

Interview Two Communist Members of Socialist Forum

By A. B. MAGIL

THE two Communist members of the 40-man national committee of the American Forum—for Socialist Education sat in the office of the Daily Worker Friday and talked about what, in their opinion, the Forum is and what it's not.

The Forum was launched May 13 with a statement of purpose issued by its chairman, Rev. A. J. Muste, dean of American pacifists. The statement declared the Forum was organized "to stimulate study and serious, untrammelled discussion of the problems of socialism in the U.S." Its national committee includes persons with differing views on socialism and other questions.

The two Communist members—Doxey A. Wilkerson and Dr. Albert E. Blumberg—emphasized that "we are not speaking for the American Forum, but merely giving our own views." They assailed attacks on the Forum by Sen. Eastland's Internal Security Subcommittee.

"It's one more evidence of the vicious anti-democratic character of the Eastland inquisitors," said Wilkerson, who is a noted Negro Marxist educator. "One day they attack the Forum and another day they smear Dr. Linus Pauling for opposing H-bomb tests."

"So many people who aren't members of the Forum or in sympathy with it," added Blumberg, "have opposed the Eastland Committee attack and supported Mr. Muste's rejection of their inquisition."

"The purpose of the attack," said Wilkerson, "is to stifle at the outset what promises to be an agency to further increased discussion of socialist ideas in our country. It's to be expected that they would seize on the presence of two Communists on the national committee as a pretext to try to kill the Forum itself."

BLUMBERG, a former philosophy instructor at Johns Hopkins University and later a leading figure in Communist Party legislative activity, said the widespread publicity given to the formation of the American Forum had stimulated interest in many circles in the need for greater discussion of socialist ideas as well as the importance and the right of Communists to participate in such discussion.

Apart from Eastland, has the American Forum encountered any other opposition?

"Well," said Wilkerson, "as was to be expected, the N. Y. Daily News called on the Eastland committee to 'investigate' the Forum. Then there was the N. Y. Times with its well known concern for socialism. The Times editorially expressed unhappiness that the Forum permits Communists to par-

Forum Meets Here Wednesday

The first public meeting of the American Forum for Socialist Education will be held Wednesday at 8 p.m. at the Communist Church, 35th St. at Park Ave.

Chief speakers will be A. J. Muste, chairman of the American Forum; Dorothy Day, editor of the Catholic Worker; Dr. Stringfellow Barr, educator; and Conrad Lynn, civil right attorney.

Questions from the audience will be answered by a panel of American Forum national committee members. They will include Dr. Albert E. Blumberg, Bert Cochran, David Dollinger, Farrell Dobbs, Clifford T. McAvoy, John T. McManus, Joseph Starobin, George Stryker and Doxey A. Wilkerson.

Purpose of the meeting is to protest the attacks on the Forum by Sen. Eastland and his Internal Security Subcommittee, and to explain the Forum's purposes.

participate. The Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation took the same position as the Times.

"It should be added that slanted reporting in the Times and N. Y. Post has helped confuse the question of the Forum's purpose."

Asked to "unconfuse" this question, Blumberg cited the May 13 statement issued by the Rev. Muste. "The statement is quite explicit," he said. "It makes clear, first, that the American Forum is a forum and not an organization with a platform or program.

"Second, the statement makes clear that the members of the national committee have come together not for the purpose of 'uniting' or 'merging' but in order to discuss. In particular to discuss the difference among the national committee members in the hope of clarifying the meaning of socialism for our country."

"The American Forum is a national committee, not a membership organization," Blumberg continued. "It believes discussion can be most fruitful if it operates on the principle of not excluding expression of any point of view. All decisions of the committee require agreement of all the members."

WILKERSON added: "The one common premise shared by all members of the national committee is the desirability of free and full discussion of the problems of socialism in the U. S. on the basis of not excluding any viewpoint."

Speculations about the American Forum's representing a new "united front" or alignment were refuted by Dr. Blumberg. "It is not a new socialist alignment nor is it intended to serve as a vehicle for such an alignment. By the same token the Forum is in no sense an alternative to or substitute for the Communist Party or any other

existing socialist organization."

As for the kind of activities the American Forum will carry on, Wilkerson cited the statement of purpose. "The Forum plans to conduct public as well as informal discussions and to publish material on problems of current and long-range interest. The Forum also hopes to stimulate similar local committees for the discussion of socialist ideas."

Wednesday's meeting of the Community Church will be the American Forum's first public activity.

This reporter asked Wilkerson and Blumberg to say what was their attitude as Communists toward the Forum.

"As Communists," said Blumberg, "Doxey and I welcome the opportunity to participate in the American Forum and to help further its purposes. We are confident that the views of Communists, as expressed in the policies adopted at the Party's recent national convention, can contribute a great deal to the content of the discussion."

"It should be made clear, however," said Wilkerson, "that our participation in the Forum in no way limits our right or the right of the Communist Party to criticize the views of other participants or the organizations to which they belong. In fact, the effective expression of our criticisms and differences is essential if the process of discussion is to achieve clarity on the meaning of socialism for our country."

New Trial for Matles Asked

Acting on the basis of last Monday's Clinton Jencks decision by the Supreme Court, attorneys for James J. Matles, organization director of the United Electrical Radio & Machine Workers, yesterday asked for a new trial involving Matles citizenship.

Judge Walter Bruchhausen had revoked Matles' citizenship after a six-week trial on the basis of a claim he concealed membership in the Communist Party when he obtained his citizenship in 1934.

Matles attorneys are basing themselves on the high court's ruling that if FBI informer reports are used as a basis for evidence, the reports to the FBI must be available to the defense. The testimony against Matles was mainly from paid informers who testified they conferred with the FBI and submitted reports.