

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Second Look at Negro Question

Editor, Daily Worker:

Although some people who have never accepted the Communist position against white chauvinism may attempt to distort us, it is still necessary to reevaluate our estimate of the Negro question.

The continued northward and westward migration of Negro sharecroppers displaced by farm mechanization, and a governmental policy of eliminating small operators, is having both a profound effect on the class composition of the Negro people and reducing the number of people living under the plantation system. A detailed Marxist analysis of current conditions and trends in the black belt area is necessary to any second look at the Negro question.

Nationhood does not spring up full grown and it is no casual matter to decide at any given time just how far a group has advanced towards nationhood, nor at what point such growth may be altered, or diverted. Therefore, I leave this question to those with the necessary command of the factual material.

I would however, like to pose this proposition: Can it not be considered a possibility that the Negro people in their determined fight to secure for themselves the benefits of American democracy are, in fact, expressing their determination to become in law and in fact fully integrated into the American nation, accepting all the privileges and responsibilities that go with such nationhood? I feel certain that our second look will reaffirm our basic premise that the Negro question is a national question, while bringing our tactics and expectations more into line with present day realities.

—A. G.

Aspects of Max Weiss Case

CHICAGO, Ill.

Editor, Daily Worker:

It is our feeling here that the developments of May 4 in the Max Weiss case deserve editorial treatment for several reasons:

First, there was no mention in Monday's news story of the fact that Judge William J. Campbell stated repeatedly his own doubts concerning the constitutionality of the membership clause of the Smith Act. We feel that this public expression of misgiving, the first to our

knowledge voiced by any trial judge, is significant for many reasons.

Second, Max Weiss was indicted at the same time as Claude Lightfoot. His is, therefore, an "old" Smith Act case. In Boston, Judge Ford delayed the trial of Michael Russo until after the Supreme Court should rule on the Lightfoot and Scales petitions; this in a "young" case. It would be dangerous to yield to any illusion about what the government may try to do next via the Smith Act. Yet there seems to be some merit in the statement of U. S. Attorney Ticken that: "if that same decision is reached in other cases (to postpone the Weiss trial) . . . the subversive activity program will be held up."

We think that the postponement of the Weiss trial and the reduction of his bail from \$35,000 to \$15,000 are parts of a pattern which includes the new low levels of bail in the Russo, Blum and Hellman cases, the observations of the judges in those cases, etc.

This pattern, in our opinion, is a tribute to the growing expressions of doubt about the Smith Act and at the same time, if recognized as a pattern, can do much to stimulate further expressions of doubt in the period up till the Supreme Court's rulings on both the "conspiracy" and "membership" sections of the Smith Act.

Sincerely,

LEON KATZEN

On Magil And Weiss

MADISON, Wis.

Editor, Daily Worker:

In the April 25 paper, A. B. Magil points out that the theoretical idea which led to the violations of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union was that after hostile classes had already been eliminated the class struggle would necessarily increase. The Soviet Union, in pointing out the falsity of this idea in both theory and practice, has not repudiated the conception of dictatorship of the proletariat. What they have denounced are the excesses of this dictatorship during a certain historical period.

Max Weiss, however, in discussing civil liberties under U.S. Socialism, advocates the right of all groups to form parties for their specific political purpose, whether it be the restoration of capitalism, or what have you. I

personally believe that this is a correct analysis; one which takes into account the specific traditions of U.S. democracy, namely the right of dissent and the necessity to strengthen the Bill of Rights, and secondly, the different world situation in which U. S. Socialism will arise.

My point, however, is that what Weiss is actually bringing up, without mentioning it by name, is whether or not U. S. Socialism will require a dictatorship of the proletariat. Naturally, a socialist government will have to remove the economic basis of capitalist rule, by putting the means of production in the hands of the working-class, and by giving the people their full economic, political and social rights denied to them under capitalism.

But does this mean that capitalist groups have the right to organize, to print their own papers and to propagandize generally? Lenin and the Soviet Marxists believed it did not.

