

The U.S.A. and Khrushchev's Special Report

By EUGENE DENNIS

PERHAPS NO previous gathering of a political party anywhere has caused as much worldwide interest and provoked such a stir of public opinion as the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U.

Reactions to and developments since the Congress in the past four months have been varied. In many quarters, including in certain Left circles, there are some for whom the revelations about Stalin have taken up the whole horizon and who seem temporarily to have lost sight of the political significance and far-reaching effect of the 20th Congress as a whole.

But there is also a growing number of non-Communist groups and individuals who see in the 20th Congress, and in the very revelations about Stalin, a completely new possibility for re-evaluating their own views regarding relations with Communists. And these past weeks have seen (not only in New York) an increasing number of important and stimulating informal discussions taking place between Communists and non-Communist liberal and labor leaders.

John Foster Dulles and the State Department recognize that there is a changing political climate abroad and at home, a change sharply away from the atmosphere of the Cold War. They are keenly aware of the fact that the 20th Congress has stimulated this whole trend. The State Department for instance, is uneasy at the rapprochement between Belgrade and Moscow, the cutting of Soviet armed forces, the Soviet invitation to General Twining, and the fact that a recent Gallup Poll shows a majority of Americans favor that Khrushchev and Bulganin be invited to visit here. It hopes that through its publication and use of its version of the special Khrushchev report, it can disrupt the trend toward peaceful co-existence among Americans and the "neutrals," disorient the Left, and sow disunity among Communists at home and abroad.

But despite all efforts of the State Department, even some conservative spokesmen and many liberals view the 20th Congress as inaugurating a period in which the industrial and technological supremacy of U.S. capitalism will have to meet on an equal level with the historic, peaceful competition of Soviet socialism. And the special report of Khrushchev is viewed in numerous non-Communist as well as in Communist circles as an evidence of that strength and confidence which enables the Soviet Union today to break with some very harmful features of the past, and to pave the way for a vast expansion of democracy in its internal life.

This perspective and these changes must inevitably bring about modifications in the positions of all forward-looking groups, trade unionists, liberals, Socialists, no less than Communists. And it is the recognition of these big changes that has created the growing number of requests for mutual exchanges and deep-going discussions by non-Communists democratic groups in a number of cities in the past weeks.

THE KHRUSHCHEV report on Stalin tells a tragic story. Shocking and painful as it is, however, it is a part of history. Communists must have the courage to face up to it, analyze it, and draw conclusions from it.

Over the last forty years imperialism exacted a terrible price from the Soviet people and their leaders who dared to storm the heights and build socialism. This

we knew. Now belatedly, we see that the heroic path to the most monumental and progressive advance in human history was made all the more difficult at a certain period by shocking crimes and crass violations of socialist law and ethics.

We especially, because we are Communists, understand and share the profound grief and shock of the Soviet people. The crimes and brutalities that sullied the latter period of Stalin's leadership are unforgivable. Nor did they have any historical or political "necessity." Nothing can justify the use of tortures and rigged trials, large-scale deportations, provocative and chauvinist actions as in the case of Yugoslavia; the persecution of the Jewish doctors and snuffing out the lives of more than a score of Jewish cultural figures.

Socialism could not continue to allow such terrible injustices to go undisclosed or unrepented. That is the meaning of the morally and politically courageous corrective measures undertaken in the last three years. We can expect to see these measures amplified as Khrushchev's extremely frank report is critically discussed by millions of Soviet citizens.

THERE ARE MANY questions about which all of us are thinking deeply. Many are the honest questions of friends, as well as of those who strongly disagree with us. Some are the loaded questions pressed by the State Department and its various "voices" of radio and press.

Why did these things happen? Were they inevitable? Are they inherent in socialism, in Communist philosophy?

A pet theme of the State Department is that the special Khrushchev report rejects "only" those injustices which were perpetrated against "the wrong people." The claim is made that the rejection of Stalin's methods must be extended to the rejection of Lenin and Leninism and of socialism as a whole.

But not even the brazen advocate of atomic "brink of war" policies can obscure the history of the last four decades. The liberating teachings of Lenin have already triumphed in one-third of the globe. The socialist world system has arrived and is irrevocably established. It wants and needs peace. It considers that war is no longer inevitable as it was in Lenin's time, that a thermo-nuclear war would be a catastrophe, but that it can be prevented. It is confidently competing on a peaceful basis with capitalism in every sphere of human aspiration and endeavor. It recognizes with a new maturity that the paths to socialism are many; and that in today's world more and more peoples and countries will be able to hew a parliamentary and democratic road to socialism in accord with their own national traditions and experience.

