

SPARTACIST & THE INTELLECTUAL IN FLIGHT

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BLACK POWER HITS THE STREETS

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Government vs. the Airline Workers

BLACK POWER HITS THE STREETS

A Look at the SNCC Position Paper in the Light of Recent Ghetto Struggles

On July 10, in Chicago's Soldier Field, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King spoke his current nonsense to the Negro people--criticizing Black Power, without using that term--it might have "incited" the crowd. In addition his usual plea for non-violence was to be heard. He even dragged in psychotherapy with "The Negro needs the white man to free him from his fears."

As if to answer him the Black people of America erupted in a series of revolts which lasted from July 12 to July 23rd. Thousands of Negro freedom-fighters confronted thousands of cops and National Guardsmen in fierce street warfare.

Brooklyn, Cleveland and Chicago were the focal points--but this could have occurred in any city ghetto where in typical American fashion Black people are beaten by cops, robbed by merchants, lied to by politicians, and harassed by the "welfare" investigator; on top of that denied jobs and forced to live in filth while sweating to pay the slumlords extortion.

One can only say that the American Negro has exercised--restraint.

Many Negroes were killed, injured, beaten and arrested in these eleven days; some cops were hurt too. By and large it was the activity of these cops which ignited the whole thing. But behind police brutality lies social brutality--the everyday slavery of the capitalist system--which uses the Negro as a spare part to hold its rotten frame together. The ghetto is sullenly quiet now.

Some people have condemned the "looting" involved. This "looting" (i.e. the instant war on poverty) has demonstrated that the "respect" for cops, white and black, that the Negroes have, extends to the property the cops protect--white owned and black owned.

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The black masses are in revolt, but it is a revolt without definite program. This revolt is primarily a rebellion against oppression--lack of jobs, slum living, police brutality, etc.-- and not race rioting of black against white. True in East New York black and white gang fights were a predominant feature and Martin Luther King's recent marches in Chicago have produced fascist-inspired white rioting. But black-white clashes still remain a subordinate feature. Black-cop clashes predominate.

Without a program and direction race clashes will become increasingly common. The energies of the Negro masses and the white masses will be dissipated in struggles against each other--not even against the police, the slumlords, and other representatives of an oppressive ruling class which bears down on black and white.

The SNCC Position Paper

It is within this context that we must look at the recently published "position paper" on Black Power associated with the current SNCC leadership. Does this Black Power program offer a meaningful program for the Negro masses North and South? How would we apply this program to, say, East New York where poor Negro teenagers fought it out with poor white teenagers?

The strength of the position paper is that it represents a break with liberalism. The liberal, be he white or black, functions as an intermediary to contain movements of the masses so that they function as no more than pressures upon the government. For years every Negro organization has been tied in with this liberal camp primarily by means of liberal financial support. SNCC, by declaring its willingness to go it alone without this financial support has taken an important step forward.

The need for black leadership of the black liberation movement is also incontestably correct. Only a black led and run movement can develop the self-confidence of the black masses, free them from fear of white domination, fear of expressing themselves and participating in their own organizations.

Outside these two important points, there is little or nothing in the position paper of a program which could transform the revolt of the Negro masses into a movement that can actually emancipate the Negro masses. This is because the paper does not go beyond a race approach. Everything is seen as black versus white. Race struggle supplants class struggle. Every white man is seen as part of "the collective white America." This collective white America is seen as the oppressor responsible for--the genocidal war in Vietnam, neo-colonialism, the 400 years of bondage of the Negro people. The blacks are to organize their masses and the whites to organize theirs. Two separate communities, two separate nations, and the community-nations are seen as homogeneous. Class solidarity crossing "national" boundaries is denied.

In about the only place the position paper discusses program it states: "If we are to proceed toward true liberation, we must cut ourselves off from white people. We must form our own institutions, credit unions, co-ops, political parties, write our own histories." But this is pure utopianism, the kind of utopianism which plagued the Jew in pre-war Europe. Seize control of your own ghetto be it North or South and you "control" only your own misery. By demanding the right to administer your own misery you supply employment for the Negro middle class but the Negro worker still has a master, this time with a black face. Negro institutions cannot liberate the Negro masses unless they become part of a general struggle against the oppressor class.

The Role of Class

Many radicals when confronted with this simplistic racialist view apologize for it explaining that such a view is "understandable" considering the 400 year oppression of the Negro people. This

we feel is just another form of paternalism. The Negro masses not only deserve but must have for their very survival and liberation a political outlook way beyond simple racial nationalism. The Negro masses must develop a leadership which understands class relations not just race relations--that is a Marxist leadership. It is about time Marxists in the United States openly fought for a class understanding within the Negro movement.

