

# FIVE-WAY FORUM IN PHILA.

## DEBATES SOCIALIST PATHS

PHILADELPHIA—A symposium on "What's Ahead for the American Left" drew an eager-listening crowd of some 250 to the New Century Clubhouse in spite of a rainstorm.

The meeting was chaired by an American Friends Service committee member, Lyle Tatum. Speakers were: J. A. Davidson for the Independent Socialist League, Thomas Carey for the Socialist Workers Party, M. Levine of New York for the Socialist Party—Social Democratic Federation (now combined), Joseph Roberts for the Communist Party, and Charles Walker for the Fellowship of Reconciliation and its magazine, Liberation.

Composed mainly of partisans of the groups represented by the speakers, the audience was notably courteous in the hearing extended each, something which could not have happened even a year ago but which indicates the groping among the various socialist groups and others, like the Fellowship, for some basis of unity.

Each speaker, while reflecting the approach of his particular group and voicing sharp differences in judgment over such matters as the Hungarians uprising and to what degree the Soviet Union is a socialist country, conceded there were large areas in the struggle for a socialist America in which the various groups had similar aims.

These included support of the labor movement and the struggles of the Negro people, propaganda for independent political action by Labor and its allies, and upholding civil liberties.

While the SP-SDF, ISL and SWP speakers considered as the "next" step ahead for the Left that of uniting the socialist-thinking groups as the basis for a mass socialist party in this country, Roberts put forward the Communist Party contention that the mass party—if it is to be really effective—cannot be established merely by a new organization built out of the "splinter" groupings of the Left.

"It is the opinion of the Communist Party," he emphasized, that there are 'left' currents operating in the labor movement, in Negro life, in the civil liberties field and

in the cultural sphere. It is therefore incumbent on us in discussing what is ahead for the American 'Left' not to limit our thinking to what is ahead for American believers in, and fighters for, Socialism.

"Progress in the struggle for Socialism in the U.S. and the successful socialist reorganization of society will depend on the role that the American 'Left' plays in the movements and struggles of the people, the program and leadership they develop."

Roberts declared that the Communist Party disagreed with those who hold the ONLY possible form of political realignment that will advance the American working class towards Socialism is the establishment of a new mass Labor-Farmer party.

"This rigid assumption," he pointed out, "can only serve to hamper the actual development of Labor's independent political action. At the present moment the tasks of the 'Left' is not to prejudge the form of eventual political realignment.

"The expansion of Labor's independent political role and the efforts to transform the Democratic Party help create the pre-conditions for a new political alignment under Labor's leadership, whatever its form.

"At the same time we believe that extensive education for the formation of a new party led by Labor will help influence developments within the Democratic Party. Eventually, in one way or another Labor will build a political home for itself and its allies."

Roberts pointed out that "irrespective of these viewpoints the struggle to build the people's anti-monopoly coalition and to achieve its effective independent political expression should be carried forward regardless of which major party controls the administration and Congress. . . .

"I believe," he concluded, "That it is possible for the American 'Left' to unite on a common minimum program for united action, while continuing to discuss and debate those questions of theory and program on which there are disagreements."