As for Lenin's "methods," but two facts need be recalled. Under his leadership the first act of the new Soviet Republic in 1917 was to proclaim peace and bring an end to the massive blood-letting visited on the Russian people during World War I. And in 1921 while foreign armies of intervention were still trying to bring down the Soviet Union, Lenin called for an end to the death penalty and any mass repressive measures.

IN THIS connection it is well to ponder a question that now some would like to conceal:

Who were the real architects of a policy of terror in respect to the Soviet Union? Those who tried to invoke the wrath of heaven and earth to crush the first land of socialism to "strangle it in its cradle," as Winston



DENNIS

Churchill put it.

How this new society, built in one of the most backward of nations, was forced to run the gauntlet of every type of attack and suffering! Civil war and military intervention pressed by the strongest governments of Europe, America, and Asia; merciless blockade and enforced famine; economic and political boycott; devastation by the hordes of Hitler; and then, with the wounds still gaping, ten years of bitter cold war—these were the sacrifices and suffering exacted by reactionary capitalism from those who dared to build a new world!

It is this grim background that gave a life and death character to the struggle over policy in the young socialist state. Industrialize or perish; catch up economically with the leading capitalist powers or be crushed by them—these are the conditions that help explain, although they do not justify, an atmosphere in which, for a period of time under Stalin's leadership, after the foundations of socialism were established, such gruesome departures from socialism were possible, as Khrushchev fearlessly disclosed.

As a result of the near miraculous progress of the Soviet people, the Soviet state and the C.P.S.U. over these hard and turbulent years, the great prestige of Stalin grew. The USSR became a first rank industrial nation. It wiped out illiteracy. It developed an unprecedented system of social ownership of the means of production and full employment, of free medical aid, education and social security for its people. Workers and farmers achieved a political, economic and cultural status and dignity undreamed of under the Czars, and, in many ways, unmatched in the advanced capitalist countries. Oppression and Czarist racism gave way to national independence, social development and self-expression for peoples and nations for whom the ancient Russian empire had been one vast prison.

In the early 1930's, when socialism had been built—notwithstanding all external pressures and attacks—Stalin promulgated an analysis and a course of action that undermined the new socialist Constitution and facilitated the grievous violations that are only now being corrected. This was the theory that with the victory of socialism, the desperate class enemy would become even more dangerous, would organize increased resistance internally, and would penetrate every echelon of the Soviet state, the country's economy, and even the Party and its leadership.

It would be naive to think that the Soviet Union did not have its Benedict Arnolds. But

the search for "enemies of the people" took on hysterical proportions in which virtually all opposition and serious differences of opinion became suspect.

At the same time there developed greater centralization of state power and the cultivation of hero worship of Stalin, especially during and after World War II, and the breakdown of Party and Soviet collectivity, and restrictions in creative intellectual and cultural life. And it was during this period that the security organs of the USSR obtained and wielded a normal and dangerous powers and criminally violated the Soviet Constitution.

HOW WAS IT possible for so many Communists in the "West," and so many non-Communist statesmen and political leaders, to accept the idea that treason and treachery had assumed such fantastic proportions in the Soviet Union as were claimed in the series of purges and trials that took place in the 1930's and subsequently?

For one thing, this was the period of the climatic rise of Hitler and his notorious Fifth Column, gathered openly under the "anti-Comintern" banner.

Secondly, especially we here in the strongest imperialist country have always been aware of the vicious anti-Soviet intrigues and espionage sponsored and financed by American Big Business. Moreover, we knew the history of our own labor movement and that the great economic struggles and free speech fights of the past decades are replete with tragic examples of strike-breaking and wreckage caused by labor spies, informers and provocateurs.

The terrible phenomena of false "confessions" and fabricated "evidence"—evil products of a feverishly suspicious and hysterical atmosphere exploited by a Yezhov, a Beria, and other agents of imperialism—have only now been proved by the opening of archives kept secret for many years. Similar to the secret intelligence agencies in our own country, like the FBI and CIA which have dictatorial powers, flaunt the Constitution, and are not accountable even to Congress, Beria and his accomplices obviously were able to perpetrate their crimes against the people under the guise of "national security."

All this was not the "fruit of socialism," but a bitter product of contradictions and abuses alien to socialism which a socialist society could not digest nor tolerate. Certainly we Communists, of all people, cannot ignore nor make light of these facts.

