

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Free Speech For Everyone?

Editor, Daily Worker:

I want to put the Max Weiss position to a concrete test: do we Communists agree that we advocate free thought and expression for everyone? Specifically: Trotskyites? Fascists? White Citizens Councils? McCarthy?

Will Weiss answer this concretely? I applaud what he said in his articles, but it badly needs spelling out. Do we Communists now accept the full position of the Civil Liberties Union? —N. J.

"Community Of Culture"

BRONX.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Abner Berry's April 3 column urging a "new look at the Negro question" is welcome indeed. Below are a few thoughts on the subject mainly the writer's own but with some benefit of discussion with other interested persons.

The Negro question is assuredly a special question, as many non-Marxists who used to deny now admit. Basically, we were correct in turning to the theory of the national question for a good start towards the answer. We came up with the conclusion that the Negroes were a nation, at least in the Black Belt. It seemed logical to go a step further and project the right to self-determination for that Black Belt, as a matter of principle though not as an immediate proposal.

Now, as the Negro people become more cohesive, and take militant advantage of favoring circumstances, they demand integration, recognition of their right to full citizenship as Americans. Clearly, our expectations as to the direction of their striving are at least partly in conflict with reality.

There seems to be no valid reason to question the applicability of "stable community," or "common economic life," or "common geographical area," or "common language," so far as the Black Belt is concerned. And all but the area criterion hold good by and large for the Negro communities outside it. But our thinking on the "community of culture" aspect of nationhood may well have been inadequate.

This aspect includes the element of group self-consciousness and desires. Where has the national question become an

issue? Where the people involved wanted recognition as such, up to and often including a struggle for independence. Neither the Frederick Douglass tradition nor the Booker T. Washington tradition pointed in that direction. Differing in tactics as their class roots differ, the political philosophers of Negro America have nevertheless pursued a common strategic objective: integration of Negro life and culture with all the rest.

Thanks to their own struggles, and fundamental changes on the world scene, the Negro people are gathering speed within the framework of bourgeois democracy. Precisely this was noted as an important possibility, here and in Switzerland, by the late Joseph Stalin. Let us give it our best thinking.

—S.A.

Medina Wants No Elected Judges

Editor, Daily Worker:

Your correspondent S. S. R. who wrote you in his distress about your item "Judges Charge Medina Deals in Untruths" should be made aware of the movement afoot in high places to abolish elections of judges by the people. Instead they propose that the judiciary be appointed (as the Federal judges are) by the executive, i.e., the governor, preferably from a list recommended by the respectable bar associations, that is, the rich and successful men's lawyers. It need hardly be labored what classes in our society wish to further remove the judiciary from popular will and make it responsive to the interests that will have the power to appoint them.

Judge Medina has been put forth to propagandize an appointment system (of which he is one example) in radio and bar association addresses. And it was solely with that purpose that he stated it to be the popular belief (hypocritically expressly denying it to be his own) that our state judiciary is boss-ridden, lazy and incompetent, these being his own words.

An appointive judiciary system, would not banish politics from the selection of judges, but only shift control from the political leaders of the grass-roots, political-club level to the big, behind the scenes, financial political backers. Medina's claim that this assures a higher calibre judiciary is belied by the far greater number of and even criminal convictions of Federal judges than among the

greatly more numerous state justices.

S. S. R. may well continue his his 'dislike of this contemptible character' and rejoice that it is becoming revealed to a great number of judges and attorneys.

—C. J.

Found Religion No Opiate

Editor, Daily Worker:

A letter from D. Holmes in the DW asking for a new look at religion encourages me to write. Along with my Communist convictions, my devotion to the Daily Worker (I have not missed reading a single copy in 30 years and I could not live without it), I am also a Christian Scientist. In my mind there is no conflict about the basic philosophy of socialism or the application of the Christian philosophy to our daily lives.

If Karl Marx refers to religion as he sees it, as the "opiate of the people" he has a perfect right to say so and to try to prove it. But religion has never been an opiate to me, and it was not meant as an opiate 2,000 years ago.

We all have convictions and opinions, politically, socially, philosophically. We gained nothing by our almost glib, mechanical way of analyzing anything and everything under the sun and always having the bright, correct answer. But the feeling of wrath, love, sincerity and complete honesty that comes from the articles by H. East, J. North, A. Max and our wonderful readers make me grateful I lived to see this day.

Yes, Anna Louise Strong's letter was wonderful, but I certainly agree with Alex Lesile that "telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth is not a political tactic, depending on the right time." It is, or ought to be, a fundamental principle of anyone calling themselves a socialist. Anything else leads to suicide and murder, and that in any country is completely criminal—doubly so in a socialist country.—M. L.

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