It is not the "white community" which is carrying on a genocidal war in Vietnam. It is the American ruling class. The liberal both white and black is tied to this ruling class and seeks to police the Negro movement according to the interests of this ruling class. The position paper sees the NAACP as "reactionary" and "controlled by the Black powerstructure." This in itself is a recognition that one must go beyond race to a class analysis of the Negro movement itself. Such an analysis will reveal that the NAACP, SCLC and to some extent CORE all base themselves upon the Negro middle classes. These middle classes ally themselves to the Negro working masses only to the point that the struggle of these masses open up opportunities for the middle class to move upward on the social ladder. They resist and struggle against the Negro masses to the extent that these masses struggle in their own class interests, for their own emancipation.

Looked at in class terms the Negro teenage worker in East New York has much in common with the Italian-American teenage workers there. They both may very well be out of a job. Marxists must struggle to bring these two groups together in a common struggle against the ruling class and for their own interests. If we do not do so then fascist elements will fan race hatred and utilize the white youths to break up the Negro movement.

It is not enough to say that whites should organize the white poor and then SNCC will organize the black poor. This is still being hypnotized by the racial dichotomy. Rather the working class movement, the socialist movement, should struggle to organize and bring together workers black and white. This can be and must be done without imposing on Negro organizations white leadership or control.

Unless there is this kind of sharp class approach to the Negro question in the United States we will actually be assisting the fascists in their attempts to organize a base among white youths. Without a sharp class understanding the concept of Black Power will become window dressing for such opportunist agents of the ruling class as Adam Clayton Powell and Livingston Wingate.

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AIRLINE STRIKE: GOVERNMENT VS. THE WORKERS

At this writing the airline workers of the International Association of Machinists still have not returned to work. Congress and LBJ still sit pondering on just how to end the five week strike. The question posed to them is not so much how to "distribute the blame" between the President and Congress in an election year, as the papers have been saying, but more important--whether to have the government to blame at all in ending this strike.

Clearly the government is in a bind for it will be politically expensive to assume the role of strikebreaker. The cloak of impartiality will be dropped and the government will be revealed to many workers as a creature of big business. Already, some have gotten a peek. After voting "no" on the LBJ-engineered settlement, a ramp employee for United remarked, "The President thinks he can step in every time he pleases. It's getting about time that the companies did not have the Federal Government to bail them out. Then maybe we could get a decent settlement."

Politics and the Strike

Worst of all for the government, the strike has begun to turn political. Sensing the nature of the government in this case, the Machinists have been murmuring about revenging themselves on Johnson's administration in the next election or impeaching LBJ. Totally ignored by the press but accidentally slipping into a couple of radio reports was news of union local leaders threatening to form a third political party if forced back to work.

The labor bureaucracy proved useless to their Washington puppeteers. The minimal contract which they all cooked up was thrown back in the bureaucrats' faces by the rank-and-file. What the national headquarters begged the men to accept was a package which took no consideration of the rise in price of transportation, eggs, butter, milk and the hike in taxes and social security payments. The workers voted "no" and the national office is discredited for its collaborative role.

The government's bind is that of having to end this strike with an amicable--to the government--settlement, but at the same time keeping the union in tow through the bureaucracy. The government must have an amicable settlement, one near the limits of "wage restraint", in order that it may weather its current crisis. During this period, the profits made must come primarily from the backs of the American working class, for American capitalist expansion overseas is practically at a standstill. Besides, the Vietnam war must be paid for. The days of prosperity, when concessions to the workers could be easily afforded, are over. Now, just crumbs.

SEN. WAYNE MORSE

KNIGHT WITH RUSTY ARMOR

An insight into the nature of the progressives' "good guy" in the U.S. Senate is this account by Drew Pearson of Morse's role in the airline strike:

"Sen. Morse got down to the crux of the problem when he told the White House Cabinet conferees that he was not going to be a party to undermining the greatest weapon of the U.S., the American dollar.

"On another occasion when George Meany criticized Morse for his part as Presidential mediator for the airline strike in keeping wage increases near the 3.2 guidelines, Morse replied:

"Meany forgets that he sat with me on the War Labor Board during World War II and voted to seize plant after plant on behalf of the government. Meany's excuse was that American boys were dying in Europe. I would like to point out to him that American boys are now dying in Viet Nam.

" ' And I for one am going to protect the greatest weapon we have--namely the American economy.' "

So like it or not, the capitalist government will be more and more impelled to step into labor disputes--such as the present one--in order to control that factor in its crisis; and more and more the working class under attack will respond with anger.

Needless to say, the capitalist class and its political representatives, sensitive to the quandry they are in, will consistently close ranks. Witness the spectacle of Wayne Morse, famed "critic of the administration" and a hero to too many, showing his true class colors by being in the forefront of the legislative campaign to force the Machinists back to work.

Needed: A Political Answer

The working class, then, must respond with as great if not greater unity. It is predictable that labor will respond with anger, but what is not predictable is that it will respond with organization. At every turn, the ruling class, mainly through their agents in the labor movement, will try to atomize the workers and set them against each other. Against this all revolutionaries must see themselves as conscious agents, exposing the bureaucracy and leading the process of organization and unification of the class, eventually to workers' power.

