

## WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY?

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In late 1963, the Revolutionary Tendency (now the Spartacist League) in the Socialist Workers Party indicated the dangerous drift of that Party away from Trotskyism, the SWP's traditions of revolutionary working-class politics: the party leadership had become tired of struggle, and had begun to grope around for attractive substitutes for working-class struggle in this country; Fidel Castro, Malcolm X, Ahmed Ben Bella were rapidly becoming the "proletarian" heroes of the party. Attempts by the Tendency to correct this drift were quashed and the Tendency was quickly expelled--at the same National Committee Plenum which endorsed National Secretary Dobbs' telegram of condolences to the widow Kennedy.

### SWP Moves Rightward

However, the SWP leadership could not expel the truth about its own direction and hard confirmation of this soon came out. Culminating especially with the 1965 Washington, D.C. anti-war conference, the SWP submerged itself in the attempt to build classless, popular-front-type anti-war committees on the single issue of the war. The SWP and YSA worked hard to confine these committees to "single-issueism", even to the extent of opposing proposals to support socialist candidates like those of the SWP! This submergence in classless politics helped pave the way for the McCarthy-O'Dwyer movement, which swept into the Democratic Party a large number of sincere anti-war youth and which has now introduced these youth to classic "lesser evil" capitalist politics as McCarthy and O'Dwyer jump on the Humphrey bandwagon. The SWP-YSA reaped the fruits of its disastrous "single-issue" capitulation when the openly reformist CPUSA was able to obtain total control of the Spring Mobilization Committee in part by outflanking the SWP from the left by arguing the patently obvious proposition that the Viet Nam war is related to other aspects of "the system", such as racism.

Only the working class situated at the point of production and distribution has the power to "stop" this war and all imperialist war--by throwing out the capitalist class. But to develop roots in the working class requires patient struggle to influence the workers and a working-class program--which means fighting politically to expose the classless character of the leaderships of the anti-war, "student power" and Black Power movements and offering radical militants a revolutionary direction.

### Final Betrayal of Marxism

Instead the SWP has seized upon various heroes to carry on the struggle in its stead. In particular the SWP has assigned itself the role of cheering squad for the Black Nationalist movement. Instead of seeking out the truly militant black leaders and exposing the fake black politicians--that is, instead of playing the role of a revolutionary vanguard party--the SWP constantly applauds everything like a guilty white liberal. This has taken on a serious turn during the present teachers' strike. There is no doubt, of course, that the UFT is putting out conservative propaganda catering to racial fears, and

that Shanker is a "business unionist" indifferent to the general needs of the oppressed and exploited. But it should also be quite obvious to Marxists that Lindsay is out to bust the public employee unions and Shanker, who is certainly not eager to call strikes, has been forced to defend the union from possible destruction. In the face of this, the SWP (along with Progressive Labor, the CP and other "left-wing" groups) advocates crossing the picket lines and thereby busting the union because, as SWP Presidential candidate Halstead explains, "the present teachers' strike in New York is a reactionary strike directed against the black and Puerto Rican communities." (The Militant, 1 Nov. 1968) Instead of seeking a radical alliance between the union and black militants by pointing out the divisive role of racism in obscuring the class issue, which is decisive, the SWP joins forces with liberal Lindsay to smash the teachers' union! All this, of course, under the slogan, "Black Control of the Black Communities", apparently meaning Rhody McCoy, the \$30,000-a-year administrator of Ocean-Hill-Brownsville who administers his district with Ford Foundation funds! This capitulation to the government is not surprising from a party which three years ago was demanding, "Bring the troops home from Viet Nam and send them to Mississippi".

The Meaning of Wallace

In essence, the SWP has written off the working class as a force for revolutionary change. As Doug Jenness writes in The Militant (25 Oct. 1968): "Many white workers, brainwashed by a racist society and enjoying a privileged position compared to blacks, feel their position threatened by the black struggle." But unfortunately the ultra-right centered around Wallace does recognize the deep discontent and anger of the white workers and has exploited it while the left, including the SWP, has defaulted. This discontent has been directed into racist channels, true--but it is also a hatred for the two bourgeois parties, the liberal "big government" which brings them nothing but war, taxes and endless inflation, and the liberals who tell them that their hard, joyless lives are so good that they must sacrifice for the Negroes. Wallace can be combatted only by showing the white workers that whether they like it or not their problems will be solved not by keeping black workers down, but by joining together with the black workers--the most oppressed and therefore potentially the most militant--to achieve a better life for all workers. Thus, working-class discontent could be the basis for a real labor party in 1968 instead of the fake little man's party of Wallace. But the SWP defaulted on its paper positions. And the whole election has been pulled to the right instead of to a revolutionary left. For these reasons, the Spartacist League's support to the SWP candidates must be of the most critical sort.

For a Vanguard Party

What is needed is a revolutionary vanguard party with a working-class program. Such a party must be concerned with special needs of various sectors of the population--Negroes, students, women--and seek to link up these special struggles with the general struggle of the working class against capitalism. Only a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist line can unite opponents of imperialism and racism in a class struggle against the capitalist system.