

STATEMENT ON UNIFICATION BETWEEN SPARTACIST AND  
THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The Spartacist and the American Committee for the Fourth International agree with the International Committee of the Fourth International that the fusion of the two groups into a unified Trotskyist organization is the urgent need of the day. The two organizations have established a Joint Unity Committee whose task it is to lay the basis for this unification as soon as possible.

The two organizations stand together politically with the International Committee and are in principled agreement with the I.C.'s International Resolution prepared for its coming International Conference. On the basis of this document and on the basis of the Transitional programme, the Joint Unity Committee has been empowered to draft an American Perspectives document for the future fused organization. This document will lay out a perspective for the building of a revolutionary party in the United States. The Joint Unity Committee is also working to further the comradely collaboration of the two organizations in furthering revolutionary work in the interim until unification is consummated.

We feel that this unification will bring us an important step forward along the road to building a revolutionary Marxist party of the working class, a world movement based on the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We urge all serious Marxists who stand with us on the basis of the Transitional Program to join in this common effort.

Spartacist and American Committee for the  
Fourth International

THE EPTON TRIAL

Behind the Government's Witchhunt

As we go to press, the trial of Bill Epton, Harlem Progressive Labor Party Chairman, continues. The Prosecution has rested and the defense is calling witnesses on behalf of Epton. Although the charge of "participation" in the Harlem riot of July 1964 has been dismissed, Epton is still being tried for "conspiring to riot" and on two counts of "criminal anarchy".

The dismissal of this charge by Judge Markevich can by no means be construed as a sign that this judge is trying to be fair or that Epton will be exonerated on the other charges. The charge of "participation" in the actual rioting was the weakest leg of the prosecutions efforts to put Epton (and many other PLP leaders) behind bars. It was not possible to prove that Epton committed any acts of violence or that he was even out of his home during the uprising.

The dismissal of an inessential charge makes it look like

the judge is not biased, thus making it a little easier for him to cover up his real bias against Epton which has shown itself throughout the trial. The dismissal does not bother the government because Epton is really not being tried for anything he may have done, but for his beliefs--his militant defense of the rights of black workers and his consistent public advocacy of socialism. On this basis the government is borrowing a page from the thought control Smith Act trials of the Trotskyists in 1941 and the Communist Party in 1948. The constitutional right to "freedom of speech" is protected the same way as the black man in Harlem is "protected" from police brutality.

The facts behind the Epton trial and the crude witch hunt of the PLP are readily available in Challenge, the National Guardian and in the reprint from the Nov. 15 Nation. Let us just say that Hitler and the gestapo would be quite proud of the leader of this operation, Fritz Behr, head of the New York City "red squad." Behind the witchhunt and trial is what Frank Donner, in the Nation article, calls "Yortyism". This is a reference to the "analysis" put forward by mayor Yorty of Los Angeles (and supported to one degree or another by all the pundits from liberal to reactionary). This theory holds that communists, agitators, criminal elements, etc., are to blame for the so-called riots that have erupted across the country from Harlem to Watts.

The government of the US, whether on the federal, state or local level cannot produce any consistent reforms or amelioration of the basic problems of racism, unemployment, poverty. The best they can do is tokenism--a phoney "war on poverty" and a real war against the peasants and workers of Vietnam. While a small, small number of the relatively privileged Negroes become "intergrated" and Reverend King is accepted and glorified, the people of Harlem and Watts get clubbed and shot down as soon as they show that they can't be bought with tokenism. While the bourgeoisie buys the docility of the Meany's and Reuthers, they bring out a club against revolutionaries like Epton and attempt to silence anyone who is drawn to a revolutionary socialist movement. While people like Norman Thomas are acknowledged by the likes of Secretary McNamara to be o.k., just slightly "misguided"--Epton becomes "public enemy no. 1". Underneath the liberal facade of the Johnson-Rockefeller-Wagner government we see the reality--repression, thoughtcontrol, witchhunt, police terror.

There is no place for hesitation, or half-hearted defense of Epton by socialists because of political differences with the Progressive Labor Party. Whole hearted support of Epton against the government persecution is a principled duty for anyone who is concerned with the defense of civil liberties. It is a principled duty for all socialists who must realize that the witchhunt is directed against the entire revolutionary movement and is a prelude to the more direct attack against the American working class itself. Support of Epton means above all, turning the frameup "trial" of Epton into a real trial of the capitalist system and its government.

NOTE: Due to the Holidays, the next issue of the BULLETIN will be out one week later, under the date Jan. 17, 1966.