As it is becoming more obvious to the working class through each struggle that the political face of the state also has economic horns and that their economic battles are drawing political attack, these political attacks will demand political response. Certainly, as a vehicle for this response, the capitalist parties are worthless.

Labor needs its own party. The recognition of the class nature of the government "in this case" must be generalized to cover the government in all cases. This time the call for a third party by some Machinists was just a threat--a tactic to remind LBJ and Congress where the votes are. But even its use as a threat indicates where the workers' minds are--they sense themselves as holders of not only economic power but of political power. To tie that link solidly between economic and politics, the party of labor, supported and run only by the working class, is on the agenda. It is the next step on the road to a workers' government.

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COMMUNIST PARTY CONVENTION:

OLD TRICKS AND SOME NEW DOGS

Before his death, Leon Trotsky predicted that the Communist International would disintegrate and the national parties would go over to their respective bourgeoisies. Many critics, basing themselves on the conduct of the CPs during World War II and Stalin's absolute control of the international movement, considered this prediction to be fantastic. In the past six years we have seen Trotsky's foresight confirmed with a vengeance. The Indian party supported Nehru's government in the Sino-Indian dispute. In France and Italy it is almost impossible to distinguish the CP from the social democracies. The

American party is now far along the same path.

On June 22nd the Communist Party held their 18th Convention in New York City. It took on the appearance of a Madison Avenue circus. All that was lacking was Miss America. The press, the radio, TV were invited to the opening session and observers were permitted to sit in on all further proceedings. The audience was composed primarily of old people with a sprinkling of the new generation. Missing completely were any representatives of the interim postwar generation.

After getting things underway appropriately (it turned out) with the singing of the Star Spangled Banner, Gus Hall gave a keynote speech based on the draft document, "The New Program of the CPUSA". The draft document is built around the crisis the U.S. is facing domestically and on the international arena. Specifically the questions of war and peace, the technological revolution which threatens to engulf millions of workers, civil rights and the increasing strength of the ultra-right. The program attempts to show the counteracting tendencies. These are seen as the ascending protest against the war in Vietnam, the growing level of consciousness in the Negro struggle and the volcanic eruption of the students on campus. Tied in with this is the fact that one-third of the world is in the Soviet camp and another one-third consists of former colonial areas which have won their national independence thus weakening capitalism. This has strengthened the forces of peace which can possibly prevent the outbreak of World War III.

The pivotal point in their entire analysis is political action. It is approached on two levels--the immediate and the long range. On the immediate plane, there is a sort of vagueness. While criticisms of the two party system are made, rationalizations for working in the "political mainstream" are also included. It all seems to add up to support for the "peace-loving" enlightened segments of the "progressive bourgeoisie" such as Johnson and the Democratic Party which the CP supported in 1964.

For the long haul we are presented, under different names, with a call for the creation of a new "peoples party" or "anti-monopoly party" based on all sections of the population but the monopolists. With the Democrats the country was given war in South Vietnam and the occupation of the Cominican Republic. A so-called peoples party, such as the Wallacite movement in 1948, in nothing more than a slightly more left Democratic caucus which collapses at the first shot. Witness Wallace's turn about in 1950 when the Korean War broke out.

American history offers many rich examples of the bankruptcy of this form of politics. In the 24 years from 1890 to 1914 various trustbusting, muckraking movements sprang up, involving millions. They were composed of farmers, small businessmen, workers and intellectuals demanding the return of government to the people and destruction of the monopolies. The protests gained in intensity; no political party could ignore them. Politicians not only gave lip service to these demands but forced through the halls of Congress special legislation. What did this legislation cover? Laws were passed regulating food and drugs, outlawing trusts, supervising railroads, and seeking to make government on all levels more honest and

democratic. Specific agencies were constructed to oversee big business.

Yet whatever the laws of the land, the paramount question is what group enforces these laws and in whose interests? Despite the mountains of social reforms the large corporations control the American government and all its manifold agencies far more tightly today than they did before the legislation was passed. The reformers and idealists found themselves castrated. Their great struggle against monopoly only ushered in the period of rule by monopoly in the United States.

In the past fifty years this trend toward monopolistic concentration has continued growing ever stronger, threatening to devour the entire economy. Business and government together with the two major parties have become more and more closely intertwined. The best example was when that flaming liberal John F. Kennedy assumed office in 1961. Whom did he choose for the three most important cabinet posts? For Secretary of the Treasury: Douglas Dillon, leading partner in the Wall Street firm of Dillon and Reed. For Secretary of Defense: Robert MacNamara, former executive head of Ford Motor Company. For Secretary of State: Dean Rusk, reportedly representing the Rockefeller interests.

The policy of the Communist Party, whatever the subjective desires of its members may be, leads to the further strengthening of the American ruling class. What is needed is a political party based on the toilers of the nation. Whatever the academic pundits may say, the working class is still the only class rooted in production and distribution which can bring society to a dead stop if it so wishes. Such a party, acting as the spokesman (or as Lenin says the Tribune) of the people can draw the majority of the masses to it. Now is the time for class politics, not the CP's very tired old school of class collaborationist politics.

