

Max Analyzes 20th Congress

PHILADELPHIA.—More than 150 Philadelphians braved a heavy rain last Friday to join with Alan Max, Managing Editor of the Daily Worker, in a discussion of "The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Its Meaning for Americans." Their deep concern with the issue was reflected in the dozens of questions addressed to Mr. Max, and to the panel of the two who joined him for the question-and-answer period, Mr. Joseph Roberts, Chairman of the Communist Party of Eastern Penna., and Mr. Thomas Nabried, Negro and Communist leader of the 4th C.D. The meeting was chaired by Robert Klonsky, Editor of the Penna. Worker.

"I don't see how we can be anything but inspired by what they are doing there," said Mr. Max, in closing his speech, "inspired to examine our own mistakes; to overcome our isolation from, and to establish unity with, the democratic currents in American life; and to work for the greater spread and influence of Marxist ideas. . . . These observations came at the end of a carefully planned presentation by Mr. Max, lasting more than one hour.

MR. MAX began by pointing out that the long and complex discussions at the Congress had dealt with three "main fields of activity." Deliberate concentration by the press here on only one phase of the Congress' thinking, he noted, had helped to obscure the tremendous significance of all these "main fields."

IN THE FIELD of international affairs, Mr. Max stressed the unequivocal assertion by the Congress—("affirmed with a vigor heartening to all")—that "war is not inevitable in this period." This position he described as "bringing up to date" the thesis of "the in-

evitability of war under imperialism," a change made possible and necessary by the great events of the last three years. He also laid emphasis on the firm insistence by the Congress that "all countries will take their own road to Socialism, each basing itself on its own conditions and history."

Of special significance to many thousands of Americans already concerned with the "American path to Socialism" was the Congress' firm rejection of the idea that the struggle for Socialism inevitably means civil war. On the contrary, it laid the strongest emphasis on the prospects for the transition to Socialism by peaceful and constitutional means—an idea, Mr. Max observed, that Communists in the United States have been "asserting for years, perhaps not loudly enough, nor often enough. . . ."

As to the field of Socialist construction, Mr. Max indicated that, while they had taken note of "lags" to be corrected, they had also projected great new goals of economic, social and cultural advances to be accomplished during the next five years. Such goals, he asserted, constitute a "new kind of challenge to all the capitalist countries, our own in the first place—the challenge of peaceful competition in production for the people's welfare. . . ."

A MAJOR portion of Mr. Max's presentation was devoted to the third great field, even though that field had in fact occupied "only a minor part of the discussions" at the Congress itself. He explained his own extended handling of the question—"the problem of collective leadership and democracy in the Communist Party, and in every phase of life in the Soviet Union"—by noting that the new developments in this field were having

the profoundest effects everywhere.

THE 20th CONGRESS, said Mr. Max, set in motion a great "phase of self-examination, self-criticism, self-correction, on the eve of a new advance." Its deliberations came as "the culmination of a three-year process, started during and immediately after the 19th Congress in 1953"; and he saw as the goal of that process "the re-vitalizing of Socialist democracy, the re-instatement of fearless criticism and self-criticism as the law of development of a Socialist society."

"Later history," said Mr. Max, "looking back on this period, will see it more calmly, will pay tribute to it as the first revolution in history that ever corrected itself—because it is the first Socialist revolution." To reactionaries, he observed, such a profound re-evaluation, such a "war against dogmatism, doctrinairism, and all ideological obstacles to advance," could only mean "splits, crises, catastrophies." But how," he asked, "how can self-criticism lead to anything but greater strength?"

Limiting himself severely to what he could speak of without speculation, at this point, Mr. Max dealt with the specific infringements of collective leadership, and of democratic rights, that have begun to come to light in connection with Joseph Stalin's "one-man rule," and more recently in such countries as Hungary. Without denying any of the established facts, he rigorously refrained from "guessing at" anything else, asserting that it is only from those who are themselves ruthlessly exposing these infringements that the truth can and must come.