

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Rigid Attitude to Democratic Party

CHICAGO

Editor, Daily Worker:

When are we going to remove the rigidity in our attitude toward the Democratic Party? In Gil Green's recent book, in discussing the developing labor, NAACP, farm coalition, he says, "And the key forces of this nebulous coalition have one other thing in common: most of them share the illusion (boldface mine) that the Democratic Party represents something basically different from the Republican Party and can be transformed into a truly people's party."

Again, "To think that labor and its allies can cleanse the two-party Augean stables is to underestimate the strength of the golden chain which binds the political machine to the powers that be."

This idea is repeated in the Dennis report. (p. 19) This concept stifles our election activity and represents an arrogant position in regard to our allies. Instead, we must recognize the possibility that the Democratic Party can be changed into a people's party. (Better program, better composition of leaders, exodus of Dixiecrats, purging of some city machines, etc.).

In the course of working for this goal we would be cementing our ties with the honest elements within and without the Democratic Party. In this way, even if the goal were not achieved, we would be in a position to move ahead together towards a new party.

Any other approach continues our isolation, and stifles our electoral enthusiasm and activity.

—ELECTRICAL WORKER

Party Structure Held Outdated

Roxbury, Mass.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Some have said that our Party's organizational structure is inappropriate to its goals. Agreed: but the question is—why?

I submit that we assumed our Leninist structure in 1919 because we felt then, and per-

haps correctly, that for us the most important practical struggle for socialism lay in the defense of the Soviet Union.

This position was tenable for us and other Leninist parties only on the assumption that the interests of the working class of the various nations and the survival (diplomatic) interests of the Soviet Union could never conflict. The Comintern embodied this principle.

I believe, however, that such conflicts, while exceptional, did nevertheless occur. When they did, the Comintern became the instrumentality for subordinating the interests of the national working classes to Soviet diplomatic needs.

Perhaps one of the most glaring distortions this produced was the position of the French and British CP's on the "Imperialist War" of September, 1939, to June, 1941. Our position then could also bear re-examination.

We saw ourselves, perhaps at first correctly, primarily as the defenders of the Soviet Union. Therefore it was easy to brand us as foreign agents. Because our structure was appropriate to that goal, we fell victim to deep-seated, long-range bureaucracy.

We are a Leninist Party structurally. The organizational characteristics of Leninism I take to be democratic centralism, monolithic unity, "iron discipline," the decisiveness of the professional (full-time) group, and intra-party secrecy.

This was the type of party the Russian revolution had to have, but bureaucracy is cemented into its structure. It is here that the cult of the individual has its source, and it is the failure to develop this genesis of the cult that makes the Soviet analysis thus far inadequate.

Today the Soviet Union certainly no longer needs us as defenders. Our job is to win the American people to socialism. To do this we must rid ourselves not only of the foreign agent brand, but also, I am convinced, of our Leninist, i.e. bureaucratic, non-American, and outmoded organizational structure. Both, I believe, are so widely associated with, or deeply ingrained into the American Communist Party that this institution itself

will have to go. To refuse even to consider this is to fall victim to sentimentality and organizational fetishism.

Without Lenin and Leninism, the world would not be enroute to socialism today. But we had to pay a high price. By trying to apply Leninist tactics and organizational concepts in a democratic or even semi-democratic country, we are continuing to pay the price without realizing the gains. Perhaps Leninism, like Stalinism and most other phenomena, creates the necessity for its own demise.

TINCTUS.

No Stop Signals on Road to Socialism

Chicago.

Editor, Daily Worker:

There is some lamenting like "I worked 10 years in the Party and look what I got!" There are those who, shocked, are standing still as if a bit paralyzed. Others contribute to the discussion by writing, the thousands who read it and who gather in meetings for animated debates, and some of these just think and talk and talk and think.

What is very essential at the moment is to do something. We need to increase the influence and strength of our Party. Of course we face grave difficulties, must open our minds to new conceptions regarding the years. But this does not mean we should lie down and die. It means we need to give more of ourselves than ever before. In the course of correcting mistakes we must simultaneously engage in struggle and maintain and strengthen our instruments of struggle.

There are no stop signals on the road to Socialism. As matters stand today what we have is acceleration, gathering momentum. You have given a hand to get what we have gotten down the years, and no matter how much you may grieve about shortcomings you helped humanity to arrive at the advanced position it is in today, phenomenally strong, driving forward to the new world. If you do not believe this, or do not have it constantly in mind (and the two are twins), if you are not stimulated by the 900

millions of workers and allies, all bound for one goal, then you are indeed ailing.

I have given 55 years to our movement. The difference between what we had in 1900 and today is stupendous. It strains my thinking to adequately conceive the gigantic step ahead that has been made. Our first responsibility is to march forward, not to stop or hesitate. Besides clearing the decks in stormy weather we still have to head for our port.

And who can think of arriving at the point we are headed for without the help of the Daily Worker and The Worker. When we say "do something" to lessen the distance to our goal, then do something, and something more for the papers, and quick!

Here am I at 75, and wishing I was 50. The years ahead will be wonderful and beautiful, though ripe with struggle.

I enclose \$50. And it seems to me that many more of our comrades, known for years as in leading positions, should become vocal in support of the need for financial aid.

This is a good time to remember what Eugene V. Debs said: "The heart of a revolutionary Socialist never beats a retreat." ALFRED WAGENKNECHT.

'Enforced Capitalism'

CHICAGO

Editor, Daily Worker:

Most certainly the 1956 platform of the Communist Party should mention that today we have a form of "enforced capitalism" in the United States. Federal taxes, roughly 20 percent of the worker's income, are used largely to enrich and bolster the power of monopoly capital while mortgaging everything the people own.

In order to safeguard and maintain the worker's claim on this money, the Communist Party should insist on a socialist, worker-oriented new organizational setup in our country. The question of nationalization of monopoly property would then be brought into its proper perspective and return the Party more closely to its status of the New Deal times.

While minority rights, minimum wage laws, etc., are proper

subjects for the platform, they are well brought forward in both of the major parties' programs also. The Communist Party cannot remain content with reiterating those same things without being accused of a "me too" attitude, i. e. Lenin's "tailism."

—J. J.

Suggests Special Resolutions Body

BUFFALO

Editor, Daily Worker:

I hope you will permit me to take exception to the way you have cut and thereby, I believe, slanted some of my letter. Generalities you have printed, but concrete criticisms and suggestions you have omitted. Criticism of the Dennis report, citing chapter and verse, particularly what seemed to me its arrogant and superficial attitude on the Negro question, you did not print at all. And in this week's letter you omitted my criticism of democratic centralism as tending to turn the really splendid human material and bureaucrat leaders, members and bureaucrat leaders, leading even into objective corruption, of which I gave examples.

Also I expressed the opinion that, judging by their failure to lead the discussion or to express their opinions, the National Committee was in no position to issue a resolution capable of serving as the basis for convention discussion. I suggested that a special resolutions committee be elected from the different areas to perform this task. How can we change if we overlook concrete suggestions (even if inept) and print only generalities?

Change we must, I believe. But I should like to add this. The Party is not a washout. We made many mistakes, but none so grievous or ridiculous as the quite official bourgeois prophecies in Collier's magazine that atomic World War III would break out in 1952. The Party's courage and devotion to the cause of the working class and peace is well-known and appreciated by the workers, even if they properly despise our know-it-well arrogance and high-falutin language. We can correct our mistakes without dissolving in tears, fears, studies and a new terminology.

—A. S. T.