

INSIDE: Spartacist and Leninist Politics

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PEACE & POLITICS



ANTI-WAR CANDIDATES



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PEACE AND POLITICS:

I. THE LEVIN AND SILBERMAN CAMPAIGNS IN NEW YORK CITY

In New York City there are two campaigns for Congress, which even at this early date, give promise of being significant. Leslie Silberman in Queens and Hal Levin in Brooklyn are running as independent candidates for Congress. Both candidates have as their major campaign pledge the call for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. Just as significant, their campaign platforms encompass a number of working class issues in addition to the war question.

Levin, for instance, calls for raising the minimum wage to \$2.50 an hour and using the billions spent on Vietnam to eradicate poverty for public housing, a massive public works program and free education through college level. Silberman has a similar platform but in addition calls for the formation of a labor party in the United States.

Neither candidate appears to have any illusions about the election, either as to the possibility of their being elected, or as to what they could accomplish if they were elected. Rather they see the election as an opportunity to carry their platforms into their neighborhoods. They are seeking to build permanent neighborhood organizations in opposition to government policy, both domestic and foreign.

Levin is running in the same district as Herbert Aptheker of the Communist Party. Aptheker, who is an avowed socialist, is running on the Communist Party's platform of political class collaborationism. Rather than struggling to create an alternative to the two capitalist parties, the CP works within the Democratic Party and seeks to bolster the illusions of the working people about this party. No socialist or class conscious worker can support such an electoral campaign.

Levin's campaign, while it does not advocate socialism, represents a greater break with class collaboration "coalitionist" politics than Aptheker's. Its central weakness is, that unlike the Silberman campaign, it is silent on the question of the labor party.

This is the central question facing all these independent campaigns. If we are to go into the working class areas with a real program representing the workers interests, we must be able to explain how such a program can be realized. This is not a matter of spreading illusions as to whether we can get elected or what we could do if elected, but rather we must relate the present political struggle to a future struggle which can realize these demands.

We must state clearly to the working class and minority peoples that this program cannot be achieved by pressurizing the ruling class -- even by pressurizing them with independent campaigns. We must rather struggle to replace this ruling class with the rule of the working class. As a first step in that direction the working people must form their own party which fights for their interests

rather than expecting the two capitalists parties to do anything other than represent capitalist interests.

These independent campaigns should be viewed as an anticipation of such a working class party--as a step in the direction of forming such a party. This is why it is so important that these candidates relate their struggle against Johnson's war and against domestic poverty and oppression with the struggle to build a new party of the American working class. Only such a party can realize the program these candidates are advocating.

PEACE AND POLITICS:

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SCHEER CAMPAIGN

The significance of the Scheer campaign in the East Bay Area of California is not to be underestimated. Scheer received 45% of the vote in a Democratic primary fight. Interestingly Scheer received more votes in the predominantly poor Negro area of West Oakland (57%) than he did in the student intellectual community of Berkeley (54%). It was the middle class white districts which cost him the election.

Scheer's support in Oakland was due not only to the unpopularity of the Vietnam War--which he made a central issue--but also to his raising at least in a mild fashion of other questions related to the conditions of the working class in the area. Thus the campaign illustrated the potential for building a political party which unites the anti-Vietnam issue, the Negro Freedom struggle and the labor movement under a common program of struggle.

The weakness in the Scheer campaign lies in the fact that Scheer ran within the Democratic Party. Scheer sought to pawn off this question as a mere tactical matter. Certainly he got a far larger vote running within the Democratic Party than he would have as an Independent. But the question isn't votes. It is the construction of a new party in the United States--a labor party which unites the working class as a whole in a common struggle against the oppressors. Such a party cannot be constructed by sidetracking a confrontation with the Democratic Party. It would have been far more important if Scheer had taken on directly the pro-Democratic Party prejudices of the masses even if it meant a smaller vote.

The evolution of the people around Scheer is extremely important. These students and intellectuals began as the core of a student rights protest movement--Free Student Movement. Then they created the Vietnam Day Committee as a single issue anti-war group. Now they have entered the field of politics with a multi-issue program seeking to develop roots in the working class community.

This is a progressive development which symbolizes the evolution of thousands of student radicals throughout the country. But the major impediment to the future development of those around Scheer is a hostility to theory combined with a heavy dose of

empirical opportunism. This is why they do not see their current struggle as part of the process of building a labor party. This is why they shy away from a confrontation with the Democratic Party politics, not only of the masses, but also of many of the students and intellectuals the Scheer people receive support from.

It is about time Scheer confronted the question of whether all his efforts are to contribute to nothing more than a left wing base for capitalist politicians like Bobby Kennedy, which is all he is now doing, or whether it is to be the beginning of a new political life for the American working class.

PEACE AND POLITICS:

III. THE SWP AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL ACTION

From the single issue slogan of "Bring the Troops Home Now", the SWP, following the logic of its position, is actively struggling against the anti-war movement turning to political struggle. In Queens SWP supporters unsuccessfully opposed the Committee to End the War in Vietnam running a campaign in the 7th district. Following the same line, SWP supporters fought against the Tompkins Square Neighbors for Peace taking any position on the recent Weiss-Farbstein Democratic Primary fight.

