

Readers Comment on Fast Interview

Believes Author Had Good Reason

Dear Editor:

I have just completed A. B. Magil's interview with Howard Fast in the weekend Worker and though I am not usually a letter writer, I could not let this pass.

Let me make it clear first that I am not planning to leave the party. I do not sympathize with Mr. Fast and his reasons for leaving. The things he found wrong with the party are the things I am staying in to correct.

As to Magil's interview, how often have Communists talked about injustices in America only to have someone hurl at them: "But things are worse in Russia"? How irrelevant the argument is. (And sadly, how true!) But now the shoe is pinching the other foot. Howard Fast tells of the things he sees wrong in the party and what does Mr. Magil reply? "But isn't it true you've suffered from censorship imposed on you by the capitalist interest...?" The relevancy of the question escapes me.

Had Magil stuck to his questioning, he might be excused. But Magil must make his own editorial comment on what Fast has to say, and instead of exposing Fast, Magil himself becomes the center of his verbal strip tease.

"But doesn't Fast overlook the fact," Magil asks, "that the Soviet system . . . took control of the economic machine from the capitalists and landlords and placed it in the hands of the workers and peasants?" Please Mr. Magil, show me the peasants and workers running the Soviet government.

If the workers of the USSR really controlled their government the many crimes that have been perpetrated by their leaders could not have occurred.

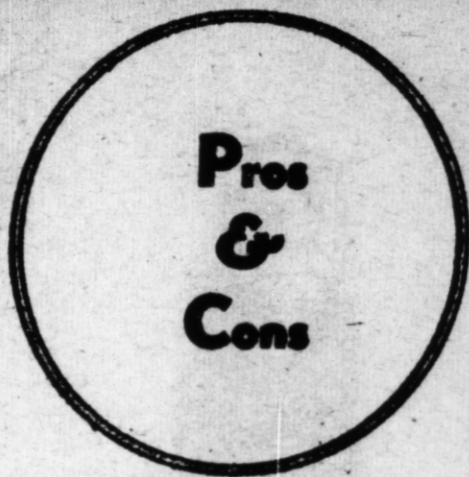
Perhaps before and during the war it was impossible for the Soviet Union to have a democratic government. But the war has been over 12 years now and we are awaiting more signs of a change in internal policy. Until the Soviet Union enforces

Bill of Rights guaranteeing freedom to everyone, the people will not control the government.

Injustice exists in this world. It exists in capitalist countries and it exists in socialist countries and one does not justify the other. Disagree with Fast's leaving the party if you wish but do not deny that his reasons are good.

Fight the lynching of Negroes in our south but just as vigorously oppose the murder of Jews in the Soviet Union. Protest the censorship of Mr. Fast's books in the United States but don't stand by silently when the Soviet censors go to work. Speak out against frame-up trials engineered here against progressives but don't look away when the Soviet Union executes people after closed-door trials. Call for an end to voting restrictions in both the United States and the Soviet Union. Point out the injustices of capitalism, but don't assume that because a country has a socialist economy it has a democratic government.

-N.S.



About Correctness And Classes

Dear Editor:

It is difficult within the confines of a letter to deal adequately with the questions raised in the Magil-Fast interview published in the Sunday Worker on March 10. Howard Fast gives as the main reason for leaving the American Communist Party his dissatisfaction with the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Certainly, the American Communists are not responsible for the actions of the Soviet Communists. Fast finds many positive things in the American CP. Nevertheless, he states, "that he cannot go back to writing within the censorship of local or international movement." Fast admits that no commercial publisher would publish his books, and that he had been barred from magazines by the capitalist interests. The fact is, that it is the CP and other progressive organizations who encouraged and aided the sale and distribution of his books.

He complains that he cannot write in terms of "correctness" but so far, it is the capitalist censorship which bars his publications, because he doesn't write in terms of "correctness" the way they see it, and not the other way around.

★

THE AMERICAN CP is making serious changes in its approach to freedom of artistic creation. So long as Fast continues to write on the side of truth, in its deepest sense, on the side of life and humanity, he need not fear that the "pervading question of being correct" will stifle him.

In trying to explain his action Fast declares: "What we witness in Russia is not democratic or humanist socialism. . . . It is totalitarian socialism." The November Revolution in Russia in its world significance overshadows the French and American Revolutions. For the first time in the history of mankind, the exploitation of man by man has been abolished.

The newborn state living through civil war, famine, intervention, the most devastating war, and inheriting low industrial development, illiterate and extreme backwardness, transformed itself into the most powerful industrial state, raising the economic and education-

al standards of its people to a tremendous extent. The appearance of the Soviet Union had the most profound effect on the people's throughout the entire world, people living in capitalist, feudal, and colonial countries.

The fact that the American people enjoy social security, and that the Negro people slowly are making progress in winning their right is due in no small measure to the existence of the Soviet Union.

★

FAST continually speaks of morality and democracy. At the present time there is no absolute democracy or absolute morality. Or has to ask himself what class interests our existing morality serves? In the main the prevailing morality in the capitalist world serves the capitalist interests. In the Soviet Union where crimes have been committed, and violation of Socialist democracy have taken place, the prevailing morality serves, in the main, the basic interests of the toiling people.

Capitalism commits thousands of crimes daily, and it seeks to perpetuate a system which produces them. Socialist societies are struggling to put an end to them and remove the causes that create them. An absolute and universal human morality is possible in a society which is not only classless, but where the



state and organs of compulsion disappear.

The Soviet Union is introducing changes in its judicial procedures, changes toward democratization and liberalization; not perhaps with the speed we would like to see. A great deal remains to be done in this connection. At present, despite tremendous progress, the economic standards in the Soviet Union are not very high. As the economic and cultural standards of the Soviet people will keep on advancing, there will be a further growth of democracy.

However, socialism is visualized as a society of abundance, with wide range of democracy in the area of civil liberties and individual rights. It seems to me, therefore, that it would be more accurate to describe the Soviet Union as a country where foundations of socialism are built, and a country moving in a direction of complete socialism.

-F.R.

