

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Eugene Dennis

At Forum

Editor, Daily Worker:

NEW YORK

It is regrettable that those Daily Worker readers who did not attend last Sunday night's Forum (the A. J. Muste, Norman Thomas, DuBois, Dennis discussion) would not get its truly exciting and significant character by reading today's paper (May 29).

There were some among the Communist and Daily Worker Left who deplored the scheduling of that forum. The reasons were varied: (1) some clung to the old feeling against "giving a platform to the anti-Communist"; (2) others felt that at this particular moment (in view of the revelations coming out of the Soviet Union) the Communist Left can only hide its face in shame, and slink around corners to avoid former friends and foes alike; and that Dennis and his party would only be leaving themselves wide open to the supposedly indefensible "I told you so" attacks of the anti-Communists.

There is still a fourth viewpoint which, while supporting such debates and forums, holds that these can be participated in only on the basis that the Communist Left first purge itself of all its past errors.

In my opinion, last Sunday night's forum gave us a fifth viewpoint and, I believe, Mr. Dennis is to be commended for the part he played there in doing just that. The main importance of that forum was, I think:

(1) The very fact that it was held at all; that Communist and non-Communist and anti-Communist could come together to discuss and debate in public is a first step toward improving relations between all non-reactionary groupings.

(2) Although Norman Thomas presented no positive approach to the topic of the evening (The American Road to Democracy and Peace) and instead engaged in a time-worn tirade against the Communists based upon upon out-of-context quotations from obsolete books, and personal experiences of 20 years ago—still in the process of the evening, he encouragingly shifted its positions somewhat, and tentatively left the door ajar for a "well, we'll see" attitude toward the need for unity of all Left and progressive forces.

(3) That he did so was mainly due to the positive and restrained role of Dennis throughout the evening. In his opening presentation, Dennis put forth a simple four point program towards realizing the road to democracy and peace. And then he emphasized, in various ways and in a persistent manner throughout

the evening, the need for unity of all diverse anti-monopoly viewpoints and groups in the country. The manner in which he conducted himself personally, the dignity with which he answered "embarrassing questions," the way in which he took from Mr. Thomas' and Dr. Muste's viewpoints that which could further unity rather than division—kept the evening focused on margins of agreements.

(4) Of special value to the Communist Left and this paper's readers, I believe, was the manner in which Dennis dealt forthrightly, at a non-Communist meeting with the mistakes of his party; at the same time, he did not abjectly abdicate to the anti-Soviet slander and Communist-baiting of the past decades.

(5) A new appreciation was gotten, I think, regarding the special and independent roles of

(5) A new appreciation was a Dr. Muste and Dr. DuBois and their very positive significance within the give-and-take between the Communist, the non- and anti-Communist Left.

ENTHUSIASTIC

## See Danger of Right Opportunism

WEST MASS.

Editor, Daily Worker:

While the current advantages for Marxist advance are very good in the content of the Geneva spirit and Stalin critique atmospheres, I can see that there is also in all this a great danger of Right opportunism.

For example, a writer from Albany wrote in the Daily Worker of May 14 urging a 'better' form of Communist Party organization, a broader party. This, I think, expresses a tendency towards liberalism.

What is needed is undoubtedly greater democracy and less dogmatism than in the past. But at the same time that party's Marxist-Leninist purity must be jealously guarded, its efficiency and unity preserved as the apple of the eye.

There is enough bourgeois ideology seeping into it already without opening it to more unstable elements and spies. While taking the OPPORTUNITY to link up with RIGHT socialist and labor forces for the success of the united front, the danger contained therein must be guarded against with the truest of Communist principles, discipline and vigilance.

This is all the more important if Communists are even going to refrain from regarding Social-Democrats such as the British Laborites and French Socialists as "social traitors" as Prof. G. D. H. Cole suggests in the Daily Worker of May 18, but as honest

# Opportunities in the Primaries

By MAX GORDON

One result of the current crop of primaries is the public discussion regarding disappearance of the old-line political machine bosses.

Party leaders today, it is argued, are an entirely different breed. Among the more popular examples of the new type of leader is Carmine DeSapio of New York.

Aside from manner and appearance, it is noted that DeSapio no longer has the absolute powers of former Tammany bosses. In addition to heading the Tammany machine, he is Democratic national committeeman from New York and controls the party in the state. But his efforts to crack the whip over the New York organization for Governor Harriman as president have not been entirely successful. In his own 17th congressional district, for instance, one of the two presidential convention delegates, unopposed in the Democratic primary, is an avowed Stevenson supporter.

With New York's primary just around the corner, a political commentator noted the following a few days ago:

"Democratic chieftans are set to start a big push this week in an effort to put over a solid pro-Harriman bloc of N. Y. convention delegates in the June 5 primaries. Bronx Chairman Buckley is the only major county leader at the moment who is assured of a 100 percent line-up of pro-Harriman delegates."