The Tompkins Square situation will illustrate the SWP's political role. During the primary fight, Weiss stated that he was critical of Johnson's Vietnam policy and attempted to obtain support from peace groups. The Tompkins Square group believed it was necessary to take a position and issue a leaflet on this. At a steering committee meeting, all agreed that there must be no support whatever for Weiss. The reasoning was that both major parties do not speak for the people, but represent the interests of big business and are thus responsible for the war in Vietnam. This logically led to the next question: If we do not support Weiss should not a call be put forth for independent working class candidates as an alternative? The steering committee defeated such a motion 3 to 2, with the SWP and those supporting it carrying the majority.

The question then went before the membership. During the discussion it was pointed out that all over the country activists in the peace movement were seeking a method of political struggle and on this political level there was a coming together of the peace and civil rights movements. What was the SWP members' answer? Either the single issue umbrella, which is becoming somewhat leaky, or embarrassment. When it was suggested that in New York City we had a choice of voting for an independent party that was working class and opposed to the war -- the SWP -- what was the answer? The SWPers stated that they would accept individual support but would oppose receiving support from any peace organization. This, they felt, might split the movement!

This, of course, raises the question of exactly what kind of peace movement the SWP is seeking to build. If the peace movement can only be held together by avoiding the question of independent political action, then obviously the SWP believes once can end the war by building a common movement with those who support one or another war party. At present the SWP is dreadfully fearful of the peace movement's turn towards politics. No doubt it explains this fear to its membership by pointing out the danger that the antiwar militants will get involved in Democratic Party politics once they get involved in politics at all. But it is acting in the most unprincipled way imaginable to insist that the peace movement stay formally out of politics while the membership of these groups throw themselves into Democratic Party politics.

The only serious approach is to confront within the antiwar movement all the political questions which are raised. It is progressive that the peace groups are seeking a political solution to the war in Vietnam. Is there any other way out? It is wrong and reactionary to seek a political solution through the Democratic Party. Political struggle must be supported while Democratic Party politics opposed. The SWP does the opposite -- it opposes the step toward political action so that it can avoid a political confrontation in the peace movement.

The Tompkins Square membership saw this and the membership reversed the decision of the steering committee by a decisive vote. It voted to issue a leaflet not only against Weiss but also for independent electoral action.

DEFEND THE ALEXANDER DEFENSE COMMITTEE!

The Alexander Defense Committee, which was formed in response to the persecutions by the racist South African government of Dr. Neville Alexander and others, is now being harassed by the Johnson Administration. On May 20, 1966 a communication signed by Assistant Attorney General J. Walter Yeagley was sent to the committee asking it to register as an agent of a foreign principal under the provisions of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938.

The committee has been engaged in supplying relief for the families of those put in jail for opposing the policy of apartheid. To accuse the defense committee of being an agent of a foreign power is an absurdity. While the U.S. government speaks of its support of "Freedom and Democracy" in Africa, it seeks to prosecute those who concretely aid freedom fighters in South Africa.

Funds and other forms of aid are desperately needed and should be sent to the Alexander Defense Committee, 2nd floor south, 873 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10003.

HANOI BURNS WHILE MAO FIDDLES

The U. S. air strikes against the fuel dumps in the North Vietnamese cities of Hanoi and Haiphong are a major increase in the scope of the barbaric war against the Vietnamese people.

LBJ now talks of further steps to crush the Vietnamese revolution, while also giving his standard peace pieties -- the major point of them being that the Vietnamese people must "reason together" with their oppressors.

It becomes increasingly imperative for the workers' states, especially the USSR and China, to stand as one against U.S. imperialism in the most concrete sense -- to give the necessary military aid, and the economic support to sustain military operations and bring the Vietnamese revolution to victory.

Of course it is true that the Vietnamese revolution must be supported in all countries where revolutionaries have any means to do so as part of the overall struggle against imperialism.

However, no amount of sophistry can dénigrate the crucial role of material aid for the Vietnamese Revolution. Sellouts over the bargaining table are no worse than selling out a revolution by depriving it of food, weapons, etc., when such material aid is available, and unusual repercussions avoidable. Praising the N.L.F. as people prepared to fight for a thousand years does not mean that such people should be forced to fight for a thousand years.

Overcompensation for any previous sellout policy by adventuristic actions would also be a tragedy for the Vietnamese Revolution. It is in the firm, steady building up of the revolution, rather than it becoming a pawn in hydrogen bomb confrontations (the "Russian Nuclear Shield") that a revolutionary victory becomes possible.

The Need for Unity

The practical support for the revolution previously referred to means shipments of vast amounts of guns, clothing, food, etc., to North Vietnam, and this must be done on an increasing scale to counter the new blows (and those to come) from the U.S.

Anyone interfering with the coordinated military-economic defense of the Vietnamese Revolution is giving a helping hand to imperialism. Coordination is necessary to avoid duplication of supplies, assure supply transportation and to provide the revolution with the best weapons "mix" -- i.e. weapons balance: in terms of mobility, offensive and defensive alternatives, weather conditions, topographical factors, etc.

Against the world's most powerful nation, willing and able to commit substantial resources to crush them, the Vietnamese must have available to them the best tools of war.

