

New Wave of Expulsions, Resignations Hits SWP

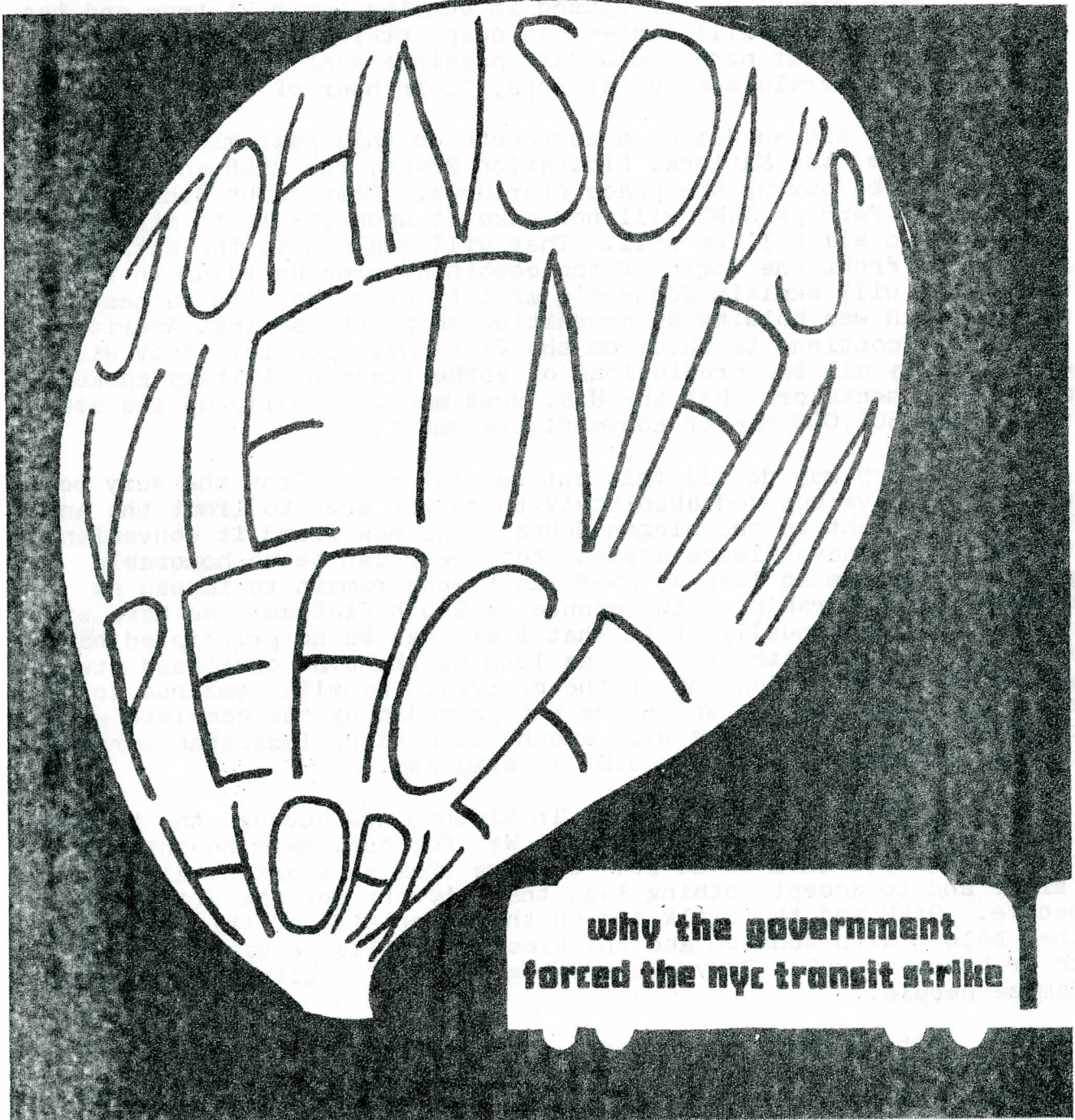
Bulletin

OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

Vol. 2, No. 23

Jan. 17, 1966

10 Cents



**why the government
forced the nyc transit strike**

New Wave of Expulsions, Resignations Hits SWP

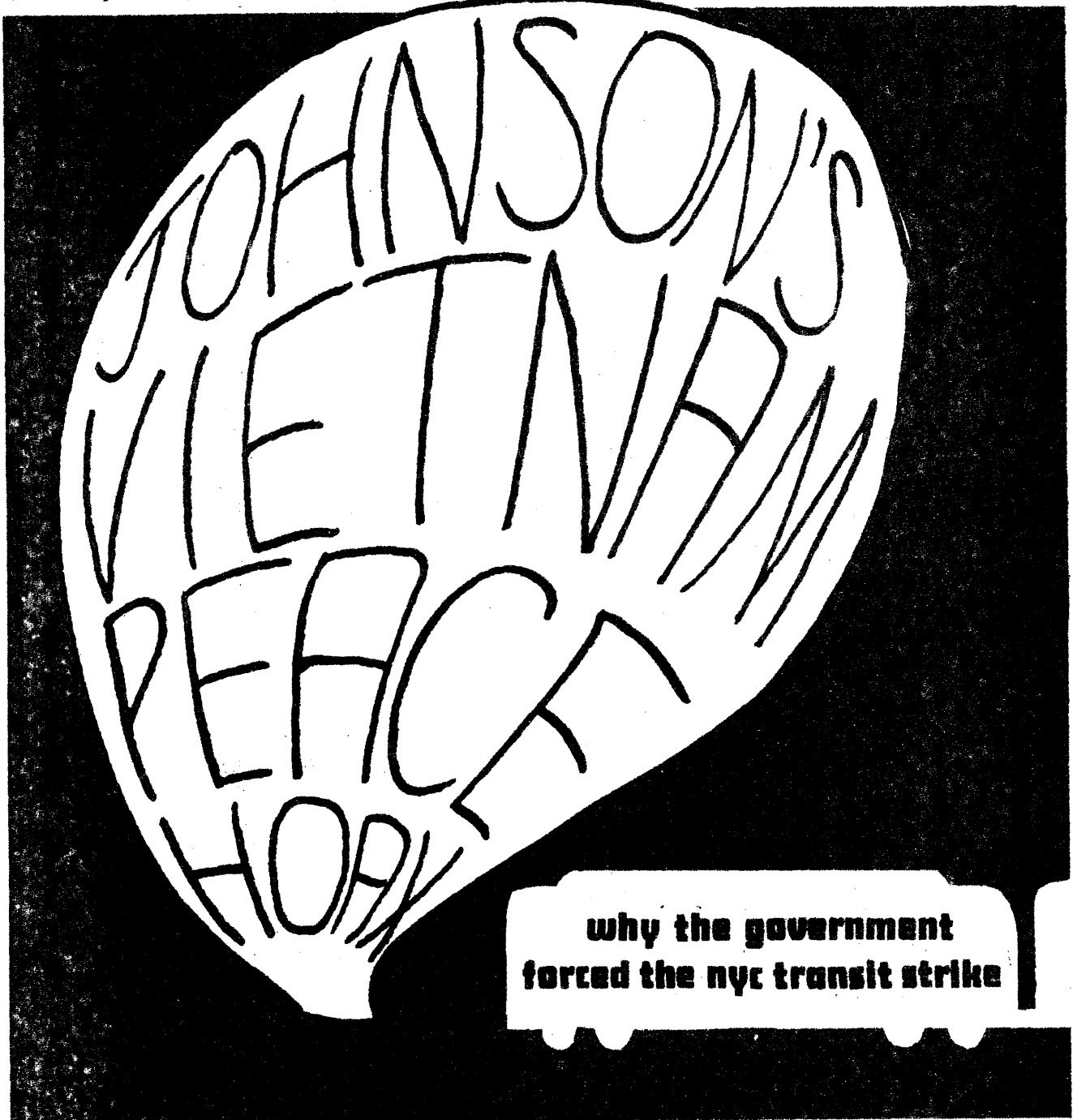
Bulletin

OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

Vol. 2, No. 23

Jan. 17, 1966

10 Cents



**why the government
forced the nyc transit strike**

EDITORIAL

JOHNSON'S VIETNAM PEACE HOAX

As we go to press the Johnson Administration is frantically dashing about the globe talking to all and sundry about "peace". For all intents and purposes it seems as if Johnson has seized the program of SANE for his own. No doubt the result of weeks of quaking in fear after that awesome American Flag waving-Washington begging session on Thanksgiving.

Yes siree, he has paused in bombing North Vietnam and has declared to all who will listen his deep interest in peace and desire to negotiate. What more could SANE possible want? How blissfully happy these liberals must be at this, their hour of triumph!

Ah, but we detect a sour note on this fair globe of ours. North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front, the USSR and China do not seem to be buying the peace overtures. They doubt Johnson's sincerity. Perhaps SANE will now take it upon itself to straighten them out and all will be well. They will explain to the National Liberation Front the logic of the continued arms build-up in Vietnam. They will explain Johnson's anxiety over the Olin Matheson strike which was holding up ammunition shipments so that American forces can continue to shoot up the Vietnamese people. They will explain away all the predictions of authoritative military spokesmen and commentators that the U.S. must and will build up its strength to the 500,000 man or above figure shortly.