Does, or would a socialist government in the U. S. view such suppression as being part of a necessary struggle to consolidate socialist strength? I myself feel that the answer would be no.

If this is true, it means that U. S. Marxists must restudy the whole question of proletarian dictatorship in relation to the U.S. scene.

—R. R.

Proposes Better Form Of CP Organization

ALBANY, N. Y.

Editor, Daily Worker:

It seems to me the form of organization of the Communist Party is strange to the conditions, environment and traditions of our country.

We should look for a broader form of socialist organization. Nor should we undertake this fundamental task of finding a better, more appropriate organizational form by ourselves but should welcome the participation of other socialist-thinking Americans.

The conditions in the 30s were favorable to building a mass party. But our party was limited to influencing others on specific issues.

—C. D.

Problems of Working Women

Editor, Daily Workers:

In the current re-examination of how we have been operating, I have not seen any comment on our failure to deal adequately

with the questions facing working women.

There is little in our paper to indicate that the problems facing women who work are any different from those faced by men, or that there are millions of women facing those special problems.

This is particularly true of your labor coverage. I do not think I have seen anything in any of George Morris' writings along this line since the flare-up among the ILGWU garment workers in Philadelphia, and that is plenty long ago.

—WOMAN READER.

Accomplishment Highest So Far

Editor, Daily Worker:

I disagree with those who are talking about a "cult of the Soviet Union" in the Communist movement. Overwhelmingly our attitude toward the Soviet Union has been a positive contribution to our country and to world peace. We have need to be proud of this record. We have erred in attributing a non-existent state of perfection to the Soviet Union, underestimating the problems, shortcomings and difficulties still remaining. Nevertheless socialism in its imperfection remains the highest accomplishment of mankind to date. It has raised new and higher standards of human decency, on the question of peace, internationalism, medical service, education and more.

With all the violations, as serious as they were and not yet knowing the full picture, still it is a fact that the entire Soviet people have attained a level of human rights not approached by any non-socialist country. Socialist democracy is a greater advance over limited capitalist democracy than the 1776 revolution was over the Divine right of kings or the civil war over the property rights of slave masters.

In a similar sense, the Communist Party, U.S.A. is the most genuinely democratic organization in our nation notwithstanding its bureaucratic distortions and imperfections of which there remain far too many, not excluding the present presentation without discussion of a controversial new position, which although important could hardly

be described as the need of the hour.

—N. W. Reader.

On Letter by Alice Jerome

Editor, Daily Worker:

As an example of a position which seems to ask that we close eyes, ears and senses to the real world and keep everything exactly as it was (as if the American left had been doing so wonderfully well!) Alice Jerome's letter is a classic.

Not to sound "hostile" to the writer of the letter, but let her ponder the fact that she (as indeed most of us) accepted EVERYTHING all these years from the lands of socialism, uncritically, without the slightest reservations, without a peep, without a question, but now that these lands move to reveal and correct and rid socialism of the terrible departures from democracy which hurt socialism so much, NOW she cautions whoa, let's be certain it's true, let's not be superficial, etc., etc.

Doesn't she concede it is painfully clear that some things went wrong? Can there be any question that we here have mistakes to answer for, and to examine in the freest and most determined manner to find out how to change, yes, drastically, for the better?

Indeed, let's "not be superficial." Let's realize that merely quoting from "State and Revolution, page 30" cuts no ice and settles no questions here, that it does not make one a Marxist to quote what a Russian wrote IN HIS COUNTRY, a long time ago, in totally different historical conditions, even when that Russian was a genius like Lenin. Let's understand at last that if Lenin were alive today he would be the most sadly amused of all at someone in the United States of America, 1956 solemnly intoning his 1917 words as though she were seriously addressing herself to anything real in our land.

Everyone is entitled to their say, but thank goodness "Speak Your Piece" shows 5-1 that we are shaken up, learning some belated lessons and not mumbling incantations to try to hide the damage. Down with dogma. On with creative thinking.

—R. I.