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REPORT BY A HOSPITAL WORKER

THE RANKS FORCE SHOWDOWN WITH BOSSES

The problems faced by New York City's voluntary hospital workers in Local 1199 in their last fight for higher wages and improved working conditions was detailed in the last issue of the Bulletin (Vol. 2, No. 33). Contracts at many of New York's large voluntary hospitals expired on July 1. As of that date the hospitals has refused to bargain, insisting that the union's demands were too high. The hospital bosses insisted that the dispute go to binding arbitration, as stipulated in the state law governing collective bargaining in hospitals.

The union's position was that it was not obligated to submit the dispute because the hospitals had not yet begun to bargain in good faith. The union rejected the demand for arbitration and supported the workers at five large institutions who walked off their

jobs. The workers at Montefiore, Mount Sinai, Beth Israel, Brooklyn Jewish and Long Island Jewish Hospitals walked off their jobs in "demonstrations" that lasted anywhere from several hours to several days. White Local 1199 claimed that it had not called a strike (it is prohibited from doing so by the law) it refused to urge the workers to return.

Through their militant action the workers won some important gains. The new contract calls for a 10% raise for all workers as of July 1, 1966, 7½% more next July, and a final 2½% in Jan. 1968. The contracts expire in July, 1968. Thus a 20% boost over 2 years has been won. This represents at least a step forward for the grossly underpaid hospital workers, unless the current inflation accelerates even further and wipes these gains out (and that cannot be ruled out). In addition 4% in fringe benefits (free medical, hospital and surgical insurance) was won. This contract may be a bitter pill for other hospitals who have so far managed to keep the union out by keeping pace with gains won by the union elsewhere. Well-known institutions like the Columbia-Presbyterial Medical Center, New York Hospital and Memorial Hospital will be under pressure to match the gains won by the union. By the same token, the union will be able to go to the workers at these and other institutions and show that it deserves a chance because it has achieved substantial increases for its members.

It is quite probable that pressure by the city administration on the hospitals was a factor in the hospitals' acceptance of the union demands. What the workers must understand is that this does not mean that Lindsay or anyone else won their strike for them. It was their own militancy and determination that put the squeeze on Lindsay as well as the bosses.

Montefiore Administration Screams

While some of the hospital bosses took the settlement relatively calmly, the Montefiore administration screamed. A split among the different administrations was revealed with the announcement from Montefiore that it was going along with the settlement under protest and that the settlement was forced by the "capitulation" of the other hospitals, particularly Mount Sinai, to the union.

Montefiore director Dr. Martin Cherkaski claimed that the settlement rewarded union president Leon Davis for creating chaos and disruption at the hospitals. He lied, of course, and deliberately, for he knew from personal experience that the rank and file workers at Montefiore needed no prodding from Davis. As a matter of fact whatever prodding there was, was in the other direction. The Montefiore workers were the most militant of those out on strike. When at one point they were urged by some of their organizers to return to work, a majority of their elected delegates insisted they should stay out until a settlement was reached, and the militancy of the workers was so high that although they did return to work, within a few hours the rank and file's sentiments were communicated forcefully to the union leadership and the walkout was resumed and continued for several more days until the settlement was reached. The union leadership claimed that its back to work recommendation

was part of a strategy to confuse the bosses by circumventing the no-strike clause and keeping the bosses guessing. But the workers wanted to stay out once they had summoned up the determination to go out, many of them on strike for their first time. It must also be noted that at this time Mayor Lindsay had just sent a telegram to the union leadership urging it to end the walkout. It appears that the back to work recommendation reflected at least in part the pressure the union leadership was under from its many "friends", and the workers were totally justified in rejecting this and fighting to continue the strike.

The same hospital boss mentioned above, Cherkaski (who probably nets at least \$25,000 a year) insisted that his institution alone had held out for the "principle" that labor disputes at hospitals should be resolved by binding arbitration. And in this he was supported by the influential New York Times, which vehemently denounced the union, the strike and the settlement. The "liberal" New York Post also took the union to task on its editorial page.

The Role of the Times and Post

The Times labeled the workers' militant action "illegal and immoral". It further called the wage settlement "greater than equitable". This from a newspaper which had presented itself as a great friend of the union and had supported the union in 1962, and Rockefeller's deal which had extended collective bargaining to the voluntary hospital field. At that time the Times as well as the Post has been praised, along with Rockefeller and other politicians, as good friends.

It is clear that we should beware of such "friends". In reality what the Times is interested in is labor peace in the hospitals above all else. The Times is a capitalist paper - a newspaper in other words, whose editorial viewpoint faithfully represents an important section of the class which rules the U.S. When the Times supported Local 1199 in 1962 it was not because it was guided by our interests, but because it saw in certain reforms a way to achieve the stability in the hospital labor field which it wanted to maintain. When we show that union recognition is just the beginning, when we show that we are determined to win meaningful increases, that we will not be bound by Johnson's pleas for wage restraint, the fangs of the New York Times are suddenly revealed. This must be a lesson to all union militants.

