

What After Communism?

Earl Browder will probably pay organized society for a technical violation of its law. Many others who helped shape that squirming thing called "the party line" will be scorched by our modern witch-hunters, but many more who naively believed the communistic promise that through political slavery escape from economic slavery is possible are being left disillusioned and bewildered by the Russo-German rapprochement. For these simple emotionalists—who comprise the bulk of the socialist movement—one cannot avoid a feeling of pity. The unmasking of their ideal has left them without faith. He who is without faith is lost indeed.

Some of these will cling to the myth of socialism, on the preposterous assumption that its apparent failure is due to its betrayal, not to its inherent fallacies. It is easier to blame individuals than to seek causes. Others who have clung to the periphery of socialism for years and who have been flung off into nothingness by the centrifugal force of its recent gyrations, may take counsel with themselves. Perhaps this political scheme, with its shibboleths that are economic in sound only, is basically wrong. Perhaps the hope of the world is in an understanding of economic principle. That's it: perhaps in understanding, rather than in hate, lies the way out of social maladjustment.

But, will they be allowed to seek understanding? What of the witch hunters? Will the reactionaries, the privilege seekers, the hundred-percent supporters of the status quo, taking advantage of the revulsion of feeling toward the hypocrisy and chicanery of the Browder-Molotov-Stalin gang, permit honest inquiry into the causes of our unsocial living? Will they not, rather, seek to root out all questioning of things as are, in order that their picayune

pecuniary advantages may be continued and extended? Can any "Dies Committee" be anything but unfair?

Therein lies the danger. The cult of communism is fast disintegrating. In the bright sunshine of reason it will evaporate. But, it can be revived by being driven into underground haunts where the vermin of hate flourish to portentous proportions.