They may do all this but we will not. From the very beginning we have opposed absolutely those who seek to limit the anti-Vietnam movement to the slogan Johnson has now found it convenient to adopt. We have always stated that there can be no honorable peace in Vietnam as long as American troops remain to impose an unwanted dictatorship on the people of South Vietnam. We have stated and will continually state that there can be no principled basis for negotiations with the U.S. as long as the U.S. continues its unwanted military occupation of the country. We will continue to insist that negotiations which are not preceded by the complete withdrawal of American troops will amount to nothing less than surrender of the Vietnamese people to U.S. imperialism.

There will be no peace in Vietnam now because the National Liberation Front cannot surrender. We, for one, have no intention of calling upon them to do so. We urge them to fight on all the harder and to accept nothing less than victory for the Vietnamese people. SANE and their ilk are on the other side of this battle. They belong with Johnson and the blood he spills in Vietnam is on their hands as well. They are nothing short of traitors to the Vietnamese people.

It is about time they were picked up by the seat of their collective pants and tossed forthwith out of the anti-Vietnam war movement. Until this first step of political hygiene is taken, little more progress will be made.

* * *

WHAT'S AT ISSUE IN THE VIETNAM WAR

Statement of the Coordinating Committee of the American Committee
for the Fourth International

The Vietnam War is one of the most paradoxical and contradictory events in modern times. Hardly a day passes without one or another "peace feeler" or negotiation proposal being reported in the press. Yet every day the fighting in Vietnam grows more intense and the crimes against the Vietnamese people grow more repugnant.

Johnson is pledged "unconditionally" to go anywhere at any time to negotiate a peaceful solution to the war. Yet in 1964 Johnson turned down a negotiations proposal which came through U Thant. Peace feelers are constantly being given out privately by Hanoi. But when they come out into the press Hanoi is quick to repudiate them. Thus Johnson publically proclaims his willingness to negotiate but privately squelches every proposal that might lead to that end while Ho Chi Minh privately sends out peace feelers and publically denies that he is doing so.

The stated objectives of both sides add further to the confusion. Both the NLF and Hanoi are pledged to end the war if only the Geneva accords are lived up to. Johnson has proclaimed that the U.S. is fighting for the very same aim. So there we have it: both sides are pledged to negotiations but no negotiations take place; both sides claim to agree that a political solution to the war must be on the basis of the Geneva accords and yet the bloody war continues.

The Geneva Accords

The heart of the problem seems to be the Geneva accords. These accords were agreed to by all the parties presently involved in this war. Why is it that the war has erupted in the first place? Is it simply a matter of treachery by one side or the other? If so, what is it about these accords which allowed them to be subverted so easily?