Nonetheless history cannot judge an epic social advance primarily by the evils and mistakes and departures from its principles that may arise in the tumultuous period of its growth and progress. The wise and moving words of one of our own great revolutionary theoreticians, Thomas Jefferson, regarding the French Revolution, are worth remembering today:

"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 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."

(Letter to William Short, Jan. 3, 1793).

CONTRARY to the State Department propaganda, the inherent evils of today's world are those of capitalism, not of so-

cialism. Inherent in socialism is the ending of exploitation of man by man; the elimination of the causes of war, depressions, and racism. The inherent spirit of socialism is human, national, and social freedom. Its victory in the USSR, and subsequently in China and the other people's democracies, has broken the back of colonialism, and in the last ten years has inspired a winning upsurge to national liberation and social advance of over a billion colored peoples.

The economic royalists hate socialism—not for its failings, but for its strength, for its inherent social progress and liberating values.

How hypocritical is their effort to sensationalize and make capital of the Soviet Union's determined effort to erase the abuses against socialist justice and democracy! One need only mention that the State Department is not prevented from extolling the "merits" of fascist Spain by Franco's crimes against the people. It is not bothered by the indescribable corruption, degeneracy, and rottenness of the puppet regime of Chiang Kai-shek. Nor is it adverse to the unconstitutional racist rule by force and violence of Eastland, Talmadge and Shivers, aided and abetted by McCarthy and Walters, Jenner and Nixon—which is sanctioned as an "accepted way of life" for a sizeable part of our own U.S.A.

This, then, is a clue as to which of today's prevailing world social systems harbors the "inherent evil."

IN THE DISCUSSION on the 20th Congress currently being centered around the special Khrushchev report, questions frequently arise about the present Soviet leadership. Did some of them try to bring about changes before the last three years? Could the past evils have been checked earlier? How big and serious are the changes now under way?

Many questions remained unanswered. The Khrushchev report, which was primarily a documented supplement to his main political report to the 20th Congress, reflects only a part of the probing that has gone on, and which may continue for years to come, in the CPSU and among the Soviet people.

There is no mistaking the historic process which is at work today. For example, for years it has been fashionable in Washington to characterize all the peace talk among the Soviet people and the concrete peace proposals of their leaders as a cover for "war-like" or "aggressive" intentions. But when a number of American travelers in the last three years began to visit the USSR, they concluded that no country could organize for war by so completely imbuing all its citizens with the idea of peace. And many conservative statesmen and millions of common folk in the West have concluded also that no "aggressor" could voluntarily relinquish all its military bases abroad and unilaterally reduce its armed forces, as has been done by the Soviet Union in the past few years.

In a similar way, along with the elimination of gross injustices of socialist law and ethics and harmful hero-worship, the process of mass popularization of the historic decisions of the 20th Congress seems to be well under way whereby critical inquiry and expression, and cultural and scientific interchange are coming into their own, along with a series of governmental and party measures to ensure the complete enforcement of the Soviet constitution and the ex-

(Continued on Page 6)

USA and Khrushchev's Report

(Continued from Page 2)

expansion of democracy in the USSR.

Even a skeptic must admit the fortitude, integrity, confidence and team spirit with which the present Soviet leadership has moved since 1953 to bring about the present thaw in international affairs, to expand socialist democracy, and effectuate a marked rise in living and cultural standards. Self-criticism in its highest form and in its only effective form is being applied in the Soviet Union today—i.e., actual self-correction. Not least of all, the steps being taken to restore genuine collective leadership in the CPSU and the Soviets are providing prerequisites for overcoming and eliminating all departures and violations of socialist legality and principle.

But this is not just a matter of leaders. The key thing is the popular character of the process, embracing the whole Soviet people. It is demonstrated in the sharp discussions among writers and scientists, in the factories and on collective farms, as reported in the newspapers daily. The recently announced steps to decentralize the ministries of justice and economic planning seem to be especially significant. This would mark an historic turn-away from a highly centralized state with certain bureaucratic excesses which inevitably presented a contradiction to the further development of Soviet democracy.

Socialist democracy has broad and strong economic and political foundations for its further development in the USSR. There is no exploiting class that by virtue of its great wealth and corporate power can assume the decisive, commanding positions of the economy and of public expression and political life. There is no material obstacle to democracy's flowering as the abnormal conditions of the struggle for survival fade and the socialist constitution is made inviolable.