Peking Review, which gives the Maoist line to the world ("in English, French, Spanish, Japanese and German editions") has printed the following in the last few months:

3/25/66 P. 5-- "Your (Russians) clamor for 'united action' especially on the Vietnam question is nothing but a trap for the purpose of deceiving the Soviet people and the Revolutionary people of the world."

5/13/66 P. 46-- "It must be pointed out that the Soviet modern revisionists who flaunt the flag of 'aid Vietnam against the United States' are the No. 1 salesmen of the U.S. imperialist 'peace talks' fraud.

6/3/66 P. 27-- "Everything the Soviet Revisionists do flows from their class interests--capitalist class. So they are in class unity with the capitalists throughout the world."

Peking has finally given us the key! Since "everything" the revisionists do is "in class unity with the capitalists" they absolutely cannot contribute to the defense of the Vietnamese Revolution. All calls for such a defense are tricks, and revolutionaries cannot attend conferences to aid Vietnam when the revisionists are present. Furthermore, the tricksters must be denounced, etc.

The above is the old game of getting a grain of truth, excluding factors that interfere with your point, and stretching this "grain" in a super-deterministic fashion so as to "nail" your opponent.

The Russian Stalinist bureaucracy, established as a social caste for at least 35 years has existed (and does exist now) as both the betrayer of the working class of Russia and its defender--but in both capacities in order to maintain its own power as the highest stratum in the workers state. In its capacity as "defender" it commanded the war-machine against Hitler--despite (and partially because of) the fact that years before it helped pave the way to Hitler's dictatorship (through its satellite German Party) by concentrating its fire against another working class party (the Social Democrats) instead of against Fascism. Even today the power of the Russian Bureaucracy rests partially on its special ties with the Russian working class.

The predatory nature of imperialism, when more openly manifested (as now) tends to put certain limits on the policy of "peaceful co-existence" as espoused by the Russian revisionists. These limits are not "guaranteed" for all time--quite the contrary, they eventually will disappear--but cries about the rotten nature of the Russian "bourgeois stratum" do not automatically evaporate them.

The Russians have been sending supplies to Vietnam, and have openly declared that they will continue to do so. It seems that for all their diplomatic wheeling and dealing that the Russian declared desire for a further military co-ordination against U.S. imperialism could be genuine. If this is so it is obligatory for the Chinese to cooperate; if not, the Chinese by trying to forge a cooperation

that was ultimately frustrated can further show up the "revisionists"-- as physical, and not just ideological scabs.

Let's face it, the current bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong by the United States are a calculated risk-- and sadly the U.S. calculated right. Johnson and his advisors were convinced that the Chinese and Russian leaderships were so tied up fighting each other, so pre-occupied with the narrow interests of their own bureaucratic existences, that the U.S. could escalate its side of the war without fear of any major build-up by the other side. This appalling lack of counter-response on the part of the USSR and Chinese leaderships leaves both North Vietnam and the NLF in an extremely vulnerable position. Already the U.S. is making clear it will follow up its bombings with new attempts to force negotiations on the basis of its military preponderance in the area. Any such negotiations would be a major defeat not only for the NLF but for the working class movement the world over.

Workers throughout the world must demand of all the workers states an all-out military mobilization in support of the Vietnamese revolution. North Vietnam must not only be supplied with the best anti-aircraft missiles available but enough bombers and fighters to make counterthrusts at U.S. military facilities in South Vietnam. The military defeat of the United States in Vietnam is the first task of the workers states. It is about time both the Chinese and the USSR leaderships stopped utilizing their ideological differences as an excuse for holding back from full commitment to this task.

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REPORT BY A HOSPITAL WORKER:

BALANCE SHEET AS LOCAL 1199 ENTERS NEGOTIATIONS

The hospital workers in New York City, organized in Local 1199 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Employees Union (RWDSU), are now engaged in very crucial contract negotiations with some of the large voluntary hospitals and medical centers in the city. The bosses have so far in practically all cases refused to bargain at all, claiming that they cannot even make an offer until the union lowers its demands.

It is necessary to examine the background of the hospital workers' struggles in order to find out where they stand today. The American working class is still to a very large extent not organized into trade unions, and the level of organization among hospital workers is still lower than among the working class as a whole. This is most applicable to the workers in the so-called voluntary, non-profit hospitals (as opposed to government owned institutions or proprietary, that is, profit-making hospitals), which employ most of the workers in the field.

For years the bureaucrats who run the voluntary institutions have insisted that all who work in voluntary hospitals must have a special dedication to serving the sick which places them above the level of fighting for improvements in their own wages or working conditions. Any such fight on the part of the workers is a stab in the back to the needy and the sick, the hospital bosses insist. Besides, the

voluntary hospitals simply don't have the money to spare, we are told. These crocodile tears, this brazen hypocrisy, comes from bureaucrats with incomes as high as \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year. This is what the millionaires on the Boards of Directors of the non-profit hospitals tell the workers who do the real work of keeping the hospital in operation for \$3000-a-year salaries or even less.

In the last decade Local 1199, a New York based drugstore workers' union, has pioneered in exposing this situation and in organizing the extremely low-paid hospital workers, many of whom have had to receive supplementary welfare payments in order to support their families. Local 1199 has had a good deal of success in its efforts. It has organized almost 20,000 workers, largely Negroes and Puerto Ricans, in non-profit hospitals in the New York-New Jersey area.

