

# Global Discussion on Socialism and Democracy

## New Round in Debate on Communist Paths

By JOSEPH CLARK

A NEW ROUND was reached in the free and frank debate within the world-wide Communist movement. This came with the resolution of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee which sought to defend the failure of the present leadership to do anything about Stalin's crimes during his lifetime. It took issue with a view

stated by Palmiro Togliatti, Italian Communist leader, who pointed out that socialism must have a democratic foundation in order to flourish and that the rise of bureaucracy and departures from Soviet democracy as conceived by Lenin were the source of the errors in the Stalin era.

The resolution of the Soviet Party followed shortly after Pravda republished an article by Eugene Dennis, general secretary of the American Communist Party, written for the Daily Worker. In the resolution the Soviet leaders attacked Togliatti's position. They cited the article by Dennis, as well as statements of Chinese and French Communists in support of their viewpoint.

(Unfortunately, in reprinting the Dennis article from the Daily Worker of June 18, Pravda deleted a clause which condemned the snuffing out of Jewish cultural figures during the Stalin regime.)

EUGENE DENNIS then issued a statement hailing the Soviet CP resolution. He acknowledged that the American CP had not yet adopted a position on the resolution but that the National Committee would shortly. Prior to Dennis' statement the National Committee of the American CP had declared:

"We cannot accept an analysis of such profound mistakes which attributes them solely to the capricious aberrations of a single individual, no matter how much arbitrary power he was wrongly permitted to usurp. It was just as wrong to ascribe all the mistakes and violations of socialist principle to a single individual as it was to ascribe to him all the achievements and grandeur of socialist progress in the USSR."

The Soviet CP resolution ascribed the errors, again, to the Stalin "cult of the individual." Then it asked how the "cult" arose "under the conditions of a Soviet Socialist regime?" Its answer recalled that:

"This was the first experience in history of building a Socialist society which was formed in the process, the test in practice of many truths hitherto only known to Socialists in general outline and theory. For more than a quarter

### A British Communist Comment on the 'World Debate'



"Whatever road we take, we must never leave them behind."

-Gabriel in the London Daily Worker

of a century, the Soviet land was the only country which paved the way for mankind to Socialism. It was like a besieged fortress situated in a capitalist encirclement. After the abortive intervention of fourteen states in 1918-1922, the enemies of the Soviet country in the West and East continued to prepare new 'crusades' against the USSR."

AFTER DESCRIBING the herculean efforts needed to build socialism in such a land the Soviet CP resolution said:

"This complicated national and international situation demanded iron discipline, overgrowing vigilance and a most strict centralization of leadership which inevitably had a negative effect on the development of certain democratic features."

The resolution condemns Stalin's theory that as socialist construction becomes more successful the struggle against the capitalists only becomes sharper.

But as to why the present Soviet leaders didn't oppose Stalin

when he violated justice and democracy, the resolution says:

"This could not be done in the circumstances which had arisen. Facts undoubtedly bear out that Stalin was guilty of many lawless deeds, particularly in the later period of his life. It should not be forgotten however, that the Soviet people knew Stalin as a person who always acted in defense of the USSR against the intrigues of the enemies and struggles for the cause of socialism. At times he applied in this struggle unworthy methods and violated the Leninist principles of party life. Therein lay the tragedy of Stalin."

The resolution says the people supported Stalin; therefore the rest of the leaders couldn't do anything about the bad things Stalin did. However, the resolution is silent on the part of the present leaders in creating the Stalin cult, as Togliatti pointed out in his interview.

In criticizing Togliatti the Soviet CP resolution says the Italian leader was wrong "when he asks whether Soviet society has not reached 'certain forms of degeneration'."

ACTUALLY Togliatti has made a vigorous defense of Soviet socialism denying that the system had been transformed into anything else. But Togliatti noted that as long as the present Soviet leaders "are limiting themselves in substance to denouncing the personal defects of Stalin as the root cause, the problem remains within the framework of the cult of the personality." He continues:

"At one time, all that was good was due to the superhuman positive qualities of one man; now all that is bad is attributed to the equally exceptional and even staggering defects of the same man. Both in the one case and in the other, we are outside the criterion of judgment which is proper to Marxism."

