

600 at Chicago Symposium on Future of American Left

CHICAGO, Oct. 8.—Hailed as a significant step toward open, public discussion of socialist ideas, a large gathering here joined in a lively symposium on "What Next for the American Left?"

In the spirited exchange of views, Rev. A. J. Muste, secretary emeritus of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, stated that the meeting itself was "a contribution to the rebirth of the Left in the U.S., with a public discussion in which the Communists, among others, are involved."

More than 600 people attended the meeting in Temple Hall, 322 S. Marshfield. Each of the five speakers made opening statements, questioned each other, answered questions from

the audience and made brief closing statements.

While much of the discussion dealt with the Soviet Union, author Harvey O'Connor vehemently called for a return by the Left to American problems to "study America if we are to win the right to speak to the American people."

Max Weiss, national educational director of the Communist Party, flew to Chicago to take part in the forum after a death in the family of Claude Lightfoot, Illinois chairman, prevented Lightfoot's scheduled appearance.

Weiss emphasized the need for developing the anti-monopoly movement in the U. S., with labor leading in the develop-

ment of a new people's coalition, a new political realignment and a people's government moving toward socialism.

Weiss said that there are possibilities for healing the split in the socialist movement, but that this would not take place overnight or spontaneously. "It will take place in the context of common struggle on important issues, in the context of mutual discussion," he said.

Robert Pickus of the American Friends Service Committee, who acted as chairman, pointed out that the meeting was planned only as a discussion of views and not necessarily as leading toward joint action by the participating groups.

Bert Cochran, editor of the American Socialist, said that the Left is suffering today because it has been dominated for decades by the Communist Party and that the party "is too discredited for a comeback."

Sidney Lens, trade unionist and associate editor of Liberation, expressed the view that there must be a "third camp movement" which fights against imperialism and against the communists.

Pointing out that the Communist Party of the U. S. is engaged in a self-critical discussion, Weiss said that the party has "gone beyond the immodest period when we thought we had all the answers." He urged other socialist groups to probe into

their own past and present policies as well.

Cochran declared: "We can't put all the blame on history. A good part of it belongs inside the Left, its own stubborn blunders and colossal stupidities."

Rev. Muste pointed out that his organization has initiated similar discussion meetings in New York and in Philadelphia, adding that this is the beginning of many such projects.

He criticized those on the Left who attack the Communists but "do not lift a finger or a voice against the Smith Act." He was also critical of "those who cry about civil liberties in the U. S., but do nothing about the deprivation of civil liberties abroad."