

Speak Your Piece

On Winston, Green And Djilas Cases

NEW YORK.

Editor, Daily Worker:

May I express what I consider a crucial difference of opinion with the letter of J. Brandt published here Monday, in which Brandt criticized released Smith Act defendant Sidney Lipshires for advocating the freedom not only of political prisoners Gil Green and Henry Winston here, but political prisoners in Yugoslavia, East Germany and Hungary.

One of the most deadly disservices anyone can do the noble cause of American socialism is to somehow get it falsely associated in the people's mind with a denial of civil liberties. Whatever Brandt's intentions, his kind of argument does just that.

I consider Lipshires' position a thousand times more potent in fighting for the freedom of Green and Winston than Brandt's position. Recall Daily Worker executive editor Simon W. Gerson's effective article calling for the freedom of Green and Winston while criticizing the imprisonment of Djilas, with whom he strongly disagreed. I personally last week sent a letter to the N.Y. Times calling for the freedom of Green and Winston here, and Djilas in Yugoslavia, though I disagree with Djilas' ideology. We must be against imprisonment for ideas, whether right or wrong ideas, in a country building socialism as well as in a capitalist country. This puts us in a far superior moral position to the Times, which has yet to oppose the thought control imprisonment of Americans despite all its moralizing about Djilas. It prods them where the nerve is exposed, and can be understood by anyone.

Brandt's opinions, mistaken or not, are his opinions and he of course has the right to state them. But he goes on to impute cowardice to Lipshires as the reason for Lipshires' position.

This is not only ridiculous (Lipshires was just freed, what "skin" is he saving?) but contemptible,

and for my money calls for an apology to Lipshires.

LESTER RODNEY.

Lipshire's Statement

NEW YORK

Editor, Daily Worker:

Sidney Lipshire, one of the freed Boston Smith Act victims, said in a statement printed in the Nov. 11 Daily Worker, "I am for the freeing of all political prisoners everywhere, including Green and Winston in the U.S., Djilas in Yugoslavia, Harridge in Germany and Nagy in Hungary."

If this statement is accepted in toto, then what he is saying is that Rudolph Hess and Baldur von Shirach, two Hitler aides, should also be released. I feel certain neither Mr. Lipshire or any sane progressive person desires this, and I gather he means he favors the release of political prisoners imprisoned for political reasons only. But still this statement is in error, both on a factual and on an ideological basis.

Nagy is not a political prisoner, and while I believe he should be tried for his complicity in the Hungarian counter-revolution, he is not in prison but is in voluntary exile in Socialist Romania.

Von Harridge, an East German professor, was not imprisoned for advocacy, as Green and Winston were (false though the charge against them was), but for organizing a counter-revolution in East Germany. Written material published here and elsewhere and not repudiated by Von Hanich confirm this; therefore I do not think he is to be adjudged as Green and Winston are.

As to Djilas, I feel that the position taken hinges on whether one is a Communist or a non-Communist.

LEW B.

P.S. Does Mr. Lipshire advocate that we urge that John Kaspar's appeal be honored—for Mr. Kaspar was convicted of conspiracy and advocacy to act?