

# FAST HITS BACK AT 'LIE' BY SOVIET

## Author Denounces 'Maniacal Castigation' of Him by Moscow Newspaper

Howard Fast struck back yesterday against the "maniacal castigation" of him published in Moscow this week.

In a statement recorded for broadcast to the Soviet Union, the American author denounced the attack as "a contrived and shameless lie." He said that as far as he could remember not even Hitler had been so reviled in the Soviet press.

Mr. Fast remarked afterward that he had been surprised by the vehemence of the denunciation printed Thursday by *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the chief Soviet literary newspaper. More than a page of what normally is a four-page newspaper was directed at Mr. Fast, who in 1953 won a Stalin peace prize. In 1957 he announced his resignation from the Communist party of the United States.

Once hailed in the Soviet Union for his writing, Mr. Fast was attacked Thursday as a swindler, an opportunist, a savage and a deserter. He was condemned as a "militant Zionist" and described as cheap, cowardly, dishonest and indecent.

Terming the article hurling these names "a most ominous document in every sense," he declared:

"The sight of a great and powerful nation provoked to this disgraceful public display of bad taste and hooliganlike obscenity cannot be written off as official imperviousness to the obligations of civilized behavior."

He suggested that the article meant that other writers, "perhaps in Russia as well as in other places," had also been "critical of many of the practices" of the Soviet leadership.

Addressing himself to his "many millions of readers in the Soviet Union, people who have cherished my work and who have loved it," he said the literary newspaper was lying.

"For many years, this organ has been the craven and willing tool of the party leaders in their war against free expression in the arts and in their war to subjugate independent thinking among all writers of Russia," he added.

Mr. Fast read his statement here for broadcast by Radio Liberation in Munich. Radio Liberation, the free voice of emigrés from the Soviet Union, beams programs exclusively to the Soviet Union in Russian and sixteen other Soviet languages.

The author had been denounced once before by *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, but not in such scathing terms. The earlier article, entitled "Deserter Under Fire," was published last August, seven months after Mr. Fast had made known his renunciation of the party.

The latest attack was regarded by students of Soviet affairs here as an indication that the August article was not enough to discredit Mr. Fast and that an all-out indictment was thought necessary to demolish his reputation in the Communist world.