Certainly the minds of men and their public institutions are always influenced not only by the historic achievements of the past and present, but by the hangovers of former evils and mistakes. No one can say that new mistakes, of an entirely different type no doubt, may not be made in socialist countries again. To expect infallibility in any group of leaders is to compound the basic error of the past and to have learned nothing from the bitter mistake in elevating a Stalin to the pedestal of a demi-God. One of the key tests of political integrity and socialist strength is the frank recognition of error and, most important, self-correction. And by the record of the last three years and their present public disclosures, discussions and rectifications, it appears as a matter of fact, that the C.P.S.U. is meeting this test.

IN THE CURRENT worldwide discussions on the special Khrushchev report, we American Communists have much to think over. A myriad of questions have been opened up to which all of us have the responsibility to reflect and seek answers—answers which can come only from a sober re-assessment of facts and a full exchange of views.

We see now that we made some serious mistakes. Based upon mistaken information, as in the case of the rupture with Yugoslavia or the former situation in Soviet agriculture—we defended and accepted the indefensible and unacceptable with uncritical attitudes. We too glibly, or idealistically, assumed that the great job of building socialism could take place without major mistakes. We refused to believe, and regarded as slander, any news that purported to tell of grave injustices in the socialist countries.

While correctly repudiating and counteracting the vile slander and anti-Soviet hostility of the

corporate interests and their agents, we were often intolerant of the critical opinions and viewpoints of many labor and liberal spokesmen. We too often treated criticism from since trade unionists and liberals as though it came from the professional anti-Communist and anti-Soviet baiters.

For all this we feel profound regret—without reservation or equivocation.

But we also do not detract one iota from the deep pride we fell in the fact that throughout the years we American Communists resolutely championed the cause of socialism, proletarian internationalism and American-Soviet friendship. This we continue to do actively and proudly. For this has always been, and is today, in the best interest of America and of world peace.

FDR, for example, near the end of his life, referred to the establishment of friendly and good neighborly relations with the Soviet Union as "the crowning achievement" of his Administration. The corrections now being made by the USSR, the eradication of all that is alien to socialism, facilitate this goal of amity and peaceful co-existence. And as this process continues, millions of Americans will begin to see socialism in a new light, and with the understanding that socialist society is a changing, evolutionary, and constantly improving system.

In this connection, many socialist-minded Americans will begin to realize that the hard and sacrificial struggles of the pioneers of socialism in the USSR—despite all their errors, malpractices and defects—have made possible the establishment of a worldwide socialist system, and have enormously facilitated the path to socialism everywhere. That road in our own country will be worked out by the American people in accord with our own conditions and traditions.

Certainly we American Communists advocate and strive for a democratic, constitutional and peaceful course of social transformation whereby the majority of the American people ultimately will move forward and establish a new social system on the basis of American needs and experience, traditions and labor-democratic political relationships. Within the framework of a common concern for peace and the progress and advancement of socialism in all countries, we American Communists—while maintaining at all times our own position as an independent political party with a truly scientific attitude towards all parties and social phenomena—should continue to base our attitude towards the lands of socialism on the principles of international working class solidarity which, as Lincoln noted, is a hallmark of genuine patriotism.

In the past our gaze was often exclusively on the historic gains of socialism against overwhelming odds. And if, in certain respects, our previous vision now appears one-sided in retrospect, how near-sighted 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 panorama of a new world before us!

IT IS NO surprise that many of us react in different ways to the questions that have erupted with such impact. The Daily Worker has opened the way for a democratic discussion and a vigorous clash of opinion. In the process, many invaluable contributions have been made. A number of views and approaches have been put forth. It would be unrealistic to expect all of us to agree with all of them.

As for myself, there are ideas expressed in some of the letters, articles, and editorials appearing in the Daily Worker which

I do not agree with. I do not agree with approaches that minimize the errors now revealed. I cannot agree, on the other hand, with sweeping anti-Soviet indictments that fail to take historical fact and perspective into account and that, regardless of intent, foster hostility toward socialist countries. I share the attitude of a frank and honest self-critical apology to honest people we have mistakenly condemned. But I cannot accept the viewpoint that wipes out and undermines pride and confidence in the Socialist countries. Nor do I share the cynical attitudes that would minimize or blot out the historic contributions of us American Communists to the working class and to our nation—contributions past or present, not to speak of the future.

I am confident that our Party—in the process of strengthening its ties with the labor and Negro people's movements and all other democratic forces, and by exercising the greatest independent Marxist judgment—will prove fully capable of helping solve not only the social questions of the future, but also the vital problems now confronting the American people. And parenthetically, let me add, that our "political independence" will not be measured by how much we "criticize" or "pressure" other vanguard parties but, above all, by how we boldly and creatively apply, in accord with American conditions and needs, the principles of scientific socialism to help solve the immediate and fundamental problems of our own, the American people.

