

independent socialist

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McCarthy & The Democratic Party: The Two-Party System in Crisis

This is the Summer of our Discontent. A mood of dissatisfaction has begun to spread throughout the length and breadth of American society. As the presidential election approaches, much of this dissatisfaction has begun to focus upon the two-party system. For the first time in twenty years, the American political iceberg has begun to break up.

One good indication of the magnitude of the crisis which today confronts the Establishment is the rapid evolution of the McCarthy campaign. The McCarthy candidacy reflected the realization on the part of elements within the Establishment that social stability, and hence their privileged positions within the social order, was being threatened by militant oppositional movements who were beginning to get the ear of the population at large. The anti-war and radical movements, as well as the growing black liberation movement, created a situation in which some Establishment spokesmen, made uneasy by current social policy, saw both the opportunity and the necessity of riding the new discontent to power—riding it by channeling it back into the Democratic Party where it could be controlled.

McCarthy reacted to the anti-war movement by facing toward it and presenting views which would appeal to its most generalized sentiments. His explicit aim, however, was not to represent the movement, as a political expression of the struggle in the streets, but to contain it, to bring it out of the streets into submersion in the Democratic Party, to re-establish the illusion that, as McCarthy put it, it was still possible to "work within the system." Even as he bid for movement support, McCarthy refused to even endorse the various peace initiatives like Proposition P in San Francisco. The McCarthy campaign emerged as a conscious alternative to efforts like the Peace and Freedom Party, as an attempt to tame the movement from without.

OLD ILLUSIONS AND NEW LESSONS

As it happened, the Democratic Party is so wholeheartedly a creature of the social forces of the status quo, is so thoroughly unresponsive to the wishes of its nominal "membership," that it has not even made the slightest effort to encourage McCarthy's attempt to create new illusions about the system. Pro-McCarthy sentiment clearly predominates among potential Democratic Party voters, and yet one state convention after another has unashamedly shafted the McCarthy organizations. McCarthy delegations have been staging demonstrations, protests and walkouts, but to little avail. This year's Democratic Party convention looks to be just about as cut and dried as the last; only the names of the candidates have been changed, to protect the guilty.

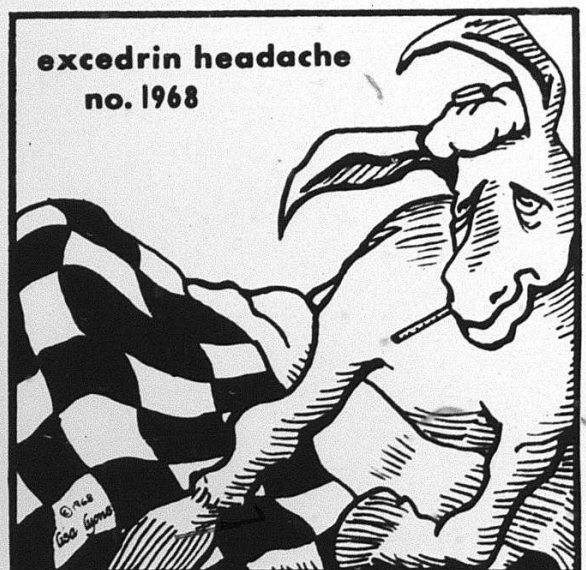
Now, up against the wall of the Democratic Party machine, the McCarthy forces which began as a split within the Establishment are beginning to split apart

themselves. Despite the fact that McCarthy himself has admitted that the failure of his campaign will likely make it impossible to again suck movement supporters back into the Democratic Party, the right-wing McCarthyites, led by Allard Lowenstein, still cling to a perspective of staying within it. They dream about disrupting the August Convention, encouraging an electoral disaster for the machine in November, and then picking up the pieces themselves in a couple of years. This dream, however, is likely to prove to be just another liberal fantasy. If the Democratic Party egg really falls off the wall in '68, the handful of McCarthyites who remain won't be able to put it back together again.

The more militant McCarthy people, led by Marcus Raskin, are beginning to toy with the idea of some kind of independent campaign. What a certain number have in mind is simply a variation on the original McCarthy idea and the present Lowenstein strategy. That is, they envision not the creation of a new party at all, but precisely the pre-empting of any such effort. They plan a "third ticket" which will pave the way, not for a new ongoing organization, but simply for the defeat of the Humphrey wing this Fall, and for a subsequent return to a "rejuvenated" Democratic Party.

Others are talking about not a "third ticket" but a "fourth party" effort that is nevertheless just as counterposed to the PFP. Most of this talk revolves around a "Fusion" party that would unite the more liberal wings of both the Republican and Democratic Party machines.

(Continued on page 7)



Rudi Dutschke on Revolutionary Democratic Socialism

On this page we publish excerpts from a talk given by Rudi Dutschke, the militant leader of the German SDS (Socialist Student League), to the Youth Commission of the Christian Peace Conference in Prague, shortly before he was shot. A translation of the whole talk was published in the Los Angeles Free Press for June 28 (translated by B. and C. Kneen); and we are indebted to the Free Press for this interesting material.—Ed.

