

ROAD TO SOCIALISM

THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION of the Communist Party, now before the members of that organization, will undoubtedly receive careful study from friends and foes of socialism alike.

It is already clear from a first reading of this document that it contains important innovations registering the intention of Communists to improve greatly the democratic functioning of their party. Moreover, it records in language clear and unmistakable the will of American Communists to seek a "peaceful, democratic road to socialism through the political and economic struggles of the American people within the developing constitutional process."

The draft constitution establishes the right of dissent within the party's ranks and the right and organizational process for the recall of party officers. The party bases itself on the teachings of the "giants of scientific socialism," Marx, Engels and Lenin, as "interpreted by the party and creatively applied and developed in accordance with the conditions of the American class struggle, traditions and customs." It asserts the American Communist relationship to workers' parties throughout the world as one operating in "an atmosphere of independence and equality" based on the "right of fraternal and constructive criticism."

Friends of socialism will welcome, we hope, such earnestness of the Communist Party's firm intent to make major internal improvements and to make its views on the American path to socialism unequivocally clear to the American people.

As for the enemies of socialism, one can reasonably predict that they will divide between those who pronounce the Communists' constitutional proposals a conspirator's sham and those who warn that the changes are both real and a deadly menace to the country.

A case in point is the Fund for the Republic's study, coincidentally issued the same day as the party draft constitution, on the Communists' recent draft resolution. In addition to its absurd conclusion that the American Communists are making changes on Khrushchev's orders, the Fund's study complains that the "new policies, with their assumption of legality, democracy and a more American outlook" will "raise again many of the civil liberties issues which have proved so difficult in the recent past."

We do not wish to minimize the Fund for the Republic's difficulties. It has only recently been red-baited by Senator Eastland and others despite the awesome respectability of the Ford billions which sustain it, because of its support for civil liberties.

But we submit that resurgent Communist Party activity is the cause not for complaint but for happy recognition that the evil tides of McCarthyism have subsided sufficiently to make that possible. At the same time, professed friends of civil liberties, including the Fund for the Republic cannot seriously expect to deplore the denial of these liberties while they are being denied and then issue grave warnings that Communists are planning to use the freedom to speak and to think.