

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Suppression of Differences

Editor, Daily Worker:

The Daily Worker and National Committee of the Communist Party were understandably disturbed by the suppression of the Khrushchev report and the fact that we had to learn of its contents through the efforts of the State Dept. There was also an expression of regret that Eugene Dennis' comments were published in the Soviet Union with his statement on the fate of Jewish cultural leader's deleted.

I think it is time for both the D. W. and the national committee to become equally exercised about those repressions for which they alone are responsible. It is becoming increasingly evident that all differences existing among the national committee and other top leaders are being kept from the membership, thereby effectively excluding them from any real role in the formulation of policy and the vital decisions that have to be made with regard to our future functioning.

Once leadership talked too much and listened too little. The current vogue has changed. Now the leadership is eager to hear all differences of opinions existing among the membership but becomes tongue-tied when asked to tell what their differences are, and who is responsible for what views.

Unless this policy of suppression of differences in the leadership is changed shortly, the coming convention will only formulate policy for certain echelons of leadership, and a self-perpetuating leadership at that. All the pious statements to the contrary, the members are barred from policy making and leadership selection, unless the membership is able to hear points of views debated in the higher bodies of the party.

The present course does give guarantee against the rise of "factionalism." It would also guarantee "unity." All those who would be supinely willing to accept pre-digested ideas would remain in the party. All those who would demand vigorous,

democratic debate in the interests of the working class would leave the party. Thus the danger of "factionalism" would be averted and "unity" would be preserved and the party become a highly disciplined, highly impotent sect. —M. W.

## Another Comment On the IAM

Pittsburgh.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I wish to comment about Ernest Thompson's letter as to the actions of the membership of District 3, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union.

1—Brother Thompson's charge that the International Association of Machinists is a craft union is wrong. However, his misstatement of fact rationalizes a more serious line of reasoning. Assuming that a majority of the IAM membership is organized along craft lines, the logic of his arguments is that left and progressive unionists should not vote for their locals to affiliate with the IAM. He is content to shun 650,000 American workers because he doesn't agree with this IAM policy.

If progressives would follow that outlook generally they would have to withdraw from many international unions of the AFL-CIO and stew in their own juice rather than, as they now are doing, help their various unions establish policies which will strengthen the American labor movement. When as progressives we talk of the "mainstream of labor," we mean the labor movement as it is now with its weaknesses as well as its strengths—not as we would like it to be in the future.

2—He also advises workers not to join the IAM because of its past attitudes to Negro and women workers. Does he forget the difficult struggles over many years within the UE to hire Negro organizers in Western Pennsylvania and elsewhere—or to elect a Negro to leadership in UE District 6? How many years did it take to elect a Negro to the UE's general executive board? Isn't it true that a FEPC committee of a

serious nature with a full time FEPC chairman didn't arise automatically, but only after many inner-union struggles?

Does he forget that it was a unanimous estimate that the Negro workers in UE Local 601, East Pittsburgh, Pa., voted overwhelmingly against the UE in a National Labor Relations Board election in 1950 because they lacked confidence in the fair treatment of Negro workers by the UE, thereby causing the UE to lose the election? (The UE lost by 100 votes out of 13,000 members eligible to vote). As a result of unionists like Ernie Thompson, the UE in recent years moved to correct its errors, but any corrections were only won through inner-union struggle.

The IAM is notoriously weak in giving full union citizenship to its Negro and women workers—although I understand there has been some progress made in these past years. But this is a major working class organization, and we can't wish it of its more backward policies out of existence. Too, I remember reading some months back a speech by Al Hayes, IAM international president, to the National Urban League in which he self-critically admits the errors of his union in not giving full citizenship to Negro workers. He states that this hurt his union as well as the Negro workers and pledges to correct this error.

These changes will take place more rapidly if there are progressive unionists within the IAM who will support those who see the need of a program of full integration for Negro workers within the IAM.

I believe that unity in the electrical industry can best be achieved by the UE merging with their past associates in the AFL-CIO International Union of Electrical Workers Union. However, if the actions of some of the IUE and UE national leaders have made this impossible, it is far better for these workers to have moved to the IAM to rejoin the "mainstream of labor."

A Pittsburgh Worker.

## Proposes Constitutional Convention

Editor, Daily Worker:

During the recent Smith Act trials there was some mention of a Communist Party constitution and by-laws. I have never seen a copy during some 21 years. Now that some serious discussion and reevaluation is taking place on democracy in the party, I believe consideration of this particular issue is very much in order.

The slipshod methods and looseness in organizational structure, as manifested in the American version of Stalin's "Cult of the Individual," should be thrown overboard with left sectarianism and other weaknesses.

As some recent letters have indicated, the party deviated from democratic centralism to centralism, which is certainly a horse of another color. It helps to explain in some measure the party's stagnation and its lack of influence among the masses.

I suggest: (1) At the next party convention a constitutional committee be elected from the floor to revise and bring up-to-date the constitution and by-laws. (2) Copies of the old constitution and by-laws made available throughout the party. (3) Thorough discussion should take place everywhere and specific recommendations presented in written form to the constitutional committee. (4) When all the changes have been submitted, the national committee should be empowered to call a special constitutional convention. (5) This constitutional convention should have adequate delegate representation from all industrial and neighborhood sections. (6) Should a majority reject the proposed changes, then the entire process should take place all over again (returned to sections and clubs). (7) In the event a majority approves the changes, then copies of the new constitution and by-laws should be made available as standard procedure of the party, until a lapse of times requires calling another constitutional convention.

—P. A. Z.