The same analysis applies to all the liberal capitalist politicians who pose as friends of labor and friends of 1199 in particular. They would like us to think that they are our friends, of course. But when it comes to an issue like the just concluded strike, when our demands run smack up against the plans of the capitalists and their government to solve problems at the expense of us and other workers, we can see where they stand. None of these people stand above classes or the class struggle, whether they realize it or not.

Need Fighting Political Perspective

The union victory in this strike does not at all minimize the need for a fighting political perspective for the union, as outlined in the last issue. The union also, of course, is not above the class struggle. It won the strike by relying on its own power. It must prepare for future struggles which will confront it, as the capitalists continue to try to solve their deepening crisis by raising taxes and holding down wages as well as waging aggressive imperialist war. A militant working class program is needed now, not only for 1199 but for the whole union movement. This strike victory can be the beginning of the fight for this kind of program.

What kind of a fight does this entail? Some of its aspects were mentioned in the last issue. First of all neither 1199 nor any other union will be a union in the full sense until it achieves the right to strike. Almost every few weeks this last year, beginning with the militant New York transit strike, government and other workers prohibited from striking have found it necessary nevertheless to strike or threaten to strike. Our goals, in addition to decent wages and working conditions, must include the repeal of all anti-strike and anti-union legislation. We must demonstrate that we are not going to be bound by such legislation.

But how can we do away with such legislation? The pressures for compulsory arbitration and strike prohibitions in so-called national emergencies are growing every day. It is not the so-called public which through its pressure demands this legislation. The public are people like us, trade unionists, Negroes, Puerto Ricans, unemployed, unorganized. It is the big corporations and their political stooges which require and demand this kind of anti-union legislation, and the cries for this legislation are directly related to the deepening crisis facing these corporations and their system.

We cannot look to the present rulers or the Democratic or Republican politicians of whatever stripe to resist this trend toward restricting the trade unions and tying them in to the state machine. It is these very same politicians who are pressing for these anti-union moves, even men like the great "liberal" Morse. The wage freeze the British workers face now will probably hit the American workers before too long. We can only fight against these moves and for our just demands by independent political action in alliance with those forces whose interests coincide with ours - the rest of the labor movement and the Negro and other oppressed minorities. An independent labor party representing those who are hit by Johnson's wage restraint, who have no stake in the war in Vietnam, and who haven't yet achieved the democratic rights at home which Johnson so hypocritically asserts he is fighting for abroad.

Local 1199 must lead the way in this struggle. These are the issues posed by our recent struggles and there is no evading them.

SPARTACIST AND LENINIST POLITICS

PART II: THE FLIGHT OF THE MIDDLE CLASS INTELLECTUAL

In Part I of this article we analysed the Spartacist's split from the International Committee as a reflection of the "individualism" and incapacity for discipline and organization that in general distinguishes the intelligentsia as a separate stratum of modern capitalist society" (Lenin). We will now show how this very same method finds expression in the thought and actions of Spartacist's foremost intellectuals.

Of great significance in this respect is the article "Trotsky and the Fate of the Russian Revolution" by Shane Mage, which took up four and a half pages of the November-December, 1965 issue of Spartacist. This article claims to be a review of Deutscher's trilogy on the life of Trotsky: The Prophet Armed, The Prophet Unarmed, The Prophet Outcast. As these books were published in 1954, 1959 and 1963, this is not what one would call a very timely review even for such an irregularly published periodical as Spartacist. It is clear that the purpose of the article is not so much to review books the radical public has long been acquainted with, but rather to offer the author an opportunity to expound his own theory of Trotsky's role in the degeneration of the Russian workers state.

The October Revolution is the touchstone of all politics in the contemporary world. A discussion of October and its aftermath, such as Mage attempts, thus becomes an extremely important indication as to the nature of Spartacist's politics and method.

On Trotsky's 'Ruinous Policies'

It is Mage's position that Trotsky's inner-party tactics from 1923 to 1926 "adds up not to a series of errors but to a ruinous policy." In particular Mage criticises every tactical compromise Trotsky was forced to make in order to maintain himself and his faction inside the Bolshevik Party. These include: failure to take on Stalin frontally at the 12th Party Congress in 1923; ceasing open factional activity in 1924; repudiation of Eastman for publishing Lenin's "Testament"; refusal to support the Zinoviev opposition in 1925. Trotsky was, Mage states, "totally unwilling to take any action which might risk organizational exclusion from the party."

What in Mage's opinion lies behind these errors? "The fatalistic sense of impotence against overwhelming social forces that caused its (the Left Opposition's --ed.) fatal inability to recognize that Stalin was the main enemy." Thus the tragic flaw in the personalities of Trotsky and the Trotskyist opposition boils down to a "sense of impotence" and an "inability" to recognize an enemy. If only, we are to conclude, Trotsky felt more politically potent, if only he were more able at recognizing enemies, then the degeneration of the Russian Revolution would have been reversed and the history of modern man totally different.