We believe that international opposition is necessary to fight against all forms of authoritarian structure, whether in socialist or capitalist form. We differentiate very seriously between authoritarian socialism and the authoritarian structure of capitalism, of course. But that doesn't mean that we haven't to fight against the authoritarian form of socialism; and I think in Czechoslovakia now there is one great subject: to find new ways to combine socialism, real individual freedom, and democracy—not in the bourgeois sense, but in the real, social-revolutionary sense. To this extent it is very important for our protest movement in West Berlin and in West Germany to look to the movement in East Germany, and for this reason, I am here. But I have to explain the situation of our movement, of our fight.

A THIRD WAY

We didn't agree with the system in either side of Germany and began to think about a third way—a way of our own organization, our own articulation and our own real radical theory about the society. We understood that the modern form of fascism is not the same as the fascism of the DDR (German Democratic Republic) theory about West Germany. . . .

First of all, you have to understand the situation of the late-capitalist society, especially in West Germany and West Berlin. I mean by that, that we have a system of authoritarian institutions. . . . This system of institutions every day produces authoritarian personalities. . . . This production of authoritarian personalities in all institutions of our society is the basic reason for our anti-authoritarian movement. And we think that the modern form of fascism is in the institutions, not in one party like the NPD (National Democratic Party), not in one ideology. . . .

. . . In former times the intelligentsia always betrayed the needs and interests of the working masses, always in our history—and now I think there is a real new beginning in that the intelligentsia and the students don't want to be the elite of the nation. They want to negate the elite conception, they want only to be a movement for the emancipation of the people, to fight for the

immediate needs, for the immediate interest of the people within the different institutions. And so we in the university began our fight. We had a privilege because we can read, we can study all information; we are not in the DDR. We are in West Germany and that's very important.

We don't want to take away democracy, bourgeois democracy, but we very seriously want to fill it with new content. That is, real revolutionary democratic socialism doesn't want to take away from democracy; we want to build up democracy from the bottom, not from above—not with manipulation, but with direct support and participation of the masses ("participatory democracy").

THE UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY

We began the anti-authoritarian, anti-fascist fight with the university, and we developed the model of democratization of the university. But we understood after a certain time that it is impossible to make democracy within the university without democratization throughout the society. We began the fight for a real direct democracy within the university always in relation to the society.

Vietnam opened our eyes. . . . This first step for democratization within the university was the beginning of an understanding that we must broaden our base, must go outside of the university to cooperate with other groups, classes, or parts of the working class to make a broader base for structural change in our society. . . .

We want to build up a new form of organization. We began with self-organization as an organization of our immediate interests, our immediate needs.

For instance . . . a critical university as an alternative to the existing university. Another example: on the 2nd of June 1967, we had a big demonstration against the puppet of Iran, the Shah, and on that day one of our comrades was killed by the police.

After the 2nd of June, we formed action committees, in which the students who were not organized in the SDS or in other organizations, but who understood the situation and wanted to make politics without the traditional content of politics, organized themselves. They build up action committees, i.e. a direct form of democracy, within the sphere of our university. That's important for an understanding of our anti-authoritarian movement because all of our organizations are built up from the bottom, not from above.

(From here Rudi Dutschke went on to make some points which, we confess, we consider rather more dubious, apparently echoing conceptions which used to be more popular in the American New Left a couple of years ago or so, than they are now. One was the theme: "We don't want to build a party, we don't want to build up an apparatus. Our SDS is a decentralized organization. . . ." On our part, we are hoping that German supporters of "revolutionary democratic socialism"—as Dutschke called it—will succeed in building a very effective organized movement (whether they call it a party or not), and in creating a democratically-run political instrument of their own kind (even if it is not an "apparatus"). Another point was "a theory of counter-milieu"—the conception, it would seem, that used to be called "building counter-institutions within this society" in the American New Left. However, these ideas, which are arising there just as they arose here—and will probably be outlived for the same reasons—are of minor importance as compared with the basic view of the world political scene which was sketched out in the talk.—Ed.)

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THE MEANY-REUTHER SPLIT

In May, President George Meany of the AFL-CIO suspended the United Auto Workers for non-payment of dues to the national federation of labor. This inglorious exit of the UAW befit the kind of struggle waged by its president, Walter Reuther, against the AFL-CIO leadership whom he attacked as the "comfortable, complacent custodian of the status quo."

The former leader of the CIO, architect of its merger with the AFL in 1955, departed with close to a million and a half members, but without a single other union backing his cold split. Despite the massive financial help the UAW has given to other unions (such as the Teachers, the Chemical Workers and the Farm Workers), and despite some private agreement with much of the criticism leveled against the AFL-CIO, no union backed the Auto Workers during a long period of sniping attacks and ultimatums.

