

HOWARD FAST, MAINSTREAM EDITORS EXCHANGE VIEWS

The current issue of Mainstream contains an exchange of views between the editors and Howard Fast on the latter's leaving the Communist Party.

In a statement called "My Decision," Fast describes the socialist system in the Soviet Union as "socialism without democracy, without trial by jury, habeas corpus or the right against self-incrimination."

He ascribes anti-Semitic policies to Soviet leaders. As for the Communist Parties, he has come to believe, he says, that within their "very structure and historical development we know then in recent

years, there is an incurable anti-thesis to the social democracy which they name as their ultimate goal."

In their reply, the Mainstream editors tell why they consider Fast's statement "a disservice not simply to the Communist Party, not just to the cause of socialism, but to the American progressive movement as a whole."

"They say that so much of his article is devoted to Stalin and Khrushchey—that one might think Fast "was resigning from a party to which he never belonged: the Soviet Communist Party."

They quote non-Communist scholars like Professor G. D. H. Cole and Isaac Deutscher as bringing more "thoughtful" on the recent Soviet developments than Fast.

The contradictions which Fast sees between the Communist Parties, the editors say, "have appeared, not as inherent, but rather in a fresh and positive form, in the internal life of various Parties and in the course of their fraternal contacts as independent organizations."

They conclude with the observation that the differences between Fast and his former comrades, sharp as they are, should not be "exacerbated so that a hostile chasm lies between them. When all the contenders in the present discussion realize how much they have in common, the editors conclude, the "bridge can be rebuilt sooner than they may imagine."



FAST