

CP Hacks Are Selling The Same Old Goods

By C. SPEARE

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The Communist Party supporters who welcomed the 20th Congress as a move toward inner-party democracy and realism may have found the Jefferson School's Summer Forums somewhat disenchanting.

At the July 17 forum, William Mandel and David Goldway—discussing "What Should the Attitude Be of American Marxists Toward the Soviet Union?"—shut their ears to Khrushchev's solo and sang a hymn to the Soviet Union: that "great land of socialism . . . where every worker owns his own house and the word 'mortgage' isn't in the dictionary. . . . Where every child has a high school education, and where a high school diploma is equivalent to a United States university degree."

They averred that due to the downgrading of Stalin by the present "courageous collective leadership," only a few more minor legal reforms were necessary to ensure absolute democracy for the people. "If this is true," came a query from the audience, "how do you explain the Polish workers' uprising in Poznan?"

Barely had the final "n" in Poznan been uttered when Stalinists in the crowd shouted the speaker down with cries of "Trotskyite — disruptor—hair-splitter," etc. Chairman Mandel, ostensibly shocked, protested: "Brothers, sisters, please! this is a democratic meeting! Quiet, please!"

When an embarrassed hush had settled over the audience, and the speaker prepared to continue, Mandel interrupted: "Now that order has been restored, I declare the speaker out of order!"

Truly, the new "democratic" Stalinism in action!

A short time later, Goldway chided "those among us who were not independent enough before" as now being "too independent."

SEEKING NEW FRONT

Two weeks later, John McManus, Max Gordon and David Goldway prophesied in "What's Ahead for the American Left?" to a dwindling audience (only about one hundred people attended). McManus, editor of the *National Guardian*, reshaped his "McManus Proposals" which had called for "A Third Party, based on the principles of socialism."

These proposals, it may be recalled, when delivered before the American Labor Party's State Committee meeting in December 1954, were unanimously rejected, since in effect, they would have meant nothing more than dissolving the ALP and reorganizing it under a new name. The same holds true today, of course, but McManus isn't troubled with the insignificant problem of having no forces, no support, let alone no voters, to justify such a proposal.

Max Gordon gave a boost for the independent Stalinoids: he thought the CP was in pretty bad shape, while "The enormous [sic] groups of uncommitted socialists [sic] around such publications as the *American Socialist*, the *Monthly Review*, and the *National Guardian*, have not been discredited, but are growing organizations with fresh ideas." He speculated on the possibilities of an NAACP-ADA-Liberal coalition splitting a left wing off the Democratic Party and combining with organized labor to form a labor party, for which a united Stalinoid Front ("modernized Communist Party") would act as a nucleus.

Several speakers from the floor gave this line a further play by identifying themselves as writers for these Stalinoid publications and congratulating the CP for its new forthright position, while speaking of their own increased circulation. (This latter claim is quite untrue, according to this writer's best information: all these publications have experienced a declining readership in the last year.)

At the August 14 forum (by this time the attendance was down to about 50) Carl Marzani and David Goldway wound up the series with a discussion of "The American Road to Socialism."

Marzani put forward the following

new-hatched theory: "The H-bomb has made war an impossibility—see, for example, the stalemate in the Suez crisis; if war is impossible, then it follows that civil war is impossible; therefore, we cannot have a proletarian revolution . . . Marx and Engels said that peaceful transition to socialism was possible if socialists could be voted into the government in large numbers. . . . At the historic Twentieth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, the great socialist leaders of the Soviet Union reaffirmed this principle. . . . The American road to socialism will be a slow, progressive one."

A speaker from the floor asked just wherein this new line differed from Browder's "Progressive Capitalism." Marzani answered: "The only difference between Browder and me is that he said he would shake J. P. Morgan's hand, and I wouldn't, because I know he wouldn't offer it to me in the first place!"

NOT WITH THE TRUTH

When questioned about the future of the American Communist Party, Marzani asserted that "The Communist Party has no intentions of dissolving. . . . It will reform itself into a more democratic structure; but I can't say this will happen in two or three years—it may take twenty-five or thirty years. The Communist Party has been and still is the *only* active, militant, and effective socialist organization in the United States."

He went on to say that since 1923 the CP has issued about 500,000 membership cards. "Of these," he said, "twenty-four out of every twenty-five either dropped out or were expelled [this would make the current membership around 20,000—C. S.] because they didn't like what was going on or because they couldn't adapt to iron party discipline. . . . I wonder if maybe it wouldn't have been better to have less discipline and more members."

During the discussion period, an LYLer demanded that the CP renounce "the defensive position it has held the last ten years and take up an offensive one. What the Communist Party must do is establish a mass socialist party that can defeat the capitalist class, immediately!" This "novel" idea was greeted by a round of applause from the Stalinists.

To sum up the Summer Forums, it is apparent that the CP is floundering around without any real policy at all: no electoral objectives, no activities, and a progressive organizational deterioration. There is confusion and disagreement among the leadership, and the rank and file wonder about things in hopeless bewilderment.

Only one thought prevails: a continuing, fantastic, fanatic devotion to Moscow, based on lies and illusions. Meanwhile, crises deepen and foundations crumble; Stalinism cannot live with the truth.

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