

Kremlin Hurls Abuse, Anti-Semitism at Fast

The Soviet press on Jan. 31 achieved something of a record for vituperation, unmatched since the days of Stalin, in an attack on Howard Fast, the American author who recently resigned from the Communist Party.

The attack, unusual for its length, took up more than one full page in the normally four-page *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (*Literary Gazette*) of Moscow, and was replete with personal insults and anti-Semitic overtones.

Among the choicer epithets used to describe Fast were: "swindler," "opportunist," "savagage," "deserter," "indecent," "immodest," "discourteous," "cheap," "cowardly," "dishonest" and "wall-eyed."

Though Fast attributes his

disillusionment with the Kremlin regime to the Khrushchev revelations and the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution, the Soviet article claims that the Jewish-born author's love of Israel was the real reason. Fast, it says, confused religion with Marxism and consequently "had never been a member of the party" in the true sense. He is said to be such a patriot for Israel that he resented the USSR's strong diplomatic opposition to Israel's invasion of Egypt in 1956. "Fast got indignant at the sharpness of the [USSR's] note to Israel," the article asserts without citing any evidence, "but he did not get indignant at the fact that Israel started the aggression."

"The truth is," the attack continues, "that Howard Fast

is not a Marxist, not an internationalist, but a militant Zionist who camouflages the insistent preaching of national exclusiveness with platonic words about fraternity."

A dispatch from the Jewish Telegraph Agency, printed in the Feb. 7 *California Jewish Voice*, notes that "at no time since his disenchantment has Fast indicated he had become a Zionist." The dispatch further points out: "The [Soviet] article made no references to Fast's demands for an explanation of the destruction of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union, the slaughter of the Yiddish writers and the continuing refusal of the present Soviet regime either to rehabilitate the honor of the murdered writers or to permit cultural autonomy to Russian Jews."

The length and scurrility of the attack on Fast is explained by the fact that for over a decade he has been presented to the Soviet and East European peoples as America's leading writer. His books have tremendous popularity there and his defection from the CP undoubtedly stirred people there more than it did Americans. For seven months the Soviet press was silent on Fast's resignation. Delegates to the World Youth Conference in Moscow last summer, however, made the news known and the Soviet press was forced to mention it — in a restrained manner compared with this current blast.

For good measure the Soviet article accused Fast of selling out for capitalist gold and writing a "sour, eclectic hodge podge" for profit.

The day after the article's appearance, Fast made a statement, which was broadcast to the Soviet Union by Radio Liberation, the U. S.-supported propaganda station. He branded the accusations as "lies" and suggested the vituperation reflected Kremlin concern with criticisms inside the Soviet Union similar to his.

While the capitalist press hailed Fast's resignation from the CP, as it hails any public defection from that party, some of the more reflective journals criticize Fast for not having attacked the Soviet Union or Marxism. For example, the *Christian Science Monitor's* book review of the *Naked God* (Dec. 12, 1957) complained: "... Mr. Fast sees the enemy not in the system but in the party. He demands that 'the Communist Party in the form we know should cease to exist,' which not only is an unrealistic proposal, as he himself admits, but strengthens the impression that he still believes in Marxism as a desirable end."

London Busmen Want Action But Union Chief Says No

By Peter Fryer

Special London Correspondent

The leaders of the powerful Transport and General Workers' Union have managed for the time being to hold back the growing dissatisfaction among the 50,000 men and women who drive and conduct London's fleet of scarlet-painted buses. General secretary Frank Cousins, whose reputation as a Left is beginning to wear very thin indeed, persuaded a delegate conference this week to refer their wage claim, which has been rejected out of hand, to arbitration.

It was a narrow shave for Brother Cousins. It took him over twelve hours to get the arbitration decision through, and he had to use all his powers of persuasion. Early in the meeting a resolution asking for authority from the union's executive for a strike was defeated—but it received only five votes less than the two-thirds majority constitutionally required. By the end of the meeting Cousins had turned this division of opinion into a two-thirds majority for his tread-softly policy. The capitalist Press hailed this decision as "a remarkable triumph" for him. Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express*, which not long ago was howling at him as a Left, cooed its praises of this man's moderation, good sense and statesmanlike approach.

WON'T SETTLE FOR 1/5

It is not likely that arbitration, which Britain's Tory Government has in effect thrown on the junk-heap, will give the underpaid busmen anything like a satisfactory award. They are asking for 25 shillings (about \$3.50). The chief arbitrator has

a reputation for giving "five bob"—i.e., five shillings. It is hardly likely that the workers will be content with a mere one-fifth of their claim.

Unlike the building workers and dockers, the London busmen have not yet built up a rank-and-file movement. Militant opinion itself tends to be confused, and garages that in the past were lively centers of militant opinion are not yet bringing to bear the pressure that used to be a feature of London busmen's rank-and-file movements.

Clearly there is a great need for proper preparations for struggle. One demand that is likely to become popular is for the busmen to seek the support of dockers and—above all—the men who operate petrol tankers. One thing is certain: the London busmen could not win on their own. They might fight valiantly for six weeks or more—but if other sections do not extend a helping hand, they can ultimately be crushed.

To hit the Tory Government where it hurts, the Labor movement will have to make sure that a London bus strike would be extended to other forms of public transport. This prospect no doubt terrifies Mr. Cousins and his colleagues; but if they want to win something more than chicken-feed for their members, they will have to fight to win, or else forfeit the confidence of their members.