DeSapio, the story goes on to report, is using a double-barreled attack: campaigning for the defeat of every pro-Stevenson delegate who is challenging pro-Harriman delegates (there are about seven in New York City and Long Island); and beating the drums for Harriman so hard as to counteract the pressures of pro-Stevenson

Marxists, instead.

While there is room for greater approaching of the united front question than the narrow path of the past, we must keep in mind that Social-Democrats, honest or not, OBJECTIVELY play the role of social treachery against the working class. Communists should not abandon their forthright criticism of them in this field, but instead must put this criticism to more constructive use, must raise it above the level of name-calling for greater EFFECTIVENESS.

PAPER MILL WORKER

## The "Icy Hearts" Editorial

NEW YORK, N.Y.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Your editorial entitled "Icy Hearts," in the issue of May 25, dealing with Howard Pyle's comment concerning the "right to suffer," was good—as far as it went. Unfortunately, it fell

sentiment among rank-and-file Democrats.

Aim of the latter is to try to get pro-Stevenson delegates to give Harriman a "favorite son" first vote, and to keep in line those who are pledged to Harriman but are likely to break after the first ballot.

The point here is that there is a difference between DeSapio's position and that of the bosses of old, whose acts were unquestioned and power virtually absolute. There were occasional challenges, usually feeble, from disgruntled elements of the machine; and from time there was an upheaval behind some good government or reform ticket which might upset the machine for a brief period.

But by and large, through a combination of gang rule, huge pilferage of the public till, shameless poll robbery and small favors to individuals, the political bosses in most major cities used to reign supreme.

This is no longer quite so true. Political machines do have to make programmatic and other concessions to the electorate. DeSapio was forced to dump Rep. James G. Donovan in Manhattan's 18th district this year. Even the GOP machine in New York, has had to make some concessions to the labor movement, as witness its sharp attack on state "right-to-work" laws.

The political machine has had to become more adaptable with large-scale popular intervention into politics. This started with the unemployment and small farmers movements of the early thirties, the mushrooming of the labor movement in the latter thirties and the Negro people's movement of the forties.

At some point, however, it will not be able to make the conces-

far short of what one would expect of a Marxist publication.

It is true, as you point out, that the present administration's unwillingness to do anything about unemployment is the immediate problem and should be given due emphasis. It is quite another matter, however, to ascribe an inherent feature of capitalism to "icy hearts" in the Eisenhower Administration, even though Mr. Pyle happened to state this feature in its bluntest and crudest form.

The "right to suffer" is, after all, but another way of phrasing the "right to starve," which, like the "right to make a million" and others, is part and parcel of our present system. While this or that administration may be more responsive to popular pressure and take measures to curb the worst features of the system, these "rights" remain nonetheless basic features of capitalism.

Instead of stating this explicit-

sions demanded by the working-class and its allies. At that point, labor will break with the two parties or there will be a political realignment.

But while the machine today is not the same as the old-line outfits, at least in most major cities, the change is as yet rudimentary. DeSapio and other bosses are still able generally to dictate candidates, irrespective of rank-and-file sentiment; it is still an almost insuperable job to lick the machine in the primaries; it still requires a massive drive of the rank-and-file to win a legislative victory where the machines oppose it.

A major reason for this is lack of independent political organization of the popular-coalition centering on the labor movement, and its general passivity as regards internal party developments. This is conspicuously true of the New York City labor movement as contrasted, say, with Detroit or Buffalo, where labor is far more active in Democratic Party affairs.

This passivity is reflected in lack of popular participation of primary elections, where a 25 percent turnout of enrolled voters is considered large. In specific primary battles where its stake is especially clear, labor will often intervene actively, as it is doing today in Manhattan's 18th district in support of State Senator Alfred E. Santangelo. But the over-all lack of independent political organization and isolation from the internal Democratic structure makes it always necessary for labor to start from scratch.

The next step in the evolution of the popular will, as against dictation of the political machine, needs to be mass participation in party primaries, organized through the labor movement and its allies. This will both require and stimulate independent political organization.

ly, your editorial leaves the impression that a change in administration would mean an end to the "right to suffer."

As we work for a change for the better, we should not lose sight of our ultimate goal—Socialism. We should put this perspective before the people (or at least those of us who read the Daily Worker) as often as possible. Pyle's statement afforded a perfect opportunity to do so, even while attacking the Eisenhower Administration.

In the days ahead the problems of layoffs, automation, nuclear energy etc., will present many similar opportunities. We should not waste them by limiting ourselves to the most immediate aspects of the problems. The liberal wing of the Democratic Party, the New York Post and the trade union press are perfectly capable, in general, of dealing with current problems in that fashion.

—GEORGE HATFIELD.