The 1959 and 1962 Strikes

Local 1199 led hospital workers in important strike actions in 1959 and again in 1962. After the first strike several hospitals were organized. The big breakthrough in organization came after the second strike. New York Governor Rockefeller at that time outmaneuvered the then Mayor of New York City, Robert Wagner, in dealing with the 1962 strike crisis. Rockefeller made a deal to end the strike, and his part of the bargain, which he kept, was the passage of state legislation which for the first time included the non-profit hospitals (although only in New York City) under the state labor relations law, thus allowing the workers to make use of state machinery in forcing the hospital administrations to participate in and abide by collective bargaining elections. Later this law was extended to the rest of the state. Using this machinery or the threat of it, the union was able to organize thousands of workers in large "prestige" hospitals in New York, such as Mount Sinai and Lenox Hill, in the 1962-63 period.

The union's part of the Rockefeller deal included agreement to a strike ban written into the state law. In addition several union leaders went so far as to back Rockefeller for reelection in 1962. The union leadership claimed that the union never had the right to strike, so that it couldn't be said to have been taken away. They not only didn't denounce the ban, they welcomed it. They didn't tell the workers that the 1962 settlement was at least in part a stalemate, in part a retreat. They didn't explain that collective bargaining and union recognition without the right to strike is a very limited gain, as so many thousands of NY city employees have found out recently. They didn't explain to the membership that the right to strike must be fought for and the strike weapon used in defiance of the government and its courts if necessary. Instead they welcomed the settlement, including the strike ban, as a total victory, and lauded Rockefeller's statemanship to boot. The anti-strike propaganda of the bosses and the government has never really been counteracted.

Time to Draw a Balance Sheet

It is time to draw a balance sheet on the growth and development of the union since 1962. The 1962 settlement was not simply a sellout, of course. In the period immediately after the state law was enacted, the union won some very important elections. The prob-

lem was that the basis for steady growth and development of the union as part of the vanguard of the labor movement was not laid. Beginning in 1964, the organizing campaign lost steam in New York City. In the last period, most of the new organization has been out of the city. Some important elections in the city were lost and many large hospitals and medical centers in New York remain unorganized. Recently practical nurses have begun to organize, but there has been no breakthrough at the as yet unorganized large hospitals.

This slowing down of organization in the city points up the weaknesses of the 1962 settlement and of the general approach of the union leadership. It is not enough to expect the workers to be union-conscious. The press and other mass media controlled by the bosses have carried out an effective and sophisticated anti-union campaign. The bosses strategy is to fight the labor movement and Local 1199 in particular, to weaken it and hold down union gains as much as possible, and then turn around and point to these weaknesses as proof of how weak and unnecessary the union is.

Many workers do not see the connection and swallow this line. While trying to hold down the gains the union is able to make, the hospital bosses try to keep the wage level in the non-union hospitals generally on a par with the organized hospitals, as a further insurance against union advances. In this situation, the support to the union given by various civil rights leaders is simply not enough, nor is the history of past struggles of the union. The workers, among whom cynicism and apathy is understandable dominant, must be shown that the union can materially change conditions now. A fighting perspective for the union is an absolute necessity, a precondition for continued growth in New York City and elsewhere.

The Current Negotiations

What does this mean in the light of the current negotiations, or more accurately lack of negotiations? The union has raised various demands, including a 30% across the board raise, and the hospitals have so far not budged. The union held a mass meeting on June 21, with several thousand workers attending. Several ideas were raised in the collective bargaining report, including stepped up pressure on the hospital administrations in the form of rank and file delegations and lunchhour picketlines in front of hospitals if necessary. The strike threat itself was not raised, but it will have to be raised before long.

As the collective bargaining machinery now stands, the unresolved issues go to "impartial" and binding arbitration. The arbitrator may of course be aware of and sensitive to many pressures. In the final analysis he is responsible for maintaining labor 'peace' in the interest of the capitalist system as a whole. Precisely in order to bolster the image of impartial arbitration, the arbitrator's decision may sometimes go against a particular employer. At any rate, regarding a wage claim, arbitration certainly cannot be relied upon to award anything much above Johnson's 3.2% guidelines. Even a 6% annual pay boost, which the union has negotiated in some recent contracts, evaporates to almost nothing after adjusting for the effect of inflation and new taxes.

Is this the kind of settlement with which the union can turn to unorganized workers, as well as its own rank and file? On what basis can we organize new workers? Of course new impulses for organization will come in any case as the bosses are forced by the logic of the class struggle to attempt to push their burdens onto the backs of the workers. The job of the union, however, is to anticipate these developments and step up the fight to organize now. Militant action, including eventual strike action as well as the mobilization of united labor support, will be necessary to secure decent improvements.

Practical Nurses and Practical Kennedy

Two incidents at the June 21 rally summarize the choices facing the union now. The rally was told that the practical nurses at Montefiore Hospital, after months in which the administration refused to bargain, were told by the bosses that the dispute must go to arbitration. The nurses simply refused to play the bosses' game. Instead they walked off their jobs and set up a makeshift picket line. The bosses quickly reconsidered and a contract was negotiated that same day.