This article does not attempt to deal with some of the biggest questions concerning how the American Left, inclusive of the Communists, can move forward and draw the necessary conclusions from the past, effect certain basic and long overdue changes in certain aspects of their programmatic positions, structures, and methods of work, and exert greater political influence on the course of political and social events.

These problems are now being more widely considered not only by us Communists, but by many labor, liberal, Left, and socialist-minded people and groups. Opinions need not, and should not, jell prematurely. There is room for much thought and exploration inside and outside our ranks—for collective thought and action rooted in the political realities of our country.

Above all, there is the need for greater mass political and economic activity, such as around the key issues in the 1956 elections, now, even while the current discussions go on. This, above all else can provide the framework for new gains and perspectives for a broad, popular realignment, as well as for the eventual emergence of a new mass party of socialism.

When all has been said and done about the 20th Congress (and that subject won't be exhausted for some time to come), one thing will remain above all else: the 20th Congress strengthened world peace and social progress. It marked a new stage in the advancement of socialism, and in the struggle for peaceful co-existence that began in Lenin's day, continued in the following years, and is becoming ever more effective and successful.

This policy captured the imagination of mankind and was upheld even in the face of massive hot and cold war threats, provocations, and the encirclement of the U.S.S.R. by A-bomb bases from 1946 on.

The emergence of socialism as a world system, and the disintegration of the colonial empires has enriched and given new meaning to many basic Marxist precepts. One such Leninist proposition that now acquires new social significance is that socialism and capitalism can live and peacefully compete in the same world, that civilization is now on the threshold

Letter From a Jersey

Says TV, R On Italians

Editor, Feature Section:

In connection with the present discussion I wish to discuss the cultural and entertainment sections of the Daily and Sunday Worker.

I feel our paper and most progressives have been callously indifferent to the stepped up attack against the Italian and Italian American people in popular song, movies, radio and TV.

For example: About a year ago Rosemary Clooney made a record called "Mambo Italiano." A more insulting song couldn't have been written in his time by Sen. Bilbo.

Martin Block, a disc jockey on a major radio network, refused to play it—his whole handling of the situation was interesting but space does not permit details.

Non-progressives in the Italian community protested to those disc jockeys who did play it. Nevertheless, the song was widely played and sung. It went up high on the hit parades. I think our press and our progressives should have been heard from at that time. On the contrary I know Communists who thought the song was good. Dear Martin's "That's Amore" was another example. There have been many more. These two, however, reached the "top." Where was our press during that period? Now on movies.

Anna Magnani received an Oscar for her performance in Rose Tattoo. Even if the question of an attack against the Italian people did not exist, I certainly feel the picture should have been reviewed. It received an Academy award which means people must be talking about it.

The debate on "Diabolique" was interesting. But isn't it more important for us to be discussing a film which received an award which millions of Americans have seen and been influenced by?

On the question of slander in the picture—my mother and thousand upon thousands of other Italian came to this country seeking a healthy solution to their problem of extreme poverty. From the moment they set foot on board ship they were exploited, cheated and ridiculed. And the treatment persisted in the slums, in the sweat shops, in the courts, etc. In spite of the hardships they raised families, became part of stable communities, helped build America and participated in the building of the labor movement in this country.

Does Searifina Delle Rose (Anna Magnani) reflect this heroism? Does she leave the moviegoer with a deeper appreciation of the dignity of Italian women? Searifina Delle Rose does not represent the Italian women who faced goon terror, overpowered it and moved on to organize the garment workers in America. Nor does she represent the countless Italian, Italian-American heroines of the famous textile strikes of the early 1900s in Paterson, N. J. and Lawrence, Mass. Gangster portrayals aren't the only ones used by Hollywood to foment contempt towards the Italian people. I think our movement including our press has committed a serious error in not reacting to the newly disguised attacks.

(The reader's lengthy letter goes on to criticize a number of other

of a lasting peace—because of the new world relationships, and through the heightened mass intervention and unity of the peoples.

The peoples and governments of the U.S.A. and the USSR can be friends, can live and let live, as good neighbors. If anything, that is all the more clear after the publication of the State Department's "big scoop" which can no more deter the world-wide trend towards peaceful co-existence and social progress than could King Canute decrees a halt to the ocean's waves.