The truth of the matter is that the Geneva accords were specifically designed to be subverted and that this was understood by all sides at the time of their signing. The Geneva accords had two parts which contradicted each other: the immediate partition of the country into two halves with their own "interim" governments and their own armies, and secondly, the pledge for elections to unify the country at a later date. Clearly if Ho Chi Minh was seriously interested in the second part of the bargain he should not have accepted the original partition. The partition was real and concrete while the election and unification proposals were so much smoke to confuse the unwary about the reality of the bargain that had been made.

In accepting this partition "solution" to the Vietnamese Revolution, Ho was following the model of the North Koreans and the Germans who have long since learned to live with half their countries in the hands of the capitalists.

The Birth of the NLF

It was not the failure of the imperialists to live up to their elections pledge which led to the present struggle within South Vietnam. Certainly Ho Chi Minh protested this failure and was deeply disturbed when U.S. influence replaced French influence under the Diem regime. But it was not Ho Chi Minh nor the supporters of the former Vietminh within South Vietnam who started the civil war there. It was rather the failure of the Diem regime to deal with the agrarian question in his country in any other way than to launch a wholesale assault upon the communal land of the villagers. This led these villagers and other dissident elements in the countryside to launch a struggle against his regime. At a later point the former Vietminh cadre had no other choice but to join and give leadership to this peasant struggle or to lose all influence within the country. They chose the former course and the National Liberation Front was born.

Thus it was the South Vietnamese peasants and not Ho Chi Minh who started the process of breaking up the crude bargain hewed out at Geneva in 1954. It was this new factor-- the masses in action for themselves-- which was soon to unsettle the whole of South East Asia and force the world powers into conflict once again on the scarred Vietnamese peninsula.

The rest of the story is pretty well known. The combination of the disintegration of the Diem and later military regimes in Saigon with the growth of the NLF in the countryside led to greater and greater American military involvement in the country until it escalated to the present "Korean-Style" conflict. The build-up by the U.S. presented a direct threat to the very security of North Vietnam as well as to China and the rest of the Soviet Bloc. These countries have been forced to come to the aid of the NLF. Thus this essentially internal civil war now involves directly or indirectly the major world powers.

The Bargaining Table is Only the Beginning

How then is the conflict to end? Clearly all involved realize that at one point or another it will end at the bargaining table. Thus the constant talk of negotiations. It is the nature of the bargain to be made which is the dispute. Since neither side is willing at this point to either recognize the military supremacy of the other nor even a relative stalemate between the conflicting forces, the war goes on with increasing intensity.

It is clear to any objective observer that the U.S. is far from winning this conflict. In fact, if we judge the U.S. in the light of its stated military objectives at the beginning of the escalation, then it is losing. But at the same time the toll upon the NLF, the North Vietnamese and the people of South Vietnam has been very, very great indeed. The U.S. is some distance away from a Dienbienphu and it may well be that at a great cost, (something which France could not afford) it will not allow itself to be defeated militarily as decisively as France.

... to the bargaining table all parties will in time go. When they get there they will find the alternative solutions open to them extremely limited. If we bar a complete military victory for the U.S. -- and the Vietnamese people will bar this -- then there is no alternative for the U.S. other than to accept in some form the present NLF proposals for a coalition "interim" government in South Vietnam to be followed, of course, by those good old elections-- the ones that will never be held.

Why the U.S. Opposes NLF Proposals

A coalition between the NLF and capitalist parties in South Vietnam could only take place on the basis of capitalist relations being maintained in the country. Certainly one cannot expect capitalists to participate in their own funeral and this is not what the NLF has proposed. It asks only that the government be "neutral". Why then does the U.S. refuse the NLF proposals today? There are three decisive factors-- the strength of the NLF among the people of South Vietnam; the absence of any alternative base for the rallying of conservative and capitalist forces in the country; and the growing dependence of the NLF on the North Vietnamese combined with the obvious dominance of China and North Vietnam in the area. Certainly the leading, controlling force within the NLF is the South Vietnamese Stalinists. These Stalinists are essentially an extension of the Stalinist Party in North Vietnam. This, of course is natural as South Vietnam is no more a separate "nation" than is our own South.