Sen. Robert Kennedy appeared at the rally with his "reform" candidate for Manhattan Surrogate, Judge Samuel Silverman. It was not clear whether he appeared at his own initiative or at the invitation of the union. It was clear from his speech that his main aim, of course, was the bolstering of his liberal 'image' both by the promotion of his candidate for Surrogate and by a report on his trip to South Africa. Kennedy managed to squeeze in a few vague sentences on his support for the union's aims. Nothing, however, demonstrated more openly the phoniness of Kennedy's position as a great friend of the union, and his great distance from the union rank and file, than his comments in trying to explain the job of the surrogate. It was the job of the surrogate, he said, to preside over the distribution of money left to relatives after death. He quickly added that this of course didn't mean very much if you didn't have any money to leave. At the same time he tried to sell his candidate for Surrogate to these workers who are fighting for the bare minimum of a decent wage.

Kennedy's glibness and the glamor that surrounds him as a celebrity does not change the basic fact that he doesn't and can't possibly represent the hospital workers or any other workers. Will the union continue to stake its struggles on gaining the support of liberal capitalist politicians such as Kennedy? Are lobbying or federal and state legislation going to achieve what the workers are fighting for?

A Program for Struggle

The alternative to this policy is not to turn away from politics or political action. Instead we must rely on the strength of the union itself and its natural class allies. The union should devote its energies to forging, not a 'liberal-labor' alliance, but an alliance of the labor, Negro, and Puerto Rican movements on a clear working class program. Local 1199 should support independent

candidates against the war in Vietnam, and it should call for and begin to campaign for the formation of an independent labor party so that the workers can at last have their own political voice.

1199 should not simply oppose the war, it should take the truth about the war to all the workers of the city. Union speakers at neighborhood street meetings against the war, for instance, could have a tremendous impact. The union should also be in the forefront supporting all the struggles of the labor movement and the minority-groups. In this respect its record of support is good but more concrete action is required.

The union should combine this kind of political action with a militant program to secure really meaningful gains for the workers. It must campaign for all out support by the labor movement to secure these gains for the entire working class and to prevent the bosses from unloading their crisis on the backs of the workers. The union can make important new gains for its own ranks and the class as a whole only if this kind of program is taken up. It will certainly involve making many enemies, and the weight of the bosses, their government, and their bureaucratic agents in the labor movement can be expected to bear down on this kind of vanguard development. But the rank and file can turn back these enemies if leadership is put forward. There is no other path.

#

THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER

Black Power has become the watchword of the day in the Negro movement. The two words are being given a different content by virtually every Negro spokesman who mutters them whether with curses or with praise.

Wilkins and King talk of "black deaths" and Black supremacy". They conjure up an image of millions of Negroes on the verge of oppressing the whites. But the supporters of Black Power put as many different meanings in the words as the opponents. Stokely Carmichael and SNCC have a pretty concrete idea of what the concept means--at least as applied to the South. For them it means a break with the Democratic Party and the struggle to build all-black independent parties like the Black Panther Party. Floyd McKissic and CORE seem to give the term a different meaning. Independent black parties become transformed into general statements about Negro political action. The rest of-it boils down to little more than vague mutterings about "Negro self-esteem". Even Livingston Wingate, Adam Clayton Powell's man in Haryou-Act, has gotten on the bandwagon and is four-square for black power. We have no doubt that for him the concept means all power to Adam Clayton Powell.

The confusion can perhaps be best illustrated if we contrast the assessment of the meaning of Black Power in the July 5th article in the New York Times on the CORE convention with McKissick's recent speech in Chicago expressing unity with Martin Luther King. The Times referred to the Black Power concept opening up "the possibility of ~~class conflict within the Negro communities throughout the nation.~~"

"Observers at the convention said that the dislike of the Negro bourgeoisie that appeared to be spreading among the direct-action groups such as CORE and SNCC could be attributed to the belief that every time Negroes march in the South and North, get killed or beaten or arrested, the result is that more educated Negroes receive high-paying Federal jobs in the numerous new Federal agencies."

A major point of McKissick's talk was that black power meant "the developing of a black consumer bloc nationwide able to strike at any concern." Specifically such a bloc could force automobile companies to grant agency franchises to Negroes. Commendable as this may be we fail to see how the lot the the 35,000 Negroes gathered in Soldier's Field in Chicago will change if one or two wealthy Negroes achieve the American Dream of owning an automobile franchise. What McKissick advocated was exactly what has led to such demoralization among the Negro masses and bitterness among Negro militants. The masses struggle and a handful of petty bourgeois Negroes find positions within the White economic establishment. Thus we have the anomalous situation where Negro frustration with this kind of petty bourgeois business leads to widespread popularity of the idea of Black Power. Then Negro leaders like McKissick and Wingate seek to sell the very same program that led to frustration under the new Black Power label.

The crux of the matter is that the Negro movement is being torn between the King-Wilkins concept of a "labor-liberal alliance" and separatist and communal tendencies of which the late Malcolm X was a symbol. It works this way: The Negro masses become frustrated with achieving anything by simply pressurizing the liberal capitalists of the Democratic Party. They see their valiant struggles producing nothing more than a few jobs of the Negro middle class. Their own lot does not change. Thus, strong sentiments now to "go it alone" to seek a solution to their problems independent of the Democratic party the Federal Government, and whites in general.