Precisely because of the method he uses Mage nowhere relates the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the struggle against this degeneration to the class struggle. Trotsky's actions seem inexplicable--the result of fear and lack of understanding. Mage does not even have the elementary polemical honesty to present Trotsky's reasoning for his course of action. If he had done so he would immediately have had to face up to class issues.

Trotsky saw in the growth of bureaucracy within the USSR the partial triumph of other social classes, the bourgeoisie and the peasantry. The degeneration of the Russian Revolution raised the danger of capitalist restoration within Russia as well as capitalist triumph internationally. His orientation was to pit -- not isolated factions nor heroic individuals -- but the working class itself against the usurping bureaucracy represented by Stalin and the danger of bourgeois restoration reflected more directly through the Bukharin group. Thus he saw the factional struggle within the Bolshevik Party as part of the class struggle.

All of Trotsky's tactical retreats flowed from this class analysis. He sought to maintain his faction inside the Bolshevik Party as long as possible in the hoped that a revival of the working class both within the USSR and internationally would open up new possibilities for struggle. Trotsky recognized the extreme importance of the Bolshevik Party, the party which made the world's first successful workers revolution. This party was not to be given up, deserted when the situation got difficult. Trotsky patiently and correctly made every compromise necessary, that was consistent with his principled struggle, in order to carry out the most extended, exhaustive struggle possible to return this great party to a proletarian line.

This fundamental approach of Trotsky's was continued even after 1928, even after Trotsky's own forced exile. In 1940 Trotsky summed up his approach as follows:

In the Third International we persisted with all our power to remain a tendency or a faction. They persecuted us, they deprived us of all the means of legal expression they invented the worst calumnies, in the USSR they arrested and shot our comrades, --in spite of all we didn't wish to separate ourselves from the workers. We considered ourselves as a faction to the very last possibility. And all that--in spite of the corrupt totalitarian bureaucracy of the Third International. (In Defense of Marxism pg. 155).

The revival of the working class that Trotsky hoped for did not come to pass and thus he was not able to reverse the degeneration despite the complete correctness of his program for doing so. But Trotsky's ability to remain inside the Bolshevik Party until 1926 did make possible the formation of the United Opposition Bloc with Zinoviev. Mage supports this bloc while opposing Trotsky's tactical line which allowed him so be in the party in 1926 so as to be able to make that bloc. Most important of all, Trotsky's exhaustive struggle for a proletarian line within the leading Communist Party of the world provided the political capital for the

building of an alternative international movement--the Fourth International--in a later period. Mage is launching a fundamental attack on this political capital. We do not take this lightly.

A Bloc With Bukharin?

This same essential lack of a working class approach leads Mage to propose that Trotsky should have formed a bloc with Bukharin of the same character that he formed with Zinoviev. Mage is correct when he states we should not use terms like "left", "right" and "center" as if they were "metaphysical essences." But what he ignores is the class content which Marxists give such terms when applied to factions within a party. This is precisely the content Trotsky had in mind when he used the term "center" for Stalin's faction and "right" for Bukharin's. There is ample evidence that the Bukharin tendency reflected within the Bolshevik Party the interests of the rich kulaks. Stalin's faction represented rather a workers' bureaucracy which compromised in one period with the kulaks only to turn on them in the next.

Looking at it in class terms there was no basis whatsoever for a political bloc with Bukharin. Such a bloc could be justified only if one's aim was simply the removal of Stalin the person (the anti-hero is viewed in the same individualistic terms as the hero). But to remove the usurping bureaucracy, it was necessary to bring the working class to bear. This could be done only by mobilizing the working class around its own program, and not through subordination and compromise of the class program of the working class with that of the kulak and the bourgeoisie which stood behind the kulak. The Zinovievist and Trotskyist oppositions shared a principled agreement on a working class program. No such programmatic agreement existed with Bukharin. Typically, Mage does not even discuss program other than the one plank--oust Stalin.

Every renegade from the Trotskyist movement is forced, at one point or other, to go back to October and to discuss Trotsky's relation to the degeneration of the revolution. Souvarine was the most famous of these renegades in the 1930s. He saw Trotskyism and Stalinism as an identity. Max Shachtman was to follow Souvarine's footsteps but a bit more gingerly. By the 1950s, however, Shachtman had begun his own reexamination of Trotsky's role in the 1920s. The same issues are brought up time and time again. Kronstat, the 1921 ban of factions, Trotsky's compromises in the 1923-1926 period, the failure of a bloc with Bukharin. Now Mage waltzes down the same path as he prepares, as we shall see, to leave the movement.

While each of these renegades differs in emphasis or theoretical subtlety, there is a common thread that runs through all these diatribes: the class axis is absent and the conquests of the class are undermined! The liberalish struggle between "democracy" and "bureaucracy" replaces the struggle between classes. The conquests of the working class--the Russian workers state and the Bolshevik Party--are treated in a cavalier manner. "No compromises", shout our free spirits. "So what if there is a premature split in the party. Parties and classes don't matter after all. All that counts is the purity of our spirits."