Under conditions of the disintegration of the capitalist forces, the internal popularity and strength of the Stalinist forces, the general dominance of these force in the area, clearly the U.S. fears the evolution of a coalition government into a workers' state (in the East European buffer state fashion) and then its absorption into the Soviet Bloc.

In fact there is only one other alternative open to such a coalition government, barring a genuine workers' revolution, and that is a military coup d'etat. Only if the NLF can be forced into a weakened and defensive position prior to the negotiations which set up a coalition government is it conceivable that the NLF will allow a military dictatorship without a renewal of hostilities. And only then after years of demoralization of the revolutionary forces such as paved the way for Boumediene in Algeria.

The Vietnam War will end and a coalition government will in all probability be set up. But now the war continues and deepens and each side jockeys for power to determine who will dominate the country after the coalition government passes from the scene, for as certain as it will come into being so it will shortly pass out of existence. And those elections, guaranteed back in 1954, will not take place.

Central Problems Remain

Whatever the outcome of this conflict the central problems facing the Asian masses as well as the working people the world over

will remain unsolved-- unless the working class intervenes independently. It is precisely from this standpoint-- the standpoint of the Asian and world revolutions that we must judge the NLF and other allies. There is no other way for Marxists to make a judgement.

The line of the NLF on the Asian revolution is clear enough. It is Stalin's old line of a bloc of four classes with the "progressive" bourgeoisie) and the "revolution in stages" (first a democratic revolution in alliance with the bourgeoisie and at some later date, a socialist revolution). This stands in sharp contrast with Lenin's and Trotsky's line-- the line of the Bolshevik revolution itself. Lenin and Trotsky held that the working class must break with the national bourgeoisie and independently lead the peasantry in a direct struggle for power. This struggle would bring into being a worker's state which would take on the tasks of the democratic revolution-- tasks the bourgeoisie was no longer capable of carrying out-- and go over into the socialist revolution. The democratic and socialist revolution can not be separated and thus the revolution is permanent.

It is precisely this policy of coalition politics with the national bourgeoisie which has led to defeat of the workers and peasants in three countries so far this year: Algeria, Indonesia and the Dominican Republic. In Algeria Ben Bella compromised with Boumedienne and the French imperialists, allowing the Algerian Revolution to stagnate. When Boumedienne chose to move against him the masses did nothing. The USSR supported Ben Bella to the end while the Chinese went so far as to support the right wing military takeover of Boumedienne. The NLF stood somewhere in between China and the USSR. Only the Fourth International supported the workers and peasants.

In Indonesia the PKI with China's support, backed Sukarno to the hilt as the representative par excellence of the progressive national bourgeoisie. Today Sukarno fronts for the military regime of Nasution while the PKI is in rout, seemingly helpless under the blows of a bloody white terror, yet refusing to call upon the workers and peasants of Indonesia to struggle independently for power.

In the Dominican Republic the leftist working class forces conducted their struggle in alliance with Col. Caamano. Caamano in turn agreed to an interim regime headed by a rich businessman Garcia-Go-doy and allowed the workers to be disarmed while U.S. troops policed the country. Nobody but the Fourth International called upon the workers and peasants of the Dominican Republic to struggle independently for power and push the U.S. troops out of the country.

To understand the importance of these events just picture the position the U.S. would be in today if it was forced to fight the masses not only in Vietnam but also in Indonesia, Algeria and the Dominican Republic. The U.S. is only able to do what it is presently doing in Vietnam today because it is able to concentrate on Vietnam in isolation. Forced to struggle against the proletariat elsewhere in the world, it could not afford the military concentration it now has in Vietnam.

We state without qualification that the international line of the NLF, North Vietnam, China, and the USSR, has contributed to weakening the NLF by isolating it and thus has aided the imperialists.