This healthy break with capitalist politics soon degenerates into despair as it becomes evident that there is also no solution to the oppressing of the Negro mass within the narrow confines of the ghetto. The Negro can no more emancipate himself within the ghettos of the United States than could the Jew within the ghettos of Europe. It was this failure of separatism which led to the disintegration of the powerful movement built up by the Muslims which today has reverted into a mystical sect existence. The assassination of Malcolm X was a reflection of the inability of the separatists to realize Negro emancipation within the narrow confines of the ghetto-North or South.

And so it goes: The separatists yell "Black Power", urging a break from the Uncle Tom politics of the Wilkins and Kings which lead the Negro masses nowhere. The Kings and Wilkins point out the futility of seeking a solution to Negro oppression without facing up to the fact that the Negro represents only 11% of the population.

The Negro masses are absolutely right to demand power, independent power. There is no other road to Negro emancipation except the road to power. The problem is that the Negro as a Negro

cannot achieve power in the United States--cannot supplant the system which oppresses him. The Negro can only do this as a part of class power, as a part of the struggle to build a great political party of all the oppressed workers in the United States--white workers as well as Negro, Puerto Rican, Mexican and other minority peoples. It is absolutely right and essential for the black masses to demand power but they can achieve this power only as part of class power. To say anything else to the Negro masses is to spread illusions, to keep the Negro movement within this self-destructive separatism -opportunism cycle.

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NOTICE TO ALL BULLETIN OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM READERS:

We are now on a monthly summer schedule due to vacations. The next BULLETIN will be published on August 15th and will be designated the "August-September" issue. We will resume our regular fortnightly publication schedule on September 12.

Our September 12th issue will mark the completion of two full years of consistent publication. Some 42 issues of the BULLETIN will have appeared over that period. The staff of the BULLETIN is happy to announce that we plan to commemorate the occasion by transforming the BULLETIN into a printed tabloid. This will allow us to gain a wider audience for the ideas of revolutionary socialism. We are convinced that these ideas will gain a receptive hearing within the working class as well as among the already committed socialists.

DEFEND IMPRISONED REVOLUTIONISTS!

Adolfo Gilly, known for his articles in Monthly Review on the Cuban Revolution and the Guatemalan revolutionary movement, is in prison in Mexico along with five members of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (of the Posadas tendency which claims to be Trotskyist). The arrests followed a month and a half long student strike at the National Autonomous University and a demonstration on April 25 of this year that forced the resignation of the rector of the University. For three days those arrested were beaten so "confessions" could be obtained. The phony charges include conspiracy to overthrow the government and association for the purpose of breaking the law.

To fight for the release of the jailed a Defense Committee is being formed in New York. The Committee hopes to hold protest meetings, demonstrations and campaign in any way that will pressure and expose the fake "liberal democratic" bourgeois government of Mexico.

The growing list of supporters of the Committee include Paul Sweezy, of MR, James Weinstein, of Studies on the Left, Jesse Gordon and Carey McWilliams, of The Nation, the critic Maxwell Geismar, Staughton Lynd, A.J. Muste, and Dave Dellinger, of Liberation. Those who are able to help the committee by activity or with financial contributions should contact: GILLY DEFENSE COMMITTEE, Dave Dellinger, 5 Beekman St., Rm. 1033, New York, N.Y.

SPARTACIST AND LENINIST POLITICS

PART I: THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

The role of the revolutionary party is to act as a memory for the working class. The party is the receptacle which holds the lessons of the past, intervene in the current struggles of the class, and at all times keep in mind the future tasks of the class to overthrow the capitalist system. It is natural that during certain periods the bulk of the class forgets the lessons of the past and loses hold of a future perspective of revolutionary change, becoming preoccupied with affairs of the moment. However, when a party succumbs to the moment, breaks continuity with the past, loses a revolutionary perspective for the future, such a party is no longer revolutionary. It simply reflects the momentary moods of the class rather than its historic tasks.

The Marxist party is a world party and it cannot be anything else without losing its character as a Marxist party. It has been a law of political development that those parties which lose this international outlook are destroyed as revolutionary parties. On the other hand, those parties which struggle at every moment to build the world party of the working class are precisely parties most equipped to carry out revolutionary tasks in their own countries.

The Bolshevik Party, whose struggles led to the founding of the Third International, is the best example of this. The October Revolution proved that this most international party was also the party with the greatest grasp of internal Russian developments.

The most severe test of the internationalism of a political organization is how this political tendency relates to the concrete task of maintaining the continuity of the world movement through the struggle to construct an international organization. It is one thing to piously maintain internationalism in words; it is quite another thing to participate as an organic part of an international movement. The latter requires the subordination of the national party to the world movement just as the participation of an individual in a Leninist party requires the subordination of that individual to the party as a collective.

The historical landscape is covered with bodies of parties incapable of making this kind of turn. The founding of the Third International in 1919 was the first great test of internationalism in the 20th century. Many were the parties which claimed to support the October Revolution but which refused to subordinate themselves to the world party thrown up by that great revolution. Typical in this regard was the centrist section of the American Socialist Party, full of praise for Lenin and Trotsky but insistent on maintaining their organizational independence from the Third International.

