

Howard Fast's Call to Surrender

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

DEMORALIZED by the novel, complex, and dismaying problem of the Stalin cult of the individual and its Hungarian aftermath, which scraped off his thin veneer of Marxism and uncovered the bourgeois nationalism lying not far beneath it, Howard Fast continues in the capitalist press (NY Times, June 9) to urge upon the workers his counsels of confusion and despair. "Woe is me!" he cries, "all is lost!", and he calls upon the workers to turn their backs against the Soviet Union and to discard the Communist Party. Obviously, such a course would be the road to worker chaos and the destruction of organized Socialism, were the militant workers naive enough to follow it, which they are not.



Fast's way and the way of the revolutionary workers lie in opposite directions. Instead of throwing in the sponge, as Fast does, these workers as a great body are resolutely tackling the problem of the Stalin cult and all it implies, determined to master it, just as they have done upon innumerable other occasions in their long and bitter struggle to Socialism. Had they historically shown the confusion and weakness now being exhibited by Fast, the labor movement would have long since been destroyed under the relentless attacks of capitalism.

Howard Fast makes a hopelessly incorrect analysis (or more properly, he emits an emotional outburst) regarding what happened in the USSR in connection with Stalin's gross bureaucratic excesses and crimes. His conception that Socialism was

thus destroyed in that country will not bear a moment of serious investigation.

Fundamentally sound was the statement of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the effect that Stalin's wrong policies, however injurious, did not alter the foundations of the Socialist system in the Soviet Union. It is upon this realist basis that the revolutionary workers of the USSR, as well as those in other lands, are dealing with the situation and are systematically repairing the heavy damage done by Stalin in his later years. They are not falling victims to the "Everything-is-ruined!" conception of Fast and others like him, which could only lead the Socialist world to disaster.

As Fast, with his emotionalism (instead of Marxist analysis), does not know what happened in the USSR under the Stalin cult, neither does he understand why this development took place. So far as he tells us, the Stalin cult, with its damaging infringements upon democracy, its reactionary anti-Semitism, its brutal imprisonments and executions, and its gross inefficiencies for Socialism, might just as well have fallen from the sky. Unfortunately, however, more than emotion and moral indignation are necessary in order to understand and to solve the peoples' intricate problems in their immeasurably difficult and complex struggle for Socialism.

The Stalin cult had as its main economic and political background the supreme need of the Soviet people to maintain a high degree of unity, discipline, and mobilization ever since the regime was founded in November 1917, in order to guard themselves against the ever-threatening menace of capitalist encirclement and destruction. This strong discipline, which by-and-large was accepted by

the people as a revolutionary necessity, was directed against the long-powerful internal enemy, towards the swift industrialization of the country and the creation of vast new armies of engineers and skilled workers, against the unprecedented military assault from Hitler's fascist hordes, and against the threatening outbreak of a great atomic war, provoked by the drive of American imperialism for world conquest.

It was under these tremendous urgencies, which long required military or semi-military discipline, that the Stalin cult, under the pretext of necessity, and aided by a slackening of Party vigilance, managed to entrench itself and to work its deadly harm. Truly all this was very exceedingly bad, but to characterize it, as Fast does, as constituting a degeneration of Socialism, necessitating the repudiation of the Soviet regime and of the various Communist parties around the world, is a monstrous distortion and a blow against the world Socialist movement.

Militant workers in all countries, in their various specific conditions, have protested against the Stalin cult abuses, and they are acting accordingly in a constructive way to remedy them. In all the Socialist countries a new wave of democracy is welling up, in harmony with the lessened needs for the dirves and "iron" disciplines of earlier years, to correct persisting bureaucratic abuses, and to realize the growing potentials of Socialist democracy and prosperity. In the capitalist countries also, the Communist parties, in the same progressive spirit, are likewise curing themselves of the characteristic weaknesses of the Stalin cult period: such as a

(Continued on Page 7)

FOSTER

(Continued from Page 5)

dogmatic application of Marxian-Leninist theory, a widespread lack of political initiative, and an uncritical attitude towards other Communist parties and the countries of Socialism.

Thus, these parties are turning to account the lessons of the Stalin cult; they are not using this development to destroy their movement, as Fast wants them to do.

With his gigantic body of readers in the Socialist countries, Howard Fast has very definite leadership responsibilities to the workers of the world. It is about time, therefore, that he should wake up to this fact and begin to act accordingly. The revolutionary workers will be sure to hold him fully responsible for his present reckless course. For by no stretch of the imagination can his current slanders against the Soviet Union and attacks upon the Communist parties be considered as anything else but playing directly into the hands of the class enemy.