The struggle for the strategy of the permanent revolution is no sectarian exercise, no matter of digging up sterile aged disputes. It is a matter of the life and death of the proletariat today.

The Role of the Advanced Countries

We must add another aspect of the picture. We cannot view the Asian revolution nor the colonial revolution as a whole--in isolation. We must also discuss the struggle of the working class in the advanced countries. Just view the position the imperialists would be in if not only they had to face uprisings throughout the colonial world but serious struggles at home by their own working class. Again it is the Stalinists who betray these working class struggles in the metropolitan countries, and it is the line of the Stalinists that the NLF follows.

Just look at France. Here the powerful PCF supports Mitterand in the election while Mitterand attacks DeGaulle--for what? For being too critical of the U.S.! The Italian and British CPs cheer on their French comrades. This is the way Stalinism in Europe "supports" the NLF!

Let us make our position clear. We do not rule out a social transformation in South Vietnam on the East European or Chinese model. Nor is it guaranteed. We do say that if such a transformation takes place, it will take place in a bureaucratic fashion so as to alienate the masses of the country just as it happened in East Europe. This will pave the way for a future "Hungary" in the country. We do say that the same line of the bloc of four classes and the stage theory of revolution will and has led to defeat for the masses elsewhere in the world. Thus viewing the NLF program from the only standpoint Marxists can use--that of the world revolution--we state clearly and categorically that the NLF's program is wrong, dangerous and an aid to the imperialists. The NLF is responsible not only for its heroic struggle within Vietnam but also for its support to betrayal outside Vietnam.

We stand for the unconditional victory of the National Liberation Front in Vietnam as we always stand with the workers and peasants no matter how misguided their leadership. Therefore we favor the defeat of American forces in Vietnam. We call on the world working class to give every assistance to the NLF without conditions. We are unconditionally opposed to the political line of the NLF, North Vietnam, China and the USSR, and we intend to struggle against every position which is not in the interests of the working class.

Our position will seem contradictory to some. But the world is full of contradictions. Those who seek simple solutions to a complex and changing reality are assured of one thing--they will always be wrong.

NEW WAVE OF EXPULSIONS, RESIGNATIONS HIT SWP

The degeneration of the Socialist Workers Party is continuing and accelerating. The latest event in this protracted "death agony" is the expulsion of five critics of the majority leadership. This time it was the Miller-Phillips tendency which had to go!

These comrades had previously been associated with the group which was to initiate the American Committee for the Fourth International. However they broke with us prior to our expulsions from the party because we did not believe in staying in the party "at all costs", which would have meant silence on questions of principle. However the recent right-wing drift of the party caused them to reconsider their tactic.

Two other comrades associated with the Swabeck group (a pro-Maoist tendency) within the party resigned in protest against organization action taken against them within the New York branch. An additional comrade who had supported the 1965 Miller-Phillips convention documents has also resigned in New York. All these party members, some of them with 20 or more years in the party, have been actively opposing the SWP's treacherous line in the Vietnam struggle.

What distinguishes these expulsions from earlier ones? There were a series of expulsions and suspensions in 1964, of the group which was to initiate the Spartacist as well as the group which formed the American Committee for the Fourth International. These latest expulsions are the first since then. Following the SWP convention by only a few months, they occur along a series of resignations. There are signs of further organizational crisis, with possible suspensions or expulsions, in the near future.

Even more important, these expulsions are directly related to the latest and most extensive in a series of betrayals by the SWP on the domestic political front.

There was Cannon's pacifist and purely pragmatic response to the Cuban missiles crisis, the role of the Soviet bureaucracy in it and how this related to a struggle in this country against the U.S. policy; the call for sending U.S. troops to the South to protect Negro rights, the tail-ending and adulation of Malcolm X; and the capitulation to bourgeois pressures at the time of the Kennedy assassination. And the SWP has continued to reaffirm its lack of real interest in the actual mass movement of the white and black workers as it develops. But never has the SWP so blatantly expressed its anti-revolutionary and anti-working class character as it has in the anti-war movement.

