

What's New in Communist Ideas on Move to Socialism

By A. B. MAGIL

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WHEN Provost Thomas V. Garvey leaped to the rescue of the Republic and ruled that John Gates, editor-in-chief of *The Worker* and *Daily Worker* could not corrupt the youth of Queens College, New York, by addressing them during Academic Freedom

Week, he gave as the reason that Gates did not support the Constitution. And he proved it by citing the fact that Gates had been convicted under the Smith Act of conspiring to "teach and advocate the overthrow of the government of the United States by force and violence."

Garvey joined with the heads of the four other municipal colleges in expressing fervent support of the Constitution by denying free speech to someone with whose ideas they disagree and by violating the academic freedom of more than 65,000 students and over 3,000 teachers.

But the fact is that Gates, a paratrooper in World War II, and the Communist Party of which he is a leader have been actively supporting the Constitution and defending it against all reactionary attacks for many years.

Back in 1938 the first constitution adopted by the Communist Party stated in its preamble:

"The Communist Party upholds the achievements of American democracy and defends the United States Constitution and its Bill of Rights against those who would destroy democracy."

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THE NEW Communist constitution, adopted by its 16th national convention Feb. 9-12, repeats this statement and strengthens it by inserting after "Bill of Rights" the words: "particularly the 14th and 15th Amendments which guarantee equality to the American Negro."

The new Communist constitution also provides for the expulsion from the Party of advocates of force and violence, as did the 1938 version. To which the *New York Herald Tribune* remarks (March 14) with its customary editorial sagacity "Buncombe!" According to the GOP paper the fact that the Party provides for expelling advocates of force and violence only proves it is guilty of such advocacy.

In other words, if the Communists say 2 plus 2 equals 4, what they really mean is that 2 plus 2 equals 5, which is subversive not

only of simple arithmetic but American democracy.

SOMETHING NEW has been added—something of major importance—to the Communist position on the U.S. Constitution and on force and violence. The basic approach has now been extended to embrace the ultimate goal of the Communist Party: the establishment of socialism in the United States.

The main resolution adopted by the Party's national convention projects a peaceful, constitutional American road to socialism. This follows from the immediate objective: an anti-monopoly coalition of workers, farmers, the Negro people, small businessmen and professionals, led by labor. The aim of this coalition would be curbing the power of monopolistic big business through political and legislative action.

This section of the resolution emphasizes the need of a political realignment to express the growing anti-monopoly movement. The resolution states:

"The possibility of the labor and popular forces gaining decisive influence in a number of key Democratic Party state organizations in the future, coupled with a growing collaboration of independent and liberal Republican political movements, may determine the form in which a new anti-monopoly party emerges. For in the long run the working class and its allies will have to have their own anti-monopoly coalition party capable of bringing about the eventual election of a people's anti-monopoly government."

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THE ESSENTIAL elements of this proposal are not new; they go back to the thirties when the Communists were advocating a coalition farmer-labor party. However, there is now greater flexibility in regard to form and tactics. The resolution warns against assuming that "the only possible form of political realignment is a labor-farmer party." It continues:

"The expansion of labor's independent political role and all serious efforts to transform the Demo-

cratic Party by ousting the Dixiecrats and undermining the influence of big business, help create the pre-conditions for a new political alignment under labor's leadership, whatever its form. At the same time the widest and most extensive education for the formation of a new party led by labor facilitates labor's current struggle to influence the situation within the Democratic Party."

The resolution carries the thread further: from the people's anti-monopoly coalition to the election of a people's anti-monopoly government, and then beyond.

"Such a government could curb the repressive economic and political powers of the monopolies and deprive them of the ability to promote violence to frustrate the will of the people. Under such conditions, whenever the majority of the American people become convinced of the necessity of a socialist reorganization of society, they would be able to advance to their goal along peaceful and constitutional lines."

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THIS approach to the method of establishing socialism also has its roots in the past: in the anti-fascist people's front policy of the 30s, in the 1938 constitution's specific exclusion of advocates of force and violence; in various statements during the past 10 years by William Z. Foster and Eugene Dennis; in the party program adopted in 1954.

However, while the 1954 program stated: "The Communist Party advocates a peaceful path to socialism in the U. S.," the recent convention added the concept of a transition that can be realized under the American Constitution.

At the same time the resolution makes clear that "socialism can be established only through a radical and fundamental extension of American democracy and a revolutionary transformation of all property relations." The document emphasizes that "ALL roads to socialism are roads of mass struggle, waged under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist vanguard."

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THE resolution also points out that the emergence of socialism in the postwar period into a world system embracing one-third of mankind, as well as other changes, "make possible a great new trend towards unity among socialist-minded people. . . . The new features of independence and mutual criticism in the relationship among Communist Parties also tend to remove barriers between Communists and other supporters of socialism.

"In the past we tended to assume that all that was worth while in other socialist currents and groupings would inevitably flow into our own organization. This assumption was always incorrect and should be replaced by serious and painstaking efforts to assist in the eventual development of the broadest possible unity of all socialist-minded elements.

"The perspective of an eventual united socialist movement or party must be viewed as the climax of a series of struggles and developments. It is not a quick and easy solution to the common problems of all socialist groupings, or to the specific problems of our own party. Such an approach would both weaken our party and distort this perspective. Least of all could this objective be advanced by any tendency to weaken or dissolve the Communist Party. On the contrary, it is essential that the Communist Party strengthen in every way its organization, mass work and influence."

(The third and final article in this series will appear next week.)

their origin at least, "private problems." In the much wider realm of "public problems," where errors can be speedily corrected by legislative and administrative means, things are going very well.

The gigantic task of "rehabilitation" was completed long ago. I have met a number of people who spent many years in the prison camps, and it has been one of the most deeply emotional experiences of my life to note that not one of them lost their basic faith in the Soviet regime. I wish someone would compile a volume of the stories of these people. It should astound those who think that the picture was one of unrelieved gloom or despair.

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NOW to a point which I think is just as widely-relevant and just as often overlooked as the "historical and geographical factors" mentioned earlier. Call it the NATO factor for short.

Many Western left-wingers who are critical of the "Soviet attitude" as regards Hungary and various other matters, external or internal, are also critical of NATO, the Eisenhower Doctrine, and the continual rejection by the Western powers of Soviet proposals for disarmament and the lessening of international tension (including the withdrawal of NATO and Warsaw-pact forces alike from other countries).

In other words, they condemn one party in the international arena for menacing another

party; but they also condemn the menaced party for actions and attitudes which, if one probes deep enough, could be shown to be a natural reaction to that menacing.

"Living as I do in the Soviet Union" I venture the opinion that if these critics could by an effort of the imagination put themselves in the position of a people on whom, so to speak, the guns of NATO are trained, they might swing round to the opinion that the actions and attitudes they criticize are, in the circumstances, not merely justified but inevitable.

To me it seems that practically every phase of Soviet life, internal or external, is affected by the "international climate." If, for instance, the leaders of the Western powers were to change their minds and find it even "politically expedient" to agree to new "Summit talks" in the Geneva spirit of 1955, I am certain that this would have an immeasurably beneficial effect on the "progress of democratization" and all the other matters on which there is a division of opinion among progressives abroad.

During the thaw in the cold war that followed the first Geneva conference there was some excuse for those campaigners for peace and friendship with the Soviet Union who wanted to rest on their oars. Today, it seems to me, there is no such thaw, and no such excuse.