The failure of the American Socialist Party to join in the world struggle to build a new international was the finish of the Socialist Party. The early American Communist Party, for all its weaknesses, became the continuator of serious socialist politics in the United States. The Americans went to school with the International and as a result learned much about their own country. It was the intervention of the International which encouraged the early Communists to break

out of an underground existence and participate in the real class struggles around them -- that is begin to seriously practise Marxism on the American scene.

With the degeneration of the October Revolution and the Third International, the task of building the world Marxist party fell to the Trotskyists, and once again history repeated itself. Literally hundreds of groups and individuals throughout the world-- Isaac Deutscher and his Polish group, the Spanish POUM, the Workers International League in England, just to mention a few, "supported" Trotsky in his critique of Stalinism but pulled back from participating in the creation of an alternative international to the revisionist Third International.

The Struggle for the Fourth International

Today we face a similar situation. Revisionism has grown up inside the ranks of the Fourth International. Three revisionist international formations have been thrown up -- Posadas' group, Pablo's group and the Germain-SWP group. A historic struggle to maintain the revolutionary program of Trotskyism has been going on since 1953 under the leadership of the International Committee of the Fourth International. The Socialist Workers Party, which originally supported the IC, deserted to the camp of the revisionists in 1963. Today the International Committee forces are led by the Socialist Labor League of England and the PCI in France. The IC is supported by a Hungarian section, a Greek section, the American Committee for the Fourth International as well as smaller groups and individuals.

Two groups outside the International Committee were invited to attend the recent Third Congress of the International Committee-- the American Spartacist group and the French Voix Ouvriere group. The reaction of both groups was the same as that of the Socialist Party centrists to the formation of the Third International and of Isaac Deutscher to the formation of the Fourth International. Both groups claimed to be in political agreement with the IC but neither group was willing to subordinate itself to the task of building a world party. Both groups will end up in the same historical dustbin as their predecessors.

The current June-July issue of Spartacist represents an attempt to justify this organization's refusal to participate as part of the International Committee of the Fourth International. As such it represents a political indictment against Spartacist itself. Nowhere in this issue is there any attempt to explain politically Spartacist's refusal to join with the IC. The entire issue is taken up with an organizational attack.

The Meaning of an Incident

What was the issue which brought about Spartacist's definitive break with the IC and what was its political significance? It began as a simple enough matter. Robertson, chief spokesman for the Spartacist group, made a critical presentation on the international report at one of the morning sessions of the Congress. Then he absented himself from the afternoon session despite the appeal of the Congress

which informed him that many delegates wished to speak on his contribution. Following this action Robertson refused to apologize to the Congress and after being given another day of full participation in the Congress during which he could reconsider, he was finally barred from attending the Congress. His whole delegation then walked out, precipitating the split.

The importance of this incident lies in the reaction of the Spartacist group to it more than in the incident itself. If Robertson and the rest of the Spartacist delegation felt they were being wronged by the IC, then clearly it would have made sense to go along with the request of the IC for an apology and then struggle as a part of the IC for a correction of this organizational wrong. This would have meant the Spartacist group had decided to compromise on an organizational matter in order to maintain its political solidarity with the international movement.

But the Spartacist delegation did not act this way. They put their own personal prestige politics, their own egos, ahead of political solidarity with the international movement. It is precisely this which gives a deep political meaning to this organizational question. How would it have been possible for the Spartacist group to have functioned as a real part of an international movement upon the return of its delegation to the United States if they put personal and organizational questions ahead of political ones? Thus the reaction of Robertson and his supporters to this incident reflected the real anti-internationalist outlook of the Spartacist group.

This is not the first time Robertson and his followers have reacted this way to the international movement. In 1962 Robertson was in a common tendency within the SWP with the founders of the American Committee for the Fourth International. A discussion broke out inside this tendency over the nature of the SWP and the tendency's tactical approach therein. It was the position of Robertson and his supporters that the SWP had already become a centrist party party and on the basis of this assessment the Robertson group had developed an alienated, hostile attitude towards both the party and its rank and file membership. It was the position of the International Committee, with which the tendency as a whole was then collaborating in the struggle against the SWP leadership, that the nature of the SWP would be determined by the course of the struggle itself. The IC felt it was incorrect to write off the SWP when the essential task was to seriously struggle to win this party over to a revolutionary course.

The IC asked the Robertson group to accept its discipline and apply this tactical course, guaranteeing to Robertson full rights to urge a reevaluation of tactics and assessment within the IC. But Robertson could not subordinate himself to the International. Rather he split from his political cothinkers, holding that his own personal independence and tactical position took precedence over political solidarity.

Lenin on Individualism

This relationship between the individual and the collective

was at the roots of that fundamental split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks which politically prepared the October Revolution. Then too the split came over what seemed to be a small organizational point. However, as it worked out, the content put into this difference over a rule which defined the relationship between the individual party member and the party was in time to evolve as the difference between reform and revolution.