The apparently monolithic front of the AFL-CIO leadership appeared unshaken, and Steelworkers' President Abel was quickly moved in as head of the Industrial Union Department, severely crippled by the UAW's departure. Meany pooh-poohed the loss of some \$1 million in dues a year from the UAW, which accounted for about 10% of the AFL-CIO's income. The result, he stated, would be a smaller surplus in the treasury.

THE HIDDEN CONFLICT

The UAW's suspension concluded some eighteen months of conflict waged primarily within the top ranks of the AFL-CIO and the UAW. The first open break occurred in late 1966 when the UAW's International Executive Board declared its intention to publicize its challenge of the AFL-CIO's foreign and domestic policies—a challenge, they declared, which went to the heart of the fundamental aims and purposes of the American labor movement.

The mountain labored, and a savage and crushing indictment of the AFL-CIO's policies and functioning came forth. But it was a documentation known to but a handful of trade-unionists, buried in the UAW's administrative letters to its locals. The mass media repented the most sensational of the charges: the CIA had funneled money to finance pro-American unions abroad through AFL-CIO unions.

But this charge lost some of its sting when former CIA agent agent Thomas Braden of California chided Reuther for his criticism. Braden pointed out: "I personally went to Detroit and gave Walter Reuther \$50,000 in \$50 bills to influence labor unions in West Germany."

COMPLACENCY AND INDIFFERENCE

The UAW's first letter summarized its reasons for an open conflict: "The current state of the AFL-CIO, its complacency, its indifference, its adherence to the status quo, its lack of social vision, dynamic thrust and crusading spirit, its inability to engage in critical self-analysis is robbing the labor movement of its opportunity to be the vital, constructive social force that it should and can be."

Programs and proposals were later elaborated along six lines, to revitalize and recharge the moribund AFL-CIO:

- (1) Internal reform and democratization of the AFL-CIO.
- (2) A massive organizing crusade, with special emphasis on agricultural workers and the working poor.
- (3) Strengthening and modernizing collective bargaining machinery.
- (4) Expanding labor's role and responsibility in the community (education, rebuilding the cities and rural

areas, housing, health care, etc.)

(5) Building American labor's ties to the free world labor movement.

(6) Building a rational and responsible world community.

The UAW promised but failed to bring the discussion of these important issues out of the narrow, exclusive and limited circle of the AFL-CIO and the UAW.

Reuther declined to wage the battle in December 1967, at the time of the AFL-CIO convention in Miami, pleading the press of negotiations with the auto companies. He then went through the motions of demanding a special convention to raise the charges, but he was neatly outflanked by Meany. Confident of its strength, the AFL-CIO informed the UAW it would accede to a special convention provided the UAW would pledge to accept the majority decision. The dues-withholding act was then played, and the UAW was treated like any other delinquent dues-payer.

NOT A BANG BUT A WHIMPER

Thus the UAW went, with a whimper. The content of their charges was buried under the tertiary question of dues payments. They limped out, alone, without a major struggle on any level—not even within the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO.

What accounts for this incredible performance from Reuther and the UAW? Several explanations suggest the answer. Basically, Reuther is not in fundamental disagreement with Meany. On basic matters such as go to the heart of what's wrong with American trade unions, Reuther and Meany both support the Democratic Party and the Johnson administration.

At one point, Reuther explicitly stated that he did not want to be accused of dividing the labor movement and causing the possible defeat of Johnson (before LBJ had withdrawn from the presidential race). While Meany, gung-ho on Vietnam, has raced to the White House, averring his superpatriotism, Reuther has merely maintained a discreet public silence, and UAW conventions have failed to pass any anti-war stand.

How then could the UAW and Reuther wage a battle with Meany and his foreign policy director, Jay Lovestone, on the major crime of their support to Vietnam and a government guilty of strikebreaking? Other UAW officials (Victor Reuther, Emil Mazey) attacked the AFL-CIO's war-mongering and detailed its collaboration with racists, fascists, and anti-labor corporations abroad; but Walter Reuther never attempted to organize the millions of American unionists opposed to the war, let alone those within the UAW. To open such a Pandora's box might be dangerous . . . to his leadership.

DIONSOURS AND LIBERALS

Nor can a battle on the racism still rife within AFL-CIO unions be unleashed without arousing the black militants. Once aroused, who can say where they would stop? So Reuther contents himself with going to Selma and to Memphis, and with financing a Watts operation, while avoiding the full-scale operation of cleaning out racism within the trade unions.

Coming out of the traditions of the CIO's social concerns, Reuther has greater awareness, employs a different style, and engages in the liberal rhetoric—all of which make Meany a stand-pat dinosaur. But a real mass challenge to the Meany leadership still has to arise within the AFL-CIO. The UAW action revealed the cracks and the flaws, but the foundation has still to be shaken from below.

