

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Silence Is Not Self-Correction

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have just read Eugene Dennis' article on Khrushchev's special report. It seems that Dennis has one major objective in writing this article—namely to indicate "how nearsighted to the point of blindness would it be to see today only the grotesque distortions made in the last years of Stalin's leadership, and to lose sight of the historic achievements of Socialism and the grand panoram of a new world before us!"

This is a worthy and necessary objective for any article contributed to the present discussion. Unfortunately the article is wanting in many serious aspects and this greatly undermines its effectiveness.

There is a complete lack of any critical approach to Khrushchev's report. Thus at this late date, Dennis accepts without question, "the cult of the individual" (Stalin), as the basic explanation of what happened in the Soviet Union in the last two decades or more!

One had hoped that Dennis would reject (or at least question) this unscientific, un-Marxist explanation.

The dictatorship of Stalin and the "cult of the individual" were symptoms not causes of what happened in the Soviet Union. (True, Stalin as an individual played an important role in helping to create and prolonging for so long a time the reign of terror.)

Not to recognize the above is more dangerous blindness than the one Dennis is rightly concerned with. It leads us back to the 18th century views on history when history was explained solely as the result of the conscious activities of individuals. Early in the 19th century this theory was exploded by the

materialists. . . .

Dennis also feels that the leaders of the Soviet Union have displayed self-criticism in the highest form . . . i.e. self-correction. True self-correction is a necessary part of self-criticism. But if the silence of Khrushchev and his colleagues about their own role in the "distortions" constitutes the highest form of self-criticism, than I must confess that after 22 years membership in the party I now belong in a new members' class. What is the real meaning of Dennis' new approach to self-criticism? . . .

PILUS CADENS

USSR Can Learn Even from U. S.

CHICAGO.

Editor, Daily Worker:

There are many unanswered questions after reading the Khrushchev report—the lack of a Marxist analysis of Stalin's mistakes; what were the specific points of disagreement with Stalin which led so many devoted Communists to their graves; the apparent absence of discussion of what to them must have been a foundation-shaking report on the congress delegates—there are a few.

Unfortunately our past correspondents in the Soviet Union, Joseph Clark, Anna Louise Strong and Ralph Parker, among others, gave us little enlightenment and as yet have not clearly explained how and why they failed. Possibly they had no inkling of either the quantity or quality of the political persecution under Stalin. More probably they heard more than vague rumors about these but refrained, mistakenly, I believe, from adding their mite to the mountains of anti-Soviet propaganda.

Let us never forget in our newly found freedom from the "cult of the Soviet Union" that all mankind owes a great debt

to that country, which, despite the political monstrosities of the Stalin era was primarily responsible for saving mankind from a long period of fascist rule. However, both the content and manner of presentation of the Khrushchev report only strengthens my belief which I have held for many years, and often expressed, that not only is the Soviet Union not always right—but they have much to learn in their political habits—not to mention economic and cultural fields—from other countries—not excluding our own.

If we adopt this more tempered but more realistic attitude we shall help gradually remove the false label of foreign agent which by our blind adulation of the Soviet Union made it easy for our opponents to pin on us unjustly.

Yours for making Speak Your Piece a permanent feature of our paper.

—B. F.

[Ed. Note: Speak Your Piece is a permanent feature.]

Dennis' Report.

CHICAGO

Editor, Daily Worker:

Again, an inconclusive article was written by Eugene Dennis. The gigantic positive peace program of the Soviet Union and its inevitable growth and strength are obvious and clear. Even such enemies of socialism as Dean Acheson on June 10 concedes the growth of its economy: in steel to 75 million tons, coal to 600 million and more engineers graduate from Soviet colleges than from our own.

The task was set by Stalin in February, 1946, with Western Russia in ruins, for 1960, while the Western world regarded them as fantastic. In addition China may have 14 million tons of steel production by 1970.

What is lacking and evasive in the Dennis article? The critic-

ism raised by the Daily Worker as to where these present Soviet leaders were, what wrong theories were prevalent, how anti-Semitism was allowed to develop, the usage of Beria cliches without facts or complete evidence—all this is not challenged or evaluated by Dennis.

Now that Togliatti and the Politbureau of the C.P. of France raised officially the same questions where is the American C.P.? Do we always have to wait for cues from outside the U. S.? Where is our Marxist courage of a Party based on scientific socialism and democratic socialist ideals.

The U.S. picture and tradition is based on civil liberties and judicial procedure. The American people are not able to understand at this point everything about class relations but they are sensitive and mature about civil liberties and abhor rigged trials and shooting. Let us give them credit. Our responsibility is to them. Let us proceed with American comprehensions and values and an American concept of socialism in the U. S. A.

—A Former Youth Leader in a Midwest College.

Jefferson on the French Revolution

FLUSHING, N. Y.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Thomas Jefferson wrote about the French revolution:

"In the struggle which was necessary, many guilty persons fell without the form of trial, and with them some innocent. These I deplore as much as anybody, and shall deplore some of them to the day of my death. But I deplore them as I should have done had they fallen in battle. It was necessary to use the arm of the people, a machine not quite so blind as balls and bombs, but blind to a certain degree. A few of their cordial

friends met at their hands the fate of enemies. But time and truth will rescue and embalm their memories, while their posterity will be enjoying that very liberty for which they would never have hesitated to offer up their lives. The liberty of the whole earth was dependent upon the issue of the contest, and was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood?"

Jefferson's statement applies with equal vigor to the events that took place during the building of socialism in one country. Only we lament the spelling of even more innocent blood. The only guarantee that such excesses will not be repeated are the growth of socialism and the growth of liberty in the USSR and in other countries.

The people will, however gropingly, find the ways and means of strengthening the economic, social and political foundations of their countries. And until such times as Socialist man flowers some generations hence, It is not unlikely that many new errors will be committed. However, we may reasonably expect that future errors will not be of so harsh a nature, nor of so long duration. However noble and inspired leadership may be, and leadership is necessary, true socialist democracy, as so many of us envisioned it, somewhat idealistically, will be achieved only when the vast majority of people, the ordinary folk, will be not such ordinary folk, and will be both able and willing to participate actively in public affairs.

Until that happy state of affairs comes about, we may be sure that collective leadership more and more will be based upon and controlled by ever-growing numbers of highly-developed socialist men and women, arising from a rapidly growing socialism.—A.P.