This is what Lenin stated about this struggle: "Taken by itself, this difference, although it disclosed shades of principle, could never have called forth that divergence (actually, to speak unreservedly, that split) which took place after the Congress. But every slight difference may become a big difference if it is insisted on, if it is put into the foreground, if people set about searching for all the roots and branches of the difference. Every slight difference may assume tremendous importance if it serves as the starting point for a turn towards definitive mistaken views, and if these mistaken views, by virtue of new and additional divergences, are combined with anarchist actions which bring the party to the point of a split." (One Step Forward, Two Steps Back)

The difference Lenin discussed here was between his formulation which referred to "personal participation in one of the Party organizations" and Martov's, which referred to "regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organizations." Lenin explains that Martov's formula in fact served "the interests of the bourgeois intellectuals, who fight shy of proletarian discipline and organization." Lenin continues: "No one will undertake to deny that it is precisely its individualism and incapacity for discipline and organization that in general distinguishes the intelligentsia as a separate stratum of modern capitalist society."

The great split between Bolshevism and Menshevism had begun with an ostensibly minor divergence over rules. The Menshevik approach to this organizational issue turned out to reflect an adaptation to the "individualism" of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. The inability of the Mensheviks to break with the Russian petty bourgeoisie led to its counterrevolutionary role during the October events.

The split between Robertson and the IC also began with the question of rules. Robertson's reaction to this divergence over rules reflected once again the inability of the petty bourgeois intellectual to break with "individualism". The history of Menshevism tells us the future of Spartacist.

Let us look further at the way in which Spartacist itself assesses its split with the IC to perhaps gain a deeper insight into the political character of this group. Having broken with the IC, how does Spartacist characterize the IC? It refers to the "monolithic bureaucratism of the IC and especially of its chief section, the SLL of Britain." It further concludes that "The Healy group has demonstrated a fundamental incapacity to build a world revolutionary movement." This task is now "up to Spartacist"! In a letter circulated by Spartacist, written by Harry Turner, a leading Spartacist, this theme is repeated but this time the IC leadership is characterized as "bureaucratic

centralism".

Trotsky on Battling Regimes

Once again the Spartacists reveal themselves to be repeating, this time almost verbatim, the errors of earlier petty bourgeois formations. This time we refer the reader to Trotsky's important work on the Shactman fight, In Defense of Marxism. In 1940 an unprincipled faction was formed within the SWP led by James Burnham, Max Shactman and Martin Abern. While all three of these individuals claimed to hold different opinions on the nature of the Soviet Union -- a central question in dispute -- they all agreed as to the nature of the SWP leadership. This they characterized as "bureaucratic conservatism".

Of the three constituents of this faction, it is Abern with whom Robertson and the Spartacists have most in common. Abern claimed to agree with the SWP majority and Trotsky as to the nature of the Soviet Union. Yet he blocked with Burnham -- who denied the working class character of the USSR -- in a common struggle against the "Cannon regime". So today Robertson declares war on the "healy regime" within the IC and declares to all and sundry that he will cooperate with them in creating an alternative "international". This approach illustrates a complete abandonment of the Marxist method. As Trotsky amply illustrated in the case of Shactman's and Abern's "bureaucratic conservatism" concept so we repeat to Robertson with his "bureaucratic centralism": Show us the class roots of this bureaucracy.

This is the way Trotsky put it to the minority in 1940:

"Cannon and his group are according to the opposition 'an expression of a type of politics which can best be described as bureaucratic conservatism.' What does this mean? The domination of a conservative labor bureaucracy, shareholder in the profits of the national bourgeoisie, would be unthinkable without direct or indirect support of the capitalist state. The rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy would be unthinkable without the GPU, the army, the courts, etc. The Soviet bureaucracy supports Stalin precisely because he is the bureaucrat who defends their interests better than anybody else. The trade union bureaucracy supports Green and Lewis precisely because their vices, as able and dextrous bureaucrats, safeguard the material interests of the labor aristocracy. But upon what base does 'bureaucratic conservatism' rest in the SWP? Obviously not on material interests but on a selection of bureaucratic types in contrast to another camp where innovators, initiators, and dynamic spirits have been gathered together. The opposition does not point to any objective, i.e., social basis for 'bureaucratic conservatism.' Everything is reduced to pure psychology."

(In Defense of Marxism, pg. 142)

As Spartacist knows full well, the British Socialist Labor League has made greater strides than any other Trotskyist group the world over in building a party based upon the proletariat. No other revolutionary group in the world has anything to compare with the young

working class base of the SLL. The SLL has gained the support of these young workers precisely because of its uncompromising struggle against the bureaucratic leadership of the Labour Party and the trade unions, a bureaucracy deeply rooted in the capitalist class itself. We defy the Spartacist to explain to us the social roots of the SLL leadership's purported bureaucratism. We demand that Spartacist explain how "bureaucratic centralists" could build the healthiest revolutionary proletarian party in the world. Unless Spartacist does so we will be forced to conclude with Trotsky that failure to make a class analysis of an opposition tendency "is sufficient to demonstrate the petty-bourgeois character of the opposition,..."

Abernism has a dual character. On the one hand the Abernite seeks to build a personal group on the basis of organizational gripes against the proletarian leadership. On the other hand having no politics himself, the Abernite is forced to adapt to alien political currents. Despite fervent attempts to assure himself and his followers of his political orthodoxy -- that his differences are purely organizational -- the Abernite inevitably ends up in the camp of the open revisionists. Robertson has already begun travelling along this path. It will be to this aspect of Spartacist that we will address ourselves in part II of this article.

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