For all the nobility of it all these renegades are actually only repeating within the socialist movement the ideology of the bourgeoisie. It is the bourgeois theoreticians who see an identity between Trotskyism and Stalinism. It is the bourgeois theoreticians who applaud a struggle for "democracy" in the USSR but attack those who insist on the defense of the workers state. It is no mere accident that no sooner have these fellows finished lecturing Trotsky on his violations of revolutionary principle than they express their own principles by fleeing from the working class movement.

Mage and Spartacist

Let us now investigate what leads Spartacist to publish and defend Mage's anti-Trotskyist propaganda. There is an identity between the current method and practices of Spartacist and the historical analysis of Mage. It is this identity which has paralyzed Spartacist preventing it from politically understanding Mage. The individualism which Robertson expresses in his approach to the international movement, Mage expresses in his approach to the analysis of the 1920s. Mage presents an historical justification for the flight of Robertson from the international movement.

The Mage-Robertson bloc has its origins precisely in Robertson's first unprincipled break with the International Committee in 1962. At that time, Mage and Robertson had concluded, after one year of struggle within the SWP, that that party was finished. Just as Mage urged impatience on Trotsky, so they expressed it themselves in their approach to the SWP. The International Committee, together with the tendency that was to found the American Committee for the Fourth International (ACFI), felt that one could not simply write off a party with a 30 year history of struggle behind it. Rather one had to exhaust every possibility to return this party to a proletarian line. What Trotsky said about the opposition in 1940 is as true of Robertson and Mage today: "Their impatience has a class character, it is the reverse side of the contempt of pettybourgeois intellectuals toward the workers."

Mage and Robertson in 1962 and Robertson again in 1966, ignored principled political agreement placing before principles unfettered self expression. There can be "no compromises" was Mage's advice to Trotsky. There can be "no compromises" is Robertson's current battle cry. Mage analyzes the factional struggles within the Bolshekik Party in isolation from social classes. Robertson characterizes the IC leadership as "bureaucratic" and on this basis splits from it without showing us the class roots of the "bureaucratic tendency". The historical method of Mage is the contemporary practice of Robertson.

Mage's recent evolution is of some relevance to this analysis. Soon after publication of the article under discussion, Mage was brought into the joint unity discussions between ACFI and Spartacist as the economic expert for Spartacist. At this session Mage launched a major attack on the economic perspectives of ACFI expressing his full confidence in the ability of capitalism to survive without serious economic crisis. Mage saw, instead, that the struggles of the future would occur despite this prosperity.

because of the alienation of man brought about by the meaninglessness of it all. Robertson and other representatives of Spartacist at this session supported Mage's economic position.

Shortly after this episode Mage turned up at a public meeting held by Spartacist and spoke at length from the floor expressing the position that the working class was no longer a meaningful revolutionary force in the modern world. The Spartacist organization then asked Mage to resign which he promptly did.

Mage's desertion of working class politics seems to have taught Spartacist absolutely nothing. In an open letter of April 30th to Gerry Healy, considerably after Mage's forced resignation, Spartacist Harry Turner states of Mage: "He is neither anti-Trotskyist nor a renegade." Mage characterizes the whole inner-party struggle of Trotsky's as a "ruinous policy" but to Spartacist he is not anti-Trotskyist. Mage attacks the very fundamentals of the Marxist program at a public meeting but to Spartacist he is not a renegade. It is typical of Spartacist that it saves its choicest epithets and its deepest hatred for the proletarian forces of the International Committee while it defends petty bourgeois deserters.

Marcus and Spartacist

Having learned nothing whatsoever from its experiences with Mage, Spartacist recently welcomed into its ranks a new replacement, Lynn Marcus. It is precisely Robertson's unprincipled struggle against the international leadership which attracted Marcus, just as Robertson's similar struggle in 1962 attracted Mage. Marcus has not come to Spartacist empty handed. He has brought with him a worked out perspective, a perspective decisively repudiated within ACFI. This perspective represents the distillation, the very essence of petty bourgeois arrogance. Not only did Spartacist welcome Marcus with open arms but they set him to work elaborating this perspective as a guide for the building of the Spartacist organization.

This is Marcus' conception of the relation of the petty bourgeois intellectual to the proletarian party as spelled out in his resignation statement from A.C.F.I.:

A party not led by a leading layer of revolutionary intelligentsia can not be a revolutionary party, can not conduct the struggle for ideological hegemony which is the absolute precondition for a socialist transformation. A party which lacks such a leading layer can neither lead the working class and its allies to power, except under the most extraordinarily favorable circumstances, and is incapable of producing a "Left Opposition" to maintain the continuity of Leninism during periods in which the "proletarian kernel" of the movement defects to centrism.

