

# REDS RENOUNCED BY HOWARD FAST

Writer Traces Party Break  
to Khrushchev Speech

By HARRY SCHWARTZ

Howard Fast said yesterday that he had disassociated himself from the American Communist party and no longer considered himself a Communist.

Mr. Fast, the winner of a Stalin International Peace Prize in 1953, has generally been considered the leading Communist writer in this country. His books were once sold in large numbers here, and in recent years many of them have been widely translated and sold throughout the world, particularly in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. Until last June he was a columnist for The Daily Worker.

Apparently troubled by the need to end his political affiliation, Mr. Fast at first was reluctant to be interviewed. When he agreed, he defined his position in these terms:

"I am neither anti-Soviet nor anti-Communist, but I cannot work and write in the Communist movement."

Nikita S. Khrushchev's secret speech last year exposing Stalin was the chief factor leading to

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his present position, Mr. Fast said.

"It was incredible and unbelievable to me," he said, "that Khrushchev did not end his speech with a promise of the reforms needed to guarantee that Stalin's crimes will not be repeated, reforms such as an end to capital punishment, trial by jury and habeas corpus. Without these reforms one can make neither sense nor reason of the speech itself."

In a column in *The Daily Worker* last June, Mr. Fast first indicated the shock and anger that the Khrushchev speech had produced in him. He ceased to contribute to that newspaper after that, but did not then break with the Communist movement.

## Tells of 7-Month Struggle

Mr. Fast indicated he had spent the months since last June in fighting out with himself the question of his future. He asserted that he admired Communist party members as dedicated fighters for peace, but that he personally felt he could no longer submit to Communist discipline.

Revelations of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union also influenced his decision. "I knew little about anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union before the Khrushchev speech," Mr. Fast said. "That little troubled me, but I repressed my doubts. Then the article appeared in *The Folkshtime* last spring telling what had actually happened. It was not an easy thing to live with."

*The Folkshtime*, a Yiddish language Communist newspaper in Poland, printed the first news from a Communist source of the repression of Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union and of the jailing and execution of numerous



The New York Times

**GIVES UP COMMUNISM:**  
Howard Fast, American author, who said yesterday he could no longer continue with Communist movement.

Yiddish writers in that country under Stalin.

Asserting that he had been a devoted Communist because of his belief in democracy, equalitarianism and social justice, Mr. Fast said that his anger at the Khrushchev speech was particularly sharp because of his experience with the American judicial system.

"I was tried and convicted in 1946 under circumstances that made a mockery of our pretensions of justice here," he said. "But while that was happening, I was consoled by the belief that in the Soviet Union a person would receive justice. I can no longer believe this."

Mr. Fast was convicted in 1946 on a charge of contempt of Congress arising from his refusal to produce the records of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee before the House Un-American

Activities Committee. He served three months in jail on the charge.

## Moved by Events in Poland

Recent events in Poland have moved him deeply, Mr. Fast said. "Poland has been an inspiration. Poland has been a living proof of the dream of many people that socialism and democracy can exist together."

Mr. Fast said he would not repudiate or return the Stalin International Peace Prize he received in 1953.

A Communist sympathizer since the early Nineteen Thirties and a Communist party member for almost a decade and a half, Mr. Fast declared: "I am not ashamed of anything I have done. I fought against war, Negro oppression and social injustice. I am proud of my books. I regret that in some of my political articles I went overboard—but by and large, I stand by what I wrote."

Mr. Fast said that in *Daily Worker* articles written last spring, he had called for Communists to take a new look at the Soviet campaign against cosmopolitanism, a movement he now regards as a form of Soviet anti-Semitism directed against Jewish intellectuals there, as well as at the party ban on psychoanalysis and its condemnation of writers like James T. Farrell, author of the Studs Lonigan books and other works of fiction.

"I was supported in raising these questions by John Gates, Alan Max and Joe Clark," Mr. Fast said. Mr. Gates is the editor in chief of *The Daily Worker*, Mr. Max the managing editor, and Mr. Clark the foreign editor. These three are generally regarded as leaders of the Communist party's "anti-Stalinist" wing.

Tall, dark and thin, Mr. Fast explained his original interest in communism as born of the poverty in which he grew up after his birth here on Nov. 11, 1914.

Mr. Fast estimated that more than 20,000,000 copies of his books had been printed and distributed throughout the world.