A. RUSSELL

STALINISM THREATENED FROM BELOW

The 'Liberalization' Crisis in Eastern Europe

One of the most beautiful signs for the ultimate success of their (the Czechs') revolution is the amount of participation by the people. Television has brought the winds of change into their homes. Throughout the country thousands upon thousands of Czechoslovaks have flocked to meetings to air their opinions, have signed petitions supporting Dubcek (First Secretary of the Communist Party and de facto head of the government), deluged government offices, and even marched in the streets . . . Time Magazine (April 5)

The Stalinist cult has been destroyed (but) the whole Stalinist apparatus remains. We must liquidate it or it will liquidate us. . . . Prof. Evan Svitak in Student (Prague, April 10)

In spite of Time magazine's best wishes, it does not look as if the Czechs are simply going to sit back and watch it all on the TV. Desirable as the loosening up accompanying Dubcek's rise to power is, the present regime is basically a transitional one. It can only lead to the breakup of the Communist dictatorship and its replacement by a socialist democracy or else a return to an essentially police-state regime after certain minimal and necessary economic reforms have been carried out.

It is the fear of the first alternative that has led to the attacks on the Czech leaders by the Russian, Polish and East German parties and the provocative Russian troop maneuvers. The second alternative, a revived Stalinism carried out by new party leaders has already become a grim reality in neighboring Poland. For reasons we will discuss below, the western press has almost completely ignored the fact that Wladislaw Gomulka's regime, now a prison run by anti-semitic wardens, was once the liberal hope that Czechoslovakia is today. The Czech and Slovak peoples, however, are well aware of the choice they face. A little over a month ago the newspaper Rude Pravo of Prague published a questionnaire asking its readers if they favored the creation of opposition parties alongside the Communist party. (It should be noted here that Czechoslovakia is theoretically ruled by a national front which includes other parties. The question was whether these parties were to be permitted to seek power in competition with the Communist Party. At present these parties are permitted only a fixed number of seats in the National Assembly and are simply a window dressing for the regime.) Some 90 percent of those who answered the questionnaire answered yes to this question.

A second question asked "Can you speak of democracy as being socialist when the leading role is held only by the Communist Party?" Three out of four non-Communist respondents answered no to this question. What is more important, between one-quarter and one-third of the Communist Party members who answered this question answered no. In a country where the entire economy is in the hands of the state the only source of privilege and power is the monopolistic and monolithic party. An open split in that party threatens the whole system of exploitation.

Shortly after these results were published, three major daily newspapers carried a manifesto signed by over 70 prominent men denouncing the state of affairs in the Communist Party even under its new "liberal" leadership. The manifesto pointed out that almost half of the Central Committee and perhaps a majority of the party itself were composed of hard-liners who remained

sympathetic to the deposed Stalinist Anton Novotny. It would be impossible to trust a party to carry out even the relatively minor reforms promised by the Dubcek leadership if its leading committee might at any moment as a result of one or two men changing sides reverse the whole process. Consequently, the manifesto called on the Czech and Slovak peoples to go outside the norms of party legality and force the removal of the hard-liners by "strikes, boycotts and demonstrations". Dubcek, speaking for the Central Committee of the Communist Party, denounced the manifesto and its authors as a threat to the entire process of "democratization." The choice in Czechoslovakia is between the liberal wing of the Stalinist apparatus thrust forward in a time of crisis, and those militants inside and outside the party who want to use the crisis to destroy the apparatus.

In addition to the general crisis in the Communist bloc which is a result of the weakening of cold-war tensions and the disintegration of both the Warsaw and NATO pacts, there are several problems peculiar to Czechoslovakia. As one of the most highly industrialized countries in the bloc (it compares favorably to many Western European economies) Czechoslovakia was oriented toward filling the tremendous need of the bloc for modern machinery. This need was for quantity rather than for quality. As a result, Czechoslovakia is saddled with a largely outmoded industrial plant. The attempt of the Communist regimes, from the Chinese to the Rumanians, to follow the road Yugoslavia set out on twenty years ago presents the Czechoslovak bureaucracy with potential blessings and some very real problems. As a highly industrialized nation it possesses advantages such as the Chinese do not have. On the other hand the transition from the captive market provided by the Communist bloc to the competitive market in the West is a difficult one.

ECONOMIC OVERHAUL

Unlike the Hungarian and Polish events of 1956, the present Czech liberalization drive began more or less openly as an attempt of the Czech bureaucracy to put its economy in order. As long ago as 1963 Prof. Ota Sik and his colleagues at the Economic Institute of the Academy of Sciences began their campaign to persuade the party of the need for an overhaul of the economy. Their proposals were adopted over Novotny's initial objections in 1964. These proposals were not unique. They were in their main outline adopted by the Yugoslavs in the early fifties; they are the proposals in the Soviet Union itself of the reformers; and similar measures are now being carried out in Hungary. The cultural revolution in China is at least partially a reflection of a dispute within the Chinese bureaucracy over the extent to which these measures should be adopted there.

