

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

A Plea from Bill McKie

DETROIT.

Editor, Daily Worker:

It's about time that something is done in Michigan, in my opinion. W. Z. Foster's article in the "Daily Worker" of April 13 on "Fight Against Bureaucracy" dealing with the top Union officials is the best thing I have read so far. The articles by Howard Fast are masterpieces of lucidity and directness in the Daily and the Worker.

I get the "Labor Monthly" from London, England, and R. Palme Dutt has an article in the April issue dealing with the 20th Conference as it effects the workers not only in Britain but also in the U.S.A.

It's about time that the Communists in Michigan were becoming aware of the changing political situations and get going in the plants and shops to reorganize their forces, that is if they want the political climate to progress. I have been anxious about this for at least five years.

—Bill McKie.

Freedom of Criticism

Editor, Daily Worker:

There seems to be one basic difference of opinion among letter-writers to the Daily Worker—should we or should we not be critical of the Soviet leaders.

I like Alan Max's approach to this question when, in his column of April 19, he stated, "This new relationship is more difficult to achieve. It places new responsibilities upon all the Communist movements—upon the most powerful and influential to be helpful but not to be overbearing; upon the movements which have not yet scored such epochal achievements to stand more firmly upon their own feet, more boldly chart their own paths, give criticism freely, frankly and fearlessly however it will be helpful. Only an equal relationship is a truly close one."

On April 19, William Z. Foster listed "Stalin's Excesses and Distortion." He says, "As the revaluation of Stalin proceeds, the list of his errors and shortcomings, extending over the past two decades, grows longer and more disturbing."

But James S. Allen in his article on the same page as Foster's, seems not disturbed at all.

As a matter of fact, he seems worried that open discussion, such as has been going on, "can

turn into a destructive flood." Instead of encouraging more discussion and more penetrating criticism, he warns that we must not "assume the kind of defensive or apologetic positions which will only oblige the anti-Sovietees."

But Allen does not cite even one example of such a "defensive or apologetic position." And he still clings to the stifling idea that we can't criticize the Soviet Communist Party until we have sharply improved our own level of work. He says, "It must be recognized that free and constructive criticism as between . . . Marxist movements of various countries requires at its base a change in the inner atmosphere of the parties . . . inner party democracy and freedom of discussion in the formulation of policy."

In other words, we must first establish full freedom of discussion in our own party, but while doing so we are not free to discuss the errors which other parties have made in this area. This seems nonsensical to me.

In Sid Resnick's letter on April 19, he says, "We must also break with another cult, one which has afflicted us far worse than the cult of the individual, that is the cult of the Soviet nation." It is this latter cult that James Allen is finding it difficult to break with.—A.L.

Inadequate Explanation

GARY, Indiana.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I'd like to comment on the article by Eugene Dennis in your April 16 issue entitled "Sorrow and Perspective." While stating several very important truths, it does very little to clear up the situation in the Soviet Union which has been revealed by the Warsaw press.

Is it not obvious that to repeat "the Beria Gang" was responsible for the executions is to merely circumvent one of the central points in the discussion of the alleged injustices? That question is: where were the rest of the Soviet leadership? Could they have permitted the executions of such outstanding Soviet citizens without being involved in discussion or the decision?

It is certainly not possible, since these executions were part of a major ideological campaign against cosmopolitanism.

—Steelworker.

Capital Punishment

Editor, Daily Worker:

For your information, The World Almanac for 1951 has on page 209 the following paragraph (under Chronology—Jan. 1950):

"Jan. 12—The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow revived the death penalty (abolished May 26, 1947) for traitors, spies and saboteurs."

If this is true and if I read it rightly it would seem that capital punishment was at one time abolished in the Soviet Union.

A READER.

Chance for New Alliances

Editor, Daily Worker:

In the course of these discussions many non-Communists (as distinct from anti-Communists) are saying: "I told you so." But they are saying it in a friendly manner, indicating new alliances may be made. Modesty will be a big help in this.

We are communists not because the Soviet Union is perfect but because we want a socialist America. The current developments show not only that socialism contains within itself the mechanism for self-correction (as capitalism contains the seeds of self-destruction) but also that socialism has a tremendous vitality and the support of the masses. Otherwise these past errors would not have been revealed.