The details of the SWP's role in the movement, culminating in its participation in the Thanksgiving Washington Conference of the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam, have been given in previous issues of the BULLETIN.

SWP CITES FEAR OF TROTSKYISTS

At a Dec. 30 New York SWP meeting a national leader (not identified for security reasons) explained why political discussion of Anti-War work was being suppressed in the Party ranks. According to his report, facts of the SWP's schemes to pack Anti-War Committee meetings had leaked to the BULLETIN, with the result that two Party leaders had been confronted with the BULLETIN in Washington by irate SDSers.

For the past two years, internal political discussion has been suppressed in the SWP on the grounds of the activities of Trotskyist minorities within the party. Now, after two years of frame-ups and expulsions of these minorities, the leadership proposes to continue suppression on the grounds of the activities of Trotskyists outside the SWP.

New York Expulsions

There have been two expulsions in New York. Miller and his wife were brought up on charges that included disruption of a previous branch meeting, non-attendance at caucus and fraction meetings in Washington, and non-payment of a fund drive pledge to the party. Those accused effectively demonstrated that these charges were totally false.

The disruption of a previous meeting had occurred when Miller requested time to explain his position on the Washington Conference. When one of the members (who subsequently resigned) defended this member's right to extended time, an altercation ensued and a member of the majority had to be restrained from physically attacking one of his critics. The majority responded to this incident by censuring the critics.

A majority of caucus and fraction meetings in question were attended, and the fund pledge was only withheld when Miller and his wife learned that they were going to be expelled.

Many members disassociated themselves from these charges and admitted that the expulsion was really for political reasons. A vote on the charges themselves was not permitted and these members were summarily expelled.

The Detroit Expulsions

The expulsions in New York were directly related to those which had taken place in Detroit several weeks earlier. Steve Fox, YSA and SWP member active in the anti-war movement had proposed a working class perspective for the movement and had asked that the YSA put forward this line and orientation. As the Bulletin has indicated, this approach was violently rejected by the SWP and YSA leaderships. This comrade then declared that he had no choice but to go to the NCCREW convention in Washington with this perspective of the anti-war fight as a class fight. He was expelled on this basis, along with Phillips and his wife who solidarized themselves with him. It must be said that although the SWP may have had formal grounds to take this action, in doing so, they have also announced their rejection and hatred of Marxism. Those expelled should be proud of their espousal of a working class perspective and their

expulsion on these grounds.

The SWP was isolated in Washington as a result of its line. It is responding to this isolation by expelling its own internal critics. It expelled those who represented its conscience, in a sense its own past tradition of a working class orientation.

The latest struggle in the SWP is progressive. Everything that clarifies and exposes the revisionism of the SWP leadership will help to educate a new generation of revolutionists. This is not a question of personalities or petty squabbles, although often bitter political differences are distorted into such channels by the very revisionism and fear of political discussion of the SWP leadership itself.

Perhaps the SWP leaders delude themselves into thinking that their latest organizational measures will solve their problems. As the SWP proceeds from crisis to crisis such delusions become almost laughable. In reality the SWP leadership has tried to build a party without politics and without the internal political struggle which is always necessary in a revolutionary party. Once they have succeeded in removing from their midst all political oppositions (and the latest expulsions represent a significant step in this direction), the crisis will continue although in a different form.

To paraphrase Trotsky's reference to Burnham in 1939-40, politics and the dialectic will continue to recognize the SWP, though it continues to recognize neither. Marxists will continue to intervene in this continuing crisis, and will not stop intervening until the crisis is ended with the removal of the SWP as an obstacle in the building of a mass revolutionary party.