The program of the reformers consists in its broad outlines of the following points. In general, enterprises are to finance their operations out of the revenues from their sales rather than being subsidized by the state. This means that goods will be produced as a response to a kind of market demand rather than merely as a response to a quota set by the central authorities. Wages and salaries will, therefore, be determined by "market forces." In Czechoslovakia these reforms are coupled with the demand for a currency which can be freely converted to Western European and American currencies. Despite the claims of the Western press

(and of some Western radicals), these measures do not constitute a return to capitalism. The state still appoints the factory managers and decides which enterprises have met the new standards and which have not. The new system is primarily a different mechanism of accounting which is still carried on by the state. The Stalinist apparatus remains in power and is the ultimate watchdog over the whole operation. For this reason all expectation that such economic liberalization will be followed by political democracy is nonsense. The best example of this is Yugoslavia where the system has been operating in one fashion or another for over fifteen years and where the totalitarian state apparatus remains as strong as ever.

What then is the function of the New Economic Mechanism, as the Czechs call it? It has two main functions, one external, the other internal. The first function has already been touched on. As long as the aim of the Communist regimes was the construction of an economically independent Eurasian empire centrally controlled by the Russians, the regime of central planning was possible if inefficient. The price the non-Russian regimes paid for this was subordination to Moscow. With the possible exception of the Chinese it is not possible for any of the other regimes to aim at autarchy even if they are willing to pay the price of a severely restricted standard of living, as the Maoists seem to be. Therefore, former satellites aiming today at independence must turn towards the capitalist world and adjust their economies as best they can to it.

The second function is related to the first. If the former satellites are to cut themselves loose from their Russian colleagues they must strengthen their base at home. The economic reforms typified by Czechoslovakia's New Economic Mechanism meet this requirement in two ways. They allow for a certain amount of initiative on the part of the middle ranks of the bureaucracy, hitherto one of the most miserable strata of the population. The increasing wage differentials which are part of the plan should also benefit these people. In addition the increase in wage differentials will have the effect of dividing the working class geographically and by industry.

WORKERS' CONTROL OR CONTROLLED WORKERS

The example of Yugoslavia is again relevant. Economic decentralization of the economy has atomized both the working class and the managerial elements while the party has remained the one centralizing force in the society. As long as independent trade unions and political parties are outlawed, workers' control at the factory level would be ineffective even if it were not a sham. What is more, in Czechoslovakia there are as yet no independent factory councils organized even at the lower levels. It is precisely these organizations that gave the 1956 Polish and Hungarian revolutionary movements their strength. And it was the failure of these councils to develop a centralized organization that allowed the Polish counter-revolution to succeed in the period from 1958 to 1959.

The fact that the "liberalization" of the Dubcek regime is primarily an attempt to save the Stalinist apparatus by adapting it to changing conditions should not lead us to underestimate its "subversive" revolutionary potential. The attempt to institute the new regime is inextricably tied in its initial phase to a vigorous attack on the old regime. As in every major transition in Communist regimes there is a purging of the party. The attack on Novotny's old guard and their demoralization releases powerful emotions long held in check. These emotions up until now have identified themselves with the personality of Dubcek and his supporters in the inter-party struggle. At the first sign of a compromise with the old regime, however, these same revolutionary sentiments could be turned against Dubcek. This is especially true in view of the fact that, as Sik and his colleagues have to admit, the first consequence of the NEM will be something very like Great Britain's wage freeze. It will be very difficult for the

reformers to fight this two-front war—against the hardliners in the party on the one hand and against the demands of the workers and peasants and sections of the bureaucracy itself on the other.

As we noted above, one of the strangest aspects of this whole affair is the failure of the Western press to draw the lesson from the Polish events of 1956-1960. Even the New York Times, in at least one feature, made the comparison between the anti-Semitic reaction in Poland and the liberalizers in Czechoslovakia without mentioning the fact that over ten years ago Poland had already gone through the kind of process the Prague regime is going through now. In fact the article went so far as to argue that the difference between Poland and Czechoslovakia could be attributed to the difference in the pre-war regimes of the two countries. (That was the CP "Worker"'s line too.)

CAPITALIST APOLOGISTS

Without going into the question of a conspiracy on the part of the Western press, we can point to certain attitudes and responses that are natural to a defender and apologist for the capitalist system when faced with events such as have occurred in East Europe recently. Clearly the breakup of the Communist empire and the orientation to the West on the part of former satellites is a welcome sight for such people in a time when anti-capitalist revolution is shaking the Third World.

At the same time, sophisticated defenders of capitalism are well aware that the introduction of that system in countries where it has already been destroyed is not likely. Since even the relatively healthy capitalist economies of Western Europe and the United States have to be buoyed up by large-scale government intervention, it is hard to see how that system could be reintroduced in Eastern Europe where not even the germ of a native capitalist class exists. The best that can be hoped for, from the standpoint of types like the New York Times, is that the bureaucracies of the Communist regimes, for purely opportunist reasons, will throw their lot in with the West diplomatically and economically.

