

'I TAKE A FRESH LOOK' (5)

The Way Out of Our Crisis

By ALEXANDER BITTELMAN

WHAT EFFECT did the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union have on the developing crisis in the American Communist Party? First and foremost was the bright vision of the emerging period of peaceful co-existence and competition with its countless new opportunities for maintaining world peace and achieving friendly, collaborative relations between states of different social and political systems. This new period was also shown to be pregnant with opportunities for the growth of the socialist countries and for the spread of democratic, socialist and communist tendencies and movements in other countries.

This was the vision that came out of the 20th Congress. It projected the coming of a new stage in the development of the Socialist countries in which the socialist capacities of the new social system would fully unfold. The repressive functions of the state would diminish while its economic-managerial and organizational functions on all levels of government would expand. Material and cultural standards of the people would rise with increasing tempo and all the great qualities of Socialist democracy would find full expression.

By its very nature of the 20th Congress was bound to inspire true democrats, Socialists and Communists everywhere. Communists especially were bound to be stimulated by the fresh look which the 20th Congress took at the world to themselves take a fresh look at their own programs, policies and organizations. Es-

pecially at the new national approaches and roads to peace, democracy and socialism in their respective countries.

BUT IN OUR OWN Party it did not work out quite like that. The bright new vision tended to become somewhat obscured for the American people and for the American Communist Party by certain aspects in the reappraisal of Stalin's role and in the fight against "the cult of the individual." The good effects of the new orientations of the 20th Congress were weakened and partly nullified by these aspects of the reappraisal. This may not have added much to our difficulties but it certainly did not help. Especially since the implementation by the Soviet Party of the new orientations of the 20th Congress was very slow and hesitant for a considerable period of time. We now know that differences of opinion in the leadership were mainly responsible for that.

Our difficulties were undoubtedly increased by the disorientations around the events in Hungary. Those in the United States who sought the defeat of Socialism in Hungary and the restoration of capitalism certainly succeeded for a time in so confusing large numbers of American Communists and sympathizers that the Party crisis became aggravated, if only temporarily.

It should also be realized that the economic problems and difficulties confronting some of the Socialist countries and the slow and painful process of raising living standards, much exaggerated by all the mediums of mass communication in the U. S., con-

tributed towards maintaining an atmosphere unfavorable for the rapid overcoming of the Party crisis.

IF THE DISCUSSION in the these articles so far on the origin and nature of the Party crisis is basically sound, as I believe it is, this in itself indicates the way out of the crisis. We must lift ourselves to a new plateau because only then and only from there can we begin a new and fresh advance towards the building of a mass Marxist-Leninist party. The road to such a party does not lie in a straight line. Nor will it come about by adding to the present party structure, brick to brick and member to member.

The road to the eventual emergence of a mass Marxist-Leninist party in the U. S. lies through the adoption, by the Communist Party, and all socialist and Marxist-minded currents of a correct attitude and relationship to the trade union movement. This movement is today the effective and recognized leader of the American working class and will continue increasingly in this role for an entire historical period. Only from the full recognition of this historic fact can there emerge a correct relationship between the Communist Party and the socialist-minded currents and groupings, on the one hand, and the trade union movement, on the other.

In accord with this recognition we must achieve a new definition and concertization of the vanguard role of the Communist Party as it is to be unfolded and practiced in the daily life and

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progressive struggles of the American people.

Theory and program must be gone into freshly and thoroughly. It is America's future we are concerned with, the road to this future from here and onward until the eventual socialist transformation of American society. Without the Marxist-Leninist theory we will be unable to find the road; and in the process of finding it, the theory itself will become enriched and undergo a further development. This is true too of a path to the eventual emergence of a mass Marxist-Leninist party.

THE POSSIBILITY of the coming together of all Communist, Socialist and socialist-minded forces in the country is clearly in prospect. Exchange of views and ideas on current problems will in time be supplemented by common efforts to explore and define the American road to Socialism. As the stage of agreement on basic questions approaches, the task of forming a new political party of Socialism will be on the order of the day.

Above all, Communists and Socialists must keep their eyes open to the vital and decisive role which progressive trade unionists will eventually play in the rise of a mass party of Socialism.

Today's sincere and militant fighters in the trade union movement for the promises of the New Deal and for the Welfare State as what they believe to be the complete answer to America's basic social problems, are the future backbone and leaders of the eventual socialist transformation of American society. They will be the decisive leading force first in the struggle for the Welfare State and then for the peaceful and constitutional transition to Socialism when that state shall have exhausted its welfare potentialities within the limits of capitalism. This too lies on the road to a mass Marxist-Leninist Party.

Finally, we must attain a correct relationship with the progressive mass movements of the allies of the American working class—the Negro people, the

working farmers, the professionals, the anti-monopoly sectors of small and independent business. This relationship must be based upon the recognition of the effective leading role of these movements in their respective fields.

It has to be agreed that in the building of an influential Marxist-Leninist party, it is impossible to go on as of old, with the old methods and ways. Our crisis persists precisely because we have not yet found the new orientations, ways and methods.

But we have the decisions and resolutions of the 16th Party Convention, and these will prove of inestimable value in finding the new ways and attitude. Let us put these instruments to full use.

In seeking solutions to the new problems, it is well to keep in mind that the American people will make good use of the experiences of other people in social progress and socialist transformation. In doing so, the American people will accumulate experiences and produce social achievements that will be of inestimable value to the rest of mankind.

(Tomorrow: America's Future)

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