Thus for Marcus it is the working class leadership of a working class party which leads it to its degeneration. If only our free spirit intellectuals like Mage and Marcus can grab hold of the party's reins, then we will be saved from degeneration and bureaucracy. It is the task of the workers to follow and of the Marcuses

to lead. Ah, but no one follows when Marcus leads. What dumb brutes the workers are!

Trotsky's view of the relation between the petty bourgeois intellectual and the party is somewhat different from Marcus'. Trotsky's concern was not with the subordination of the party to the rule of the intellectual but rather the bringing of the proletariat into the leadership within the party. In 1937 he wrote: "Predominance in the organization of intellectuals is inevitable in the first period of the development of the organization. It is at the same time a big handicap to the political education of the more gifted workers...It is absolutely necessary at the next convention to introduce in the local and central committees as many workers as possible." He further expressed in the same year the fear that "the intellectuals and white collar workers might suppress the worker minority, condemn it to silence, transform the party into a very intelligent discussion club but absolutely not habitable for workers." In 1940 he stated: "Members of the party untested in the class struggle must not be placed in responsible positions. No matter how talented and devoted to socialism an emigrant from the bourgeois milieu may be, before becoming a teacher, he must first go to school in the working class." To Trotsky the 1940 opposition represented precisely a rebellion, a flight on the part of the petty bourgeois element of the party from the working class at a time of crisis. Marcus turns Trotsky on his head. We are sure if he were alive today Trotsky would address Marcus as he addressed Shachtman in 1940: "If this be Trotskyism then I at least am no Trotskyist."

"It could very well be that Marcus will follow in the footsteps of such free spirits as Mage and part ways with Spartacist." So we wrote down in the first draft of this article. Ah, Marcus is too fast for us. No sooner was this draft completed when we learned of his resignation from Spartacist. (We gather it had something to do with asking Robertson to apologize about something or other!) He has now written us to inform us: "The tragic fact is that the 4th International has been destroyed by various currents of revisionism within it, Healy's included; the task now is to begin those urgent steps toward building a 5th!" He spent less than a year with us and seven weeks with Robertson. Perhaps the "5th International" will get a full month of his precious time.

Marcus' resignation from Spartacist in no sense indicates that Robertson or other Spartacist members have learned anything more from their experiences with Marcus than they did from Mage. Shachtman watched the departure of first Burnham and then Dwight McDonald without finding it necessary to reevaluate the character of his original combination with these gentlemen. Robertson now follows in Shachtman's footsteps. Having started down the path of unprincipled politics he collects on the way the Mages and Marcuses. These men give their political stamp to Robertson's organization much as Burnham and McDonald did to Shachtman's.

The Intellectual and the Working Class

The middle class intellectual is capable of coexisting within a working class party for considerable periods of time without

"an actual break with the old environment and the establishment of ties with workers" (Trotsky). But when a period of crisis comes, a period when participation in a workers party requires a break with the middle class intelligensia, then the intellectual who is not serious flies the coop. So it was with Shachtman, Abern, Burnham, McDonald and Co. in 1940. The coming of World War II brought the question of the defense of the USSR into sharp focus. One could not keep a foot in both the middle class and working class camps. The "regime" of the workers party becomes unbearable. One must break out free oneself from this "oppression."

So it is today with the Spartacist camp. For many years the crisis of world capitalism has not directly affected the middle classes of the imperialist countries. As long as this crisis was expressed more sharply in the colonial countries or the Soviet countries, but only developed relatively slowly in the major capitalist countries, the middle class radical could lead a propagandistic existence leaving little contact with or pressures from the working class. Today the crisis is building up within the main capitalist countries themselves. This demands even of small political groupings, the development of a serious relation with the working class. Revolutionary politics can no longer be abstractions. Politics must be applied concretely within one's own country.

The Spartacists rebel from this. It is of extreme importance that at the very same International Congress from which Robertson split, his main political contribution was aimed essentially at avoiding a serious relation with the working class. He wrote off the white working class as quiescent and opposed any agitational work. The tasks of the movement, as he saw it, were to remain essential propagandistic and the arena for work was to continue to be the radical middle class milieu. (see July 9, 1966 Newsletter) Marcus and Mage say: "Hear! Hear! We are with you, Jim. But for such tasks we don't need you or your organization." Robertson has no answer for his organization is nothing more than a conveyor belt for those seeking to desert the serious responsibilities of building a proletarian movement at a time when the proletariat is becoming less and less of an abstract category and more and more of an active force in the United States as well as the rest of the world.

Spartacist represents the rebellion of the petty bourgeois radical against the program and organization of the proletariat. Spartacist pits personal prestige politics against political solidarity with the international movement. Spartacist engages in unprincipled battles against "regimes" and "Bureaucracies" which are not rooted in social reality. Spartacist adapts to anti-Trotskyist theoreticians who attack the priceless heritage of the Trotskyist movement and arrogantly insist they are born to be the proletariat's masters. Spartacist is the direct descendent of Menshevism and of Shachtmanism. There can be no compromise with this tendency.

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