Thus the responsible Western journalist or statesman has to ask himself, what are the alternatives to this Stalinist liberalization?

There seem to be only two: a return to a monolithic Communist bloc based on Russian military might or a revolution that spreads throughout Eastern Europe, at the least. In a famous article written at the time of the Hungarian revolution Walter Lippman summed up these thoughts in a coherent and sober fashion. The only way the Hungarians could win was if the revolution spread to Czechoslovakia and Poland. If it spread that far it would almost certainly spread to Easter Germany, then West Germany might . . . That was twelve years ago. There was at that time no mass movement of students and young workers comparable to the German SDS, nor was there a massive general strike in France.

Given the alternatives, the limited kind of liberalization such as Dubcek is carrying on now, or as Gomulka successfully carried out ten years ago, is the only hope for Western statesmen. They have no incentive, therefore, to investigate the causes of the disastrous failure of this course (at least as far as anyone who is interested in a society fit for human beings to live in is concerned) in Poland. It is best just to blank it all out.

For revolutionary socialists such a self-inflicted lobotomy is not necessary. For us the unification of Europe by a revolutionary movement independent of both capitalist and Communist ruling classes is not something to be dreaded. It is the basis of our politics. The balkanization of Europe at the close of both world wars was necessary if the Great Powers were to maintain their position. It was a disaster for the people of Europe. The present revolutionary movement in both Eastern and Western Europe is a hopeful sign that the domination of that continent by Russia and the United States may be coming to an end.

ERNEST HABERKERN

BLACK LIBERATION

BLACK MILITANTS & THE UNIONS

During the last 15 years the black citizens of the United States have applied increasing pressure to the nation's ideologically white (though white and black in membership) labor unions. In the five years since the 1963 March on Washington led by Martin Luther King, Jr. the pressure has increased geometrically. From that date onward, every battle mounted by blacks in general has been accompanied by factory shutdowns scattered across the country caused by black industrial workers. This has been particularly true in mass production industries like auto manufacturing which employ large numbers of the semi-skilled.

The American public is not aware of this crisis. Not even active participants in labor unions are able to obtain knowledge about it sufficient to allow informed discussion. Neither industrial, government nor union leaders have acknowledged its existence. There was no hint of the problem brought before the 2,900 delegates to the United Auto Workers (UAW) 21st convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey last May 4 through May 10.

It is known, through vague press reports, that in addition to work stoppages by meat workers, retail clerks, East Coast longshoremen and seamen, dozens of auto assembly plants all over the country had to shut down for at least two shifts immediately following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. because black workers walked off the job. It is also known, though again the information is not detailed, that in at least several instances the blacks were accompanied by large numbers of whites who did not wait for their foremen to dismiss them.

BLACK AND WHITE WILDCATS

However, in one of the plants about which this writer is best informed, this was not the case. In the new Belvedere, Illinois, Chrysler plant near Chicago which has over 5,000 employees, almost 300 black workers left their jobs for one shift without any show of solidarity from the white workers. All workers in the plant lost several hours pay and the Chrysler management did not discipline the black workers who staged the "wildcat" walkout. Then during the first week in May over 200 white Belvedere workers began a wildcat and before they could punch out at the time clocks management threatened to discipline them. They returned to work grumbling of the immunity of blacks to corporation discipline. They attempted another wildcat on the day racist Alabama Governor Lurleen Wallace died. (The Wall Street Journal, May 13, reports that the Ford plant in Atlanta shut down totally on the same day and that some General Motors plants were asked to fly their flags at half mast.)

Civil-rights-related and other recent stoppages at the Ford plant in Mahwah, New Jersey reveal a different welding of circumstances. The plant draws most of its 4,400 employees from New York City, Jersey City and Newark. Thirty per cent of its hourly paid work force is black. On Tuesday, February 13, a raw metal department foreman "allegedly" called one of the men under his supervision a "black bastard." The workers in the department, from their past experience with the foreman, believed the allegation and walked out, even though the union said it could not be proven. They were immediately followed by a majority of the workers in the plant, both black and white. There was no production on either the day or night shifts for the remainder of the week. Between 200-300 workers were consequently disciplined by 1-3 day suspensions from their jobs. The union did not sanction the strike.

As yet there have been no incidents of racial conflict at Mahwah like those at Belvedere Chrysler. The

Mahwah Ford Local 906 is an older local and working conditions in the shop are said to be among the worst in the industry. It is reported that the black worker around whom the walkout began had angered his foreman during an argument the two whites were having over a production grievance. The incident took place in the context of a general dispute over assembly line speed, work method and load. Both black and white workers had enough at stake in a common grievance against a common opponent to force or allow them to push their racial prejudices aside.

There is enormous dissatisfaction in the UAW, especially among production workers, since the contract settlements made early this year. Inflation has wiped out the wage increases. Nothing has been done to check the speed-up. Among the 98% of the rank and file who do not participate in union proceedings there is a growing feeling that the union is not a force that can accomplish what has been the primary goal of unions since the factory system replaced cottage industry--the improvement of the condition of life on the job. At Mahwah Ford this feeling produced a united white-black struggle against the employer and against the lack of official union responsiveness to the plight of its members who spend the bulk of their waking hours in a dehumanizing environment.