More than ever before, to coin a phrase, we can face the future with confidence.

READER

Discussion In Brooklyn

Editor, Daily Worker:

This is the second time in the past two weeks that 25-30 of us readers of the Daily Worker in Boro Park, Brooklyn, have gotten together to discuss the 20th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

We have had a "speak your piece" kind of discussion which has been very good bringing our many pent-up grievances that many people have had.

This letter is being written to express our unanimous approval of your editorial of Friday April 13—entitled "Grievous Deeds." Your courageous editorial is on the right track—keep up the good work.

M. K.

Election Question

MINOT, N. D.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Alan Max asks for comment on his answer to Homer Chase regarding the editorial "Can the Cadillac Cabinet Be Defeated?" I hope many readers do write.

Some time ago it was decided that progressives should work with the Democratic Party, as I understand it, because (1) Most of the labor movement and the "left" farm movement at present are attached to the Democratic Party and (2) because the Democratic Party is not so hidebound in its allegiance to the big Wall Street trusts as the Republican Party.

I think that position will have to be changed or modified. Why not a non-partisan approach to this question? Alan Max himself thinks that things are not exactly right "to work in and with" the Democratic Party for he agrees almost in toto with Homer Chase. Of course Alan Max is by inference supporting the Democratic ticket and has done for some months. But Stevenson is weaker than Eisenhower on the main issues. Though reluctantly, Eisenhower at least did something for peace in Korea and helped shape the Geneva spirit.

We want to defeat the Cadillac cabinet, that's for sure. However, if it's defeated in the 1956 elections, then what? Will the victor be any better than the vanquished? In other words are we going to take part especially for any setback that might follow a Democratic Party victory?

ALFRED KNUTSON

Waiting for Top Officials

Editor, Daily Worker:

I agree with Harry Zumoff that "the workers are not only ready but in many instances are ahead of the C. P., but are unable to get anywhere for they lack leadership." The workers definitely know both Democratic and Republican parties do not represent them.

The C. P. is on the one hand sharply critical of trade union top leadership and trade union bureaucracy, but on the other hand leaves labor completely in the clutches of this leadership in the matter of politics.

This whole approach of waiting for top officials to introduce the idea of a labor party is also to me an anti-female one. It is my belief that workers' wives these days are more militant than their husbands, and they

have no representation in trade unions and certainly not in trade union bureaucracy. S. M.

Disagrees With Reader

Editor, Daily Worker:

I am writing this in answer to the letter "On Capital Punishment" (April 19). How can one condone the killing of an individual by law in a socialist country during peaceful times by saying that it is necessary for the security of that country? How can one argue that capital punishment should be abolished only in capitalist countries?

If I'm not mistaken I think England abolished capital punishment.

When one stops to think, if the innocent people who were wrongly accused and executed were still alive, even if languishing in jail including Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, how much lighter our hearts would be. I'm all for an organized movement to do away with this horrible crime against humanity.

A. B.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Three cheers for D.K and C.D. in last Wednesday's DW and Francis Sheehy in an earlier issue for challenging the Communist Party's recent arbitrary policy of peaceful transition to socialism in this country, and also that of granting complete civil rights to the enemies of socialism after the establishment of a socialist state in this country. D.K. describes the first policy as one that "smells too much of Browderism." This is an understatement.

No CP ever advocates violence as a solution, but that does not mean that we must kid ourselves and pretend that the bourgeoisie will step down gracefully from control simply because the majority of people ask them to in an election. Nor need we have illusions about the overthrown bourgeoisie working to restore their system peacefully within the new socialist state—they will be no more peaceful then they have ever been.

—J. F.

Daily Worker

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday by the Publishers New Press, Inc., 35 E. 12th St., New York 2, N. Y. Telephone ALgonquin 4-7854.

Reinstated as second class matter Oct. 22, 1947, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

	3 mos.	6 mos.	1 year
Daily Worker only	\$4.00	\$7.00	\$12.00
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The Worker	2.00	3.50	