* * *

FRENCH CP SUPPORTS PRO-NATO CANDIDATE

The decaying corpse of European Stalinism gave off a particularly sharp odor last month as the French CP rallied behind pro-NATO SP candidate Francois Mitterand in the just-concluded presidential elections. Although the CP press, Humanite, had much to say about the danger of DeGaulle, "the man of the monopolies," Humanite's candidate, Mitterand, spent his time and energy attacking DeGaulle for the latter's apposition to U.S. economic and military policies. Understatement of the year is provided by New York writer Keith Botsford, who explains the CP's strange alliance with Wall Street: "French Communists form the largest single political party in France, but few of them are in any sense revolutionaries."

This political rottenness is not a peculiarity of the French Stalinists. Advanced stages of the French Disease are seen in the Italian and British CPs. Across the Alps, Italian CP leaders have hailed the French Stalinist role as a great "lesson" and have announced their resolution to commit even greater crimes at the first opportunity. Across the Channel, the British CP is so aged and doddering that no bourgeois press troubles to measure that party's exact angle of political inclination at any moment; however, for those who may be interested, the British Stalinists are leaning

precariously toward a Wilson regime that supports Johnson's war and is in the process of attacking British labor on direct orders from Wall Street.

It would be false to leave the impression that French CP leaders are not opposed to Johnson's war in Vietnam; to them, supporting a pro-NATO presidential candidate is a "clever way" to get a few CPers into minor French Government posts where they can "influence" national policy for peace.

Nor did the French CP leaders cook up this betrayal out of their own ivory-tower fantasies; they were reacting opportunistically to real social and political pressures among French workers and farmers, both within and outside CP ranks. The French CP was responding to a class sentiment in the electoral campaign. French workers and farmers are seething with resentment against Gaullism as they know it.

The real meaning of Gaullism is the stability of the Franc and the relatively large size of the French national gold hoard. The secret of the stable Franc is partly Gaullist protectionist policies, which aim at protecting the relatively backward internal French economy from the ambitions of capitalists in more advanced West Germany and the U.S. The deeper secret of the stable Franc-- the aspect which hits home with French workers-- is low wages.

The contemporary historical key to the emergence of Charles "Napoleon" DeGaulle's regime and policies is French economic backwardness. France, as a capitalist nation, can maintain a strong currency only by vigorous protectionist policies, even with the very low workers' wages. Without protectionist policies, without massive subsidies, France cannot maintain profitable foreign markets for French farmers.

As for anti-Gaullist moods among French farmers, it is an irony of current history that the present anti-Gaullist sentiment arises from DeGaulle's efforts to negotiate bigger subsidies for them from the Common Market. DeGaulle has temporarily eased out of his Common Market arrangements in an effort to bring West Germany to terms on the agricultural question. But while De Gaulle sweats this tactic out, French farmers, an ungrateful, short-sighted lot, have become impatient.

At the same time DeGaulle's French national economic policy demands a disengagement of France from the inflationary burdens of U.S. Imperialist military adventures. This was key to Mendes-France's success (among the French bourgeoisie) in bringing France's Vietnam campaign to an end; this was key to DeGaulle's settling of the Algerian war. It is also key to DeGaulle's easing out of NATO and his opposition to the present Vietnam war. It is, finally, key to his policy toward China and the Soviet Union-- toward, in other words, broadening and deepening France's trade with less developed countries.

-- The ridiculous French alternative to NATO, the "Force de Frappe" --France's primitive independent nuclear armament--is the pyramid of Gaullism, the temple of the official state religion of Napoleon-

the-Third. It represents the ideology of French bourgeois nationalism, France's pitiful efforts to establish independence from Washington and London financiers.

Thus, it was natural enough that French worker and farmer resentment against Gaullism--as it directly affects their purses--should express ignorantly in an attack on the symbols of the Gaullist ideology, the "Force de Frappe," DeGaulle's gestures of independence from Wall Street. It can thus be understood where and how the CP conceived the filthy opportunistic scheme of playing up to the most reactionary, pro-imperialist side of French workers' and farmers' anti-Gaullist sentiments.

The Class Line In The French Elections

The question posed in the recent French elections is whether to choose to vote against the Vietnam war by supporting DeGaulle, to vote against pro-U.S. Mitterand, or whether to offer a real, meaningful class program capable of solving the problems