RACISM VS. SOLIDARITY

At Belvedere, however, where the nature of work also makes a work stoppage in any form a greeted respite, circumstances did not blend to create rank and file solidarity. As in so many other UAW plants, the shop floor struggles of the Belvedere workers to improve working conditions have not been aided by the top officials of their union and so a reactionary tendency in the ranks was given the freedom to fill a leadership vacuum.

The spread of the political work stoppage confronts the UAW with an especially acute form of the crisis over racism which the US labor movement as a whole must come to grips with or be destroyed. A funneling of the new rank and file militancy into racist outlets would mean the end of the trade union movement as an independent force for progressive change. But a translation of black militancy into trade union forms and black-white rank and file unity in action would set the stage for a different kind of transformation of the labor movement—one just as terrifying to both conservative and liberal labor bureaucrats. Reuther's shadow boxing with the AFL-CIO leadership cannot shield him from the long hot summer that menaces him as well as George Meany.

CLEOPHUS PIERCE

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McCarthy & The Democratic Party---

(Continued from page 1)

But the idea of a "McCarthy-Rockefeller" campaign represents no more of a real break from the two-party system than the conscious "third ticket" proposals. What is needed now—not to mention what is possible in the present context—is not a new party of the Establishment but a party of the movements. An organizational break from the Democratic Party is not enough; a political break is required as well.

However, all the talk about an independent campaign emerging out of the McCarthy effort does reflect a tremendous potential. All the old liberal shibboleths about the sanctity of the two-party system have abruptly gone out of circulation. The rank-and-file McCarthy supporters are in large part uncommitted to either the Democratic Party or any of the phony alternatives to it. What they want is a real alternative to the way things are going today; but they have been confused about what would constitute a real alternative. The disintegration of the McCarthy campaign opens up the possibility of mobilizing large numbers of them behind an attempt to begin to build a new kind of party, a party in fact responsible to the movements, a party based upon, and escalating rather than absorbing, the struggle in the streets. One of the reasons many McCarthy bureaucrats have been reluctant to turn toward an independent campaign is their awareness of the possibility that the whole thing could get completely out of hand.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE STATUS QUO

The Democratic Party has been the mainstay of the status quo in this country for the very reason that within its confines things can't get out of hand. Like the Republican Party, it is not a democratic political organization controlled by its "membership." People don't join the Democratic Party, and together determine its line; they simply vote for the candidates imposed by party oligarchies responsible not to the voters but to the city machines, the military establishment, the business community and so forth. Both of the two major parties are the organized expressions of the politics of the dominant forces in our society. They disagree about how to run the society, not about in whose interests to run it. The differences between the Democratic and Republican parties have been tactical ones, not strategic, at the very least since the 1930s. The maintenance of corporate capitalism has been their common foundation. The Democratic Party has sought to play this role by absorbing opposition in preference to repressing it. The "Liberal" Democrats especially, by claiming to speak for the people, have worked to keep them quiet.

But this has been the year when more and more people have refused to be shut up. A first wave of revulsion from the two-party system, triggered by the spectre of a Johnson-Nixon choice in '68, led to the creation of the Peace and Freedom Party, the first genuine independent alternative in many years. Now a second wave is beginning, triggered by the Humphrey-Nixon spectre.

It is up to those who joined the McCarthy campaign, now that they are discovering that working IN the Democratic Party means working FOR the Democratic Party at best—and being worked over BY the Democratic Party in many cases—to decide whether they in fact do want a real alternative. And it is up to the Peace and Freedom Parties, now growing in many states across the country, to convince the rank and file McCarthy supporters that Peace and Freedom is such a real alternative.

By continuing the work of the movements from which it emerged, by putting forward candidates who represent the anti-war and black liberation movements, by representing the movement in every aspect of its activity, in the streets as well as at the polls, the PFP can point the way toward a progressive resolution of the crises that are shaking American society. Complete

organizational and political independence from the Democratic Party is a first step toward the kind of change that can only be brought about by people organizing to take control of their own lives, not by depending on beneficiaries from On High to give them what they want. July 15, 1968 **MIKE FRIEDMAN & KIT LYONS**

For further information on the Independent Socialist approach to the Peace and Freedom Party and the Cleaver Campaign, write for the special pamphlet supplement to IS No. 5, The Road Forward for the California Peace and Freedom Party. 10¢

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Gun Control & The Climate of Violence

Of all American institutions, there is none so viceriously worshipped by liberals as the Bill of Rights. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that the latest assault on the Constitution has not only met little resistance from liberals, but is actually led by them. The Nation, the New Republic, and the speeches of liberal senators and congressmen are filled with demands for the restriction or abolition of the right to keep and bear arms. Only the traditional conservatives have offered any serious resistance to this campaign.

