

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Creative Thinking

Editor, Daily Worker:

The Communist Party must encourage creative thinking, even if this takes the form of disagreement with or goes beyond the thinking of official leading committees. Inadequate means and opportunities exist for this at present.

Pre-convention discussions are very important, but not enough, since these take place every few years. Occasional discussions such as that which took place around the 1952 draft resolution and the 1954 Party program are good, but still not enough. Why should not Political Affairs become an organ not only for presenting the line developed at National Committee meetings and conventions but also serve as a forum for debate and discussion available to all Party members? Could not the various district bulletins serve a similar purpose? Would it not be advisable that the National Committee issue a regular bulletin perhaps every three months with a similar function in mind?

Following National Committee meetings, the main reports have been reprinted in Political Affairs or in pamphlet form. Why should not the views of dissenting individuals or minority, especially where major questions are involved, be also presented to the Party membership?

This would help our members to weigh the many factors that entered the thinking of the leadership, to weigh the pros and cons and thus be in a position to better think through all matters. Also, would it not be wise to have a formal vote at club meetings following such discussions and the views of those dissenting with the National Committee thinking made known in written form to the Party leadership?

This in no way denies the role of Party members and committees.

Maintaining and strengthening Party unity must at all times be the concern of the membership and the leadership. Only the enemies of the Party and the working-class could gain from disunity, splits and factionalism. However, there have been times when the word "factionalism" has been used too loosely to stifle criticism, to cover up bureaucracy, or to deny the right to disagree. Dissent, by itself, is not factionalism.—R. S.

Delilah Replies

To Samson

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.
Editor, Daily Worker:

Eugene Dennis commented in the Daily Worker recently that some people misunderstood the sense of the approval of his Report at the recent National Committee meeting. He said that what was approved was the line that our errors had been in the main left sectarian, but that on individual issues there were differences on the National Committee. Against those who criticize the pat tone and "monolithic" atmosphere of this Report, he answers that the National Committee intends the Report only as a first beginning in opening up preconvention discussion.

There is indeed a misunderstanding, but I think it is between Dennis (and apparently the National Committee) and the party, at least in my area in its present mood on how to open up such a preconvention discussion.

The catalogue of issues on which the Report finds we were wrong is endless: the trade union question, inevitability of war and extent of war danger, Progressive Party, the Soviet Union, the "third force," Lysenko, the Smith Act, crises, the American road to socialism and the transition pe-

riod afterwards, the Negro nation, etc. etc.

After such a catalog of errors the National Committee's earlier position that "in the main we were right" reminds one of the artists who would defend his picture by saying that after all his picture has got two eyes, a nose and a mouth.

Disturbing as our low batting average is, what is most disturbing is the proof this gives of the low level of intellectual leadership at top levels although we have many able people at these levels. The report does not even tackle this as a question although it is openly raised by some of our most sympathetic friends outside our own movement.

Far from even considering the question, the Report does not deviate from that stultifying atmosphere which alone can adequately explain both the abundance of our errors and the intolerable length of time for their correction, both before and after the dispersal of our centers by the Smith Act trials. This atmosphere was sufficiently detailed in Samson's letter May 28, except that he left out the devout attitude of almost all rank and file that the leaders knew best.

For if, as Dennis says, there are differences within the National Committee, they were as in the past carefully concealed in this consolidated report. The National Committee's concept of democratic centralism in practice here apparently is that the meal has not yet been predigested enough by it to be fit for the tender stomachs of us infants. This when the times cry out for the party to begin discussions on an entirely different basis—with a knowledge of important differences of opinion within the National Committee, in order that by the clash of informed controversy within the whole party the National Committee as well as the members may be enriched now.

The issuance of a report of this character reinforces the opinion which I find becoming more and more widely shared—that the national leadership badly needs freshening. We must dig out some of the people who by virtue of correct views never had a chance to rise to top leadership or were booted out of it, and leaven the leadership with such people!

DELILAH

Weasel Words

Editor, Daily Worker:

I noticed the reappearance of the words, "certain excesses," in a quote from Dennis in Max's story of the recent forum meeting where Socialists took part.

Can't we do without this term? "Cult of the individual" is bad enough. Let us at least say what we mean. Secret executions are not made the less gruesome when alluded to as "certain excesses." What then is just less than excessive? It is like the old gag of being slightly pregnant.

In line with making ourselves understood by the American people, we have to have something to say; to believe it ourselves, and to speak in concrete language.

Your letter page is a breath of new life. Some may not be so "correct" but I find they have at least something valid about them; only a few are dull or pompous, and other letter writers promptly take care of them. Doubtless one reason these letters are more simply written, more concrete, than longer pieces by leading writers or functionaries, is that they are written with passion, are written because the writers want to write them solely.

—G. M.

The Period After Browder

Editor, Daily Worker:

William Z. Foster, in an article on Stalin, stated that we had a similar lack of collective leadership in the "Browder period" and inferred that we corrected this when we rid ourselves of the "renegade Browder."

A few questions—

1. Did the mass of political expulsions from the C.P. of the U.S.A. occur during the "Browder period" or afterwards?

2. How widespread were these expulsions? (I would guess of the basis of percentages among my acquaintances that the total figures would shock us.)

3. What effect did this political reprisal have on our general membership?

4. Have we regained an atmosphere of free discussion? Does the bulk of the membership feel that they determine the policies of the Party? Do they feel that they even influence the decisions of the Party?

5. We have bandied about a phrase "petty bourgeois bureaucracy." Have we not developed our own brand that has by now become "standard operational procedure" (A brand that can perhaps compare with the worst, especially when it is accompanied by the type of self-righteousness which is peculiar to us.)

What steps are we taking to insure that political disagreement will not lead to reprisal in the future?

7. Did we in the post "Browder period" throw out the baby with the dirty water? Should we not reexamine the whole question?—C. R.

U. S. JUDGE SAYS SMITH ACT STILL RULES PUERTO RICO

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (Via Airmail).—U.S. Federal Judge Clemente Ruiz Nazario has denied all pre-trial motions submitted by the 11 Puerto Rican Smith Act defendants.

On April 9 Judge Ruiz refused to invalidate the indictment, maintaining that the thought-control Smith Act is applicable in Puerto Rico despite establishment of the Associated Free State.

He further voiced disagreement with the defendants' complaint that the requirement that jury members speak English violates civil liberties inasmuch as it excludes the majority of Puerto Ricans, who speak only Spanish. He even asserted that all Puerto Rican economic, social, racial and religious groups are adequately represented on the jury panel.

The defense had pointed out that of 1,450 persons on the jury

panel, 1,200 had listed their occupations, and that of these no more than six were workers. The Court had not allowed into evidence statistics from the census and other sources indicating that only a minority of Puerto Ricans are familiar with the English language. The defense had also objected to the fact that the vast majority of potential jurors comes from the metropolitan area, particularly San Juan, leaving the rest of the island almost unrepresented.

James Dean Wins British Award

LONDON, May 31.—British movie-goers have named James Dean, rising American star killed last year in an auto accident, as the leading screen actor of 1955.