

RED-FRONT SCHOOL LOSING STUDENTS

Jefferson Organization Has Smallest Roll in 12 Years

—Party 'Turmoil' Cited

The Jefferson School of Social Science, which has been listed as a Communist front organization, said yesterday that its enrollment for the fall term had slumped below 400, the lowest in its twelve-year existence.

Dr. Howard Selsam, director of the school, expressed the belief that the decrease had been caused by "turmoil" within the Communist movement over the downgrading of Stalin and by "persecution" of Communists by the Government.

In the middle Forties, when the Stalinist line was strong, the Jefferson School said it had between 4,000 and 5,000 students. The decline set in even before Nikita S. Khrushchev, Soviet party chief, exposed Stalin as a murderer and blunderer last February.

When the fall term opened this week in the nine-story converted loft building at 575 Avenue of the Americas, the attendance was "between 300 and 400,"

Until this term, the school billed itself as "the foremost Marxist-Leninist institution in the Western Hemisphere." Its latest publicity, however, describes it as being primarily interested in the "Democratic traditions of Jefferson and Paine, of Lincoln and (Frederick) Douglass, of Debs and Haywood."

It contends it is dedicated to spreading the "principles of scientific socialism and Marxism and advancing the cause of socialism in our country."

Omission of "Leninism" reflects the deep dissension in Communist ranks. A majority of the Communist leadership wants the party to sever its formal ties with the Soviet Union and adopt a more "American" coloration.

Most of the Jefferson faculty reportedly support this stand.

That trend is bitterly opposed by William Z. Foster, national chairman of the party and a Stalinist stand-patter. While agreeing that the party should be "Americanized," Mr. Foster has assailed what he calls "a strong Right tendency" to downgrade Lenin and to "transform the Communist party into an amorphous 'Marxist' party."

The Jefferson School was declared a Communist-front organization by the Federal Subversive Activities Control Board last year.

The proposed new Communist party line, as projected in a recent political resolution by the national committee, was assailed and defended last night in a forum at the school.

'Peaceful Coexistence' Cited

Joseph Starobin, former foreign editor of The Daily Worker, who quit the Communist party two years ago, said the resolution failed to take into account that the United States and Russia were engaged in "peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition."

Mr. Starobin, who has been attacked by Mr. Foster as one of the influences responsible for the party confusion, said there could be "no revival of the American Left within the framework of the Communist party."

The Communist party might contribute to the revival but "regeneration will have to come from other forces," he said.

John T. McManus, managing editor of The National Guardian, leftist weekly, said the resolution "put too much emphasis on supposed errors of the past." He called it "a document of abdication" and said it would have the effect of "dismembering and dispersing the American Left."

The resolution was defended by Sidney Stein, a member of the national committee, who conceded that the document might be amended before it was submitted to the party convention next February.