The proponents of gun "control" speak from a variety of viewpoints and offer diverse proposals. Agreement is most widespread on the demand for universal registration of firearms, a proposition second only to compulsory fingerprinting in the hearts of police administrators everywhere. Logic, however, demands that this should be only a first step toward confiscating all firearms. After all, knowing where guns are doesn't prevent people from using them, which is the presumptive purpose of gun control. New Republic editor James Ridgeway has honestly stated the underlying assumption of gun law proponents: "Private citizens should be disarmed." Registration is only the opening wedge for a drive to repeal the Second Amendment entirely.

The gun control position is based on two false beliefs. The first is that guns themselves, by their very presence, create violence, as if they harbored some evil spirits. A tension-wracked society, ruling by force over foreign nations and minorities at home, is indirectly absolved of its everyday institutional violence and the personal violence it creates in individuals. If guns created violence, then Switzerland (where possession of military arms is compulsory) would have the highest murder rate in the world.

Even when the social roots of violence are given lip service, the argument is made that the state, as benevolent and impartial mediator of societal disputes, must be given power to check the violent impulses of individuals and groups. Melioration of the causes of violence must await the "pacification" of civil society. A similar line of reasoning led the liberals and social-democrats of Weimar Germany to support the universal gun registration which Hitler found so useful in disarming his opponents.

LIBERALS & THE 2ND AMENDMENT

We are flatly opposed to gun "control" or registration. We believe that the Second Amendment was placed directly after the First by the radicals of the 1790's not because they were fond of hunting, but because they believed that only by depriving the state of its monopoly of force could the citizens of the democracy ensure their rights. When they demanded that the right of the people to keep and bear arms should not be infringed, the Revolutionary War against England was fresh in their minds. Today's liberals (and many radicals) choose not to remember that the first battle of that war was fought because the British army tried to confiscate the arms of Massachusetts farmers.

We don't base our position on historical sentiment. It is no coincidence that the growing clamour for gun control has paralleled the spread of armed self-defense in black communities and the increase of popular hostility to the government and the system it represents. The right of individuals to keep and bear arms threatens to become incompatible with the security of the ruling class as more of the "meek" citizenry begin to claim it. It is a luxury which soon can no longer be afforded. The democratic dream of an armed

people, maintaining order through voluntary militia units, is incompatible with a system which depends on organized force to maintain exploitation.

It is precisely that organized force, the armies and the cops committed to the maintenance of the status quo, which is the real source of the "climate of violence" today. It is the cops and the national guard, like the US armies abroad, which are visiting wholesale violence in America on everyone who strikes out for a greater degree of control over their lives. It is the cops who should be disarmed, not the people--but only when capitalism is abolished will we be able to abolish the cops and armies who sustain it.

In the meantime, the right to keep and bear arms is a fragmentary one, like freedom of the press. Every citizen's ability to utilize it is limited by his financial resources and constrained by the knowledge that the "bigger battalions" are the property of those more powerful. Rudimentary and incomplete though it may be, it remains a harbinger of a better and brighter day. We will not surrender it.

TOM CONDIT

A Footnote on Gun Control

The current push for "gun control" legislation was given its present impetus by the tragic assassination of Robert Kennedy. Even more than after the shooting of Martin Luther King, everyone began talking about "violence in American life," and well-intentioned people started agitating once more for the disarming of tiny tots, beginning with their toy soldiers. In fact, everyone began talking furiously about everything except the ACTUAL political context of Sirhan's act.

This was not "violence in American life," in the first place, but the violence in the Middle East. After all, Sirhan conceived his act to be a shot in the Middle East war between the Arabs and Israel, not an act directed to internal U.S. politics. Senseless, but a fact.

The Mt. Everest of irrelevance was reached by Governor Ronald Reagan, who immediately used the assassination as a peg on which to hang an attack on "violence in the streets" by the Black militants and student activists. One would think that Sirhan had been involved in Berkeley or Watts or Oakland, instead of living surrounded by the patriotic climate of Pasadena. This logical irrelevance was not, however, without political point. Reagan was merely blurting out, in effect, the fact that the ruling powers were interested in utilizing the shock of the assassination to direct emotions against THEIR OWN internal enemy.

The liberals, on the other hand, insisted on talking about "violence on television," etc. This, to be sure, was somewhat more to the point. But if it is a question of gun control, let's talk just a bit about the violence in the Middle East.

Who was the purveyor of guns to the Middle East (both sides)? It was the U.S. government, in the first place, and not only the Soviet Union, which had armed and is again arming Egypt. It was the same Lyndon Johnson, among other presidents—who immediately utilized the tragedy to call for the disarming of the Black ghettos. (Or do you think he is really more concerned about disarming duck hunters?)

If others think it relevant to start a campaign to get water pistols out of department stores, we think it worth a moment to remind you that the biggest gun-runner in the world is the U.S. government.

HAL DRAPER