine. I labelled his ideas.

Mason says further that when the N.Y. State leadership declared on Aug. 21, that they were in "direct disagreement with Mason's views," they did not mean what they said. They intended, according to him, to express themselves only on whether Mason's article should be printed. That I don't know.

One thing is certain: I am in direct disagreement with Mason's views. Browderism is a pitfall too much underestimated in the Party's present situation. Browder's basic mistake—of abandonment of the class struggle and of the historic role of the working-class—was a result of the tremendous pressures of the objective situation, among which was

the war-time alliance of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. That is why it is strange to find many leading Party members today who claim virtually that the extremely difficult objective situation of the last ten years had little or nothing to do with the sectarianism which often hampered our Party's commendable and heroic activities during the last period.

Mason contends that his document boosting Browderism did not "take sides in any . . . disagreement among our various members of our national" committee. Obviously, this is untrue. I disagree with him, and other members of the National Committee disagree with Mason's views. If this isn't taking sides, then there is no such thing—although every Party member has a perfect right to take sides as he sees fit.

Mason's letter to the Daily

appeared some two weeks after my article was printed. When it was written, I don't know. But my article was sent it in to the Discussion Committee of the Communist Party 4 weeks before it was printed. Had it been published more promptly, it would have been impossible for the N.Y. Post to print the false story that the entire Party leadership agreed with Mason's views.

My views on Browderism are well-known and are further dealt with in my report "The Negro People on the March." My report, like those of Dennis, Lightfoot and Weiss, was adopted by the National Committee for discussion. The Daily and the Worker should list my report accordingly with the other three.

Mason says that his article is the result of some "do-it-yourself" thinking. That is true of practic-

ally all our Party members today. May it continue! At the same time, "do-it-yourself" thinking must rest on its merits, just like "do-it-for-others" thinking.

Mason's letter would lead one to believe that it was only after his document was written and circulated that he finds himself "in politics." Every Communist is in politics—consciously so. Mason underestimates himself. Mason states that he has been in the Party 25 years, longer than I and many others who, I presume, are supposed to be "politicians." Surely, Mason knows that to circulate a document in the Party in more than 100 copies is an obvious effort to line up members behind his "do-it-yourself" thinking. That may be his privilege; but it is also pretty good "politicking."

—BENJAMIN J. DAVIS