

# A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT

EVERYWHERE Communists are stressing an old but often forgotten aspect of Marxism—that there are many paths to socialism and that the cause of socialism requires completely independent workingclass parties.

More than that, it is clear that many past practices and relationships among Communists were harmful to democracy and socialism. Certainly the exclusion of the Yugoslav Communists from the Cominform helped only the foes of socialism and peace.

Today the solidarity of labor is being enhanced by the frank and critical relationships among Marxists. It was in this spirit that the two biggest Communist Parties in the capitalist world—the Italian and French—this week demanded from the Soviet leaders more fundamental and more logical explanations of how violations of law and democracy became so widespread under the Stalin regime. The London Daily Worker reprinted Howard Fast's column from our paper and expressed similar criticism.

More than a year ago we pointed out that the Soviet leaders' bold initiative in admitting their errors regarding Tito necessitated a basic review of the past by Communists everywhere. And ever since the 20th Congress of the Soviet C.P. this newspaper has been trying to draw those conclusions so necessary for advancing both democracy and socialism. We have called upon Communist leaders in socialist countries to explain the real origins of injustices that arose and threatened the existence of socialism there.

We have differed in this regard with some readers and prominent contributors to our paper. We are strengthened in our conviction that only such an independent position helps the cause of labor and socialism by the way the big business press is fearful of the new Communist attitudes. For example, a dispatch to the N. Y. Times from Paris yesterday complains that the French C.P. statement will "bring the French Communists domestic political benefits."

Naturally the working class will benefit as the foreign agent slander is demolished. It was never true of course. But it was always necessary to refute it, and far more effectively than has often been done.

A relationship of equality and of free and critical attitudes among working class parties and among socialist countries is bound to strengthen the bonds of internationalism. This was what the Soviet Communists stressed when they healed the breach with Tito. This is part of the historic significance of the 20th Congress.

Blind loyalty to socialist countries was harmful. Critical loyalty to socialism, based on understanding and on truth, is helpful to socialism.

Criticism of various developments in the Soviet Union and the Peoples Democracies does not mean becoming anti-Soviet or anti-socialist, as some thought. On the contrary, this was a service to socialism and gave greater confidence in the ability of socialism to overcome errors.

For the American people, who, in their vast majority, are not ready to accept socialism, the new trends in the Communist movements are nevertheless all to the good. They have helped ease world tensions considerably. They have strengthened the cause of peace and democracy. They have brought us to a new era where basic issues of social systems can be settled not in the wasteland of atomic war but in the arena of peaceful competition and co-existence.