

Does Socialism Limit Freedom?

A discussion entitled "Socialism—U.S.A. and USSR" has been conducted in recent issues of the magazine MONTHLY REVIEW, a Socialist publication. The editors of POLITICAL AFFAIRS were invited to participate in this discussion, and their answers, reprinted from April issue of MONTHLY REVIEW follow:

In answer to the questions which you asked Political Affairs to join in discussion, we would make the following comments. We agree with you, as any thoughtful person must, that "short answers must necessarily take a good deal for granted that ought to be explored and explained."

And, as you say, just as your "ideas about these questions are not fixed and frozen," so our own views and subject to change with the changing needs of the people and the country.

We think that the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Eugene Dennis, expressed this idea well when he said recently:

"When and how socialism will be brought about is up to the majority of the American people. We Communists believe that ultimately some kind of workers' and farmers' government, based on a united and class-conscious working class and

a militant alliance of labor, the Negro people and the toiling farmers, will effect the transition from capitalism to socialism.

"Likewise we are sure that this will be a truly American government. It will be headed by an American president and act through an American Congress which would be—for the first time in our nation's history—genuinely of, for, and by the people. And as for us Communists, we desire, and advocate that this people's democracy shall be established by constitutional and democratic processes. (Political Affairs, February, 1956, p. 10.)"

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THE AMERICAN people's decision for socialism will take place after socialism has been triumphant in many countries. Our own country, in such a new world situation, will face nothing like the problems of the wars of intervention and the Hitler invasion. There will be no other power capable of organizing a Project X, or a "Crusade for (capitalist) Freedom" against a socialist America. These changed circumstances will vastly alter the forms of social development here as compared with other countries. With this conception of the situation as a background, our answers to the questions are as follows:

Question 1: Under what circum-

stances (if any) should civil rights in a socialist America be denied to anti-socialist individuals or groups who are not practicing, actively planning, or inciting violence?

There should not be any curtailment of the civil liberties of such groups. But the key achievement of socialism in the field will be that it will bring about the fullest flowering of civil liberties and political freedom, first and foremost for the overwhelming mass of the people who are denied these liberties in the fullest sense today.

Question 2: Can the outlawing of propaganda which incites racial or national hatred be accomplished in a manner consistent with the First Amendment? If not, should the Constitution be amended, and how?

Racist propaganda should be outlawed now; there is no need to wait for a socialist America for that. This would no more challenge the First Amendment than do libel laws.

Question 3: Is the leadership of all or virtually all public bodies by one party inevitable in any socialist state? If not, would it nonetheless be desirable in a socialist America?

In general, the assumptions in the question indicate a certain confusion on the relation between parties and democracy. The number

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Facts

business:

... The average (share of profits) for 1926-29, representing the four years of largest incomes in the early part of the period ... was about 21 percent. The average for the years 1950-53, also a time of prosperity, was about 24 percent.

The profit figures used by this government agency minimize both the share of profits and the extent to which it has increased. Even so, the figures show how the corporations are making a bonanza out of the militarized boom, on a scale exceeding the halcyon 1920's.

The other side of the story is that this is at the expense of the people. The other side is that this builds into the economy unbalance, instability, and the makings of crisis even more surely than the speculative excesses of the 1920's.

CORRECTION: In our column of March 25, certain lines were omitted in the description of Marx's theory of crises. The section in question should read:

"Profits and industrial expansion limited only by the ability to intensify the exploitation of labor and by the productive power of society—the continued realization of these gains limited by something totally different,—etc."

Socialism

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of parties does not indicate the breadth of democracy. There can be many parties and no democracy, one party and full democracy, two parties and precious little democracy. American bourgeois propaganda places the two-party system as the height of democracy. This ignores facts. The multi-party systems to Western Europe are no less democratic, and may be more democratic, than our two-party system.

In the Revolutionary period of our own history, and for some years thereafter, the general assumption was that democracy meant unanimity. Then, in our Republic, there were no political parties, and, as is well known, Washington, for example, was twice elected President without opposition.

A socialist society necessarily is led by the vanguard party of the working class, the party of Marxism-Leninism. This, however, is not the same as one party rule, nor does it mean the non-existence of dissenting or opposition parties. In a socialist America there may well be a coalition of popular and democratic parties sharing jointly in state power. And in a socialist America we believe that there will also be freedom for the functioning of a dissenting or opposition party so long as it does not engage in efforts to overthrow the government by force and violence.

Question 4: Is the control of mass communications by a single party inevitable in any socialist

state? If not, should some degree of access to and control of mass communications be guaranteed, in a socialist America to non-socialist and/or anti-socialist groups and individuals?

It is inevitable that a single party shall control the mass media; this flows from what has been said above. There will be access, we believe, to such media by other parties or groups (and no doubt there will be such even in an America that has made the democratic decision for a new society). There will be subject, we think, to the decisions of public bodies expressing the will of the vast majority of the people.

Question 5: In a socialist America, to what degree (if any) should the government or governing party seek to impose administratively its aesthetic and ideological standards on cultural and scientific workers and on the general public?

There will be no "administrative imposition" of cultural standards in a socialist America. Of course, cultures reflect their social bases; there will develop socialist standards out of the people's needs and not out of any "administrative imposition." "Administrative imposition" is the bugaboo of anti-socialist propaganda coming for generations from capitalist apologists who so easily ignore the visible and concealed imposition of pro-capitalist standards in the culture of today. Under socialism, the people will seek and require higher standards than are permitted today; they will encourage art and science, and artists and scientists with a fullness and variety and freedom impossible today. Then our national genius will truly flower.

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IN CONCLUSION: all who advocate socialism face a creative challenge in finding the ways to make socialism more meaningful to our fellow - Americans. Obviously this requires popular education for socialism and especially participation in the mass struggle, joining hand-in-hand with the labor movement, the Negro people, the farming millions, and all Americans who seek to defend civil liberties against McCarthyism and racism, to defend peace against the war-plotters, to defend the economic interests of the masses against monopoly capital. Without this, socialism in America would remain only a matter of speculation and a utopian dream.

Boycott

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grotesque piece of appeasement and politics which should result in his immediate removal from office.

It seems that Eisenhower appointed Brownell to liquidate the Bill of Rights. The Republican Eisenhower Administration should enforce representative constitutional government in the South guarantee that the Supreme Court decision be implemented and that the federal and state officials in the South be compelled to respect the Constitution or be racked up in jail.

All of the threatening talk from