"The real problem escapes notice, such as the method by which, and the reason why, Soviet society could and did stray so far from the democratic path and from the legality which it had traced out for itself, arriving as far as degeneration. . . ."

"Above all we recall the fact that Lenin, in his last speeches and writings, emphasized the danger of bureaucracy which was threatening the new society. It

problem presented by the dangers of bureaucratic degeneration; the eradication of democracy; the confusion between constructive revolutionary forces and the destruction of revolutionary legality; the separation of political and economic leadership from the criticism and creative activity of the masses."

ONE OF THE MAJOR results of the negotiations in Moscow between the Yugoslav and the Soviet Communist leader was the agreement to exchange theoretical scientific experiences of socialism as well as practical. Togliatti and the Italian Communist press have been playing up the experience of the Yugoslavs in securing worker participation in industrial management and in coping with the problem Lenin wrested with—to get direct worker-farmer control of political and economic life.

Paradoxically, while denying that anything but the Stalin cult was responsible for past errors, the Soviet leaders were embarked in practice on considerable revision and change in their legal and legislative system.

For example, the Supreme Soviet opening July 11 is expected to change the single-candidate election system and gradually return to the Soviets the power they originally had and retained until 1922.

Meanwhile the theory that had been current in Washington and part of the press that all the discussion and differences were only a "Soviet plot" was knocked into a cocked hat by the discussion itself. Through the use of free discussion the Communist movement was showing in practice how important democracy was to the working class movement. Differences of opinion were a means for securing deeper unity for peace, for democracy and ultimately for socialism.

Certain conclusions had already crystallized. One was that Marxism bases itself on the idea that each country will find its own specific path to socialism. Another that world politics had reached a point of development where lasting peace was possible and the inevitability of wars no longer obtained. Out of the ferment of discussion socialism and unity trends in the labor movement were being vastly strengthened.

### STATISTICS

(Continued from Page 2)

claim credit for these employment-stimulators.

All of the gain was realized by labor, by the organization of the unorganized, by self-sacrificing strikes against resistant capitalists such as that now being waged by the steel workers. Certainly capitalism gets no credit for that.

Socialism in America will realize quickly a good—not merely adequate—standard for all families. Through economic planning and the abolition of human exploitation, it will bring about rapid, continuous increases in living standards without the need for crippling strikes. It will be a secure standard, without the overhanging menace of depression and war.

The American people will learn this by personal experience and international example—despite the wishes of the Daily News.

## Dennis Comments on Soviet CP Statement

Eugene Dennis, General Secretary of the Communist Party, yesterday issued the following comment on the recent resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

"The Soviet Communist Party's resolution is a most welcome development in the friendly interchange of opinion among Marxists of the world. It correctly turns attention to the profound significance of its 20th Congress, with its historic decisions paving the way for new socialist advances and its far-reaching conclusions on the non-inevitability of war and the possibility for peaceful paths to Socialism in democratic countries."

"The resolution correctly estimates the sinister aims of those reactionary circles who would bury the tremendous achievements of the 20th Congress under an avalanche of speculation about the re-evaluation of Stalin. It coincides with our estimate that reactionary circles here and elsewhere are trying to distort and utilize Khrushchev's special report on Stalin to disrupt

the solidarity of the international working class movement. These 'cold war' forces are not interested in making peaceful co-existence a settled national policy; they seek to prolong world tensions and maintain a suicidal arms race. They vainly seek to frustrate the will of the peoples for world peace which was reflected at Bandung and Geneva and continues to grow."

"In my opinion the resolution of the CPSU goes a long way, in explaining—while clearly not justifying—what has become known as the growth of the cult of the individual and the unforgivable violations of Socialist legality and principles that took place in the latter period of Stalin's leadership. The substance of this matter will be discussed shortly by our National Committee which will then collectively express its views."

## The Worker

PUBLISHED EVERY SUNDAY BY THE PUBLISHERS NEW PRESS, INC., 35 E. 12th St., New York 3, N. Y. Telephone ALgonquin 4-7954. Cable Address: 'Daily Worker,' New York, N. Y.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(Except Canada and Foreign)	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
DAILY WORKER and THE WORKER	\$4.75	\$8.00	\$13.00
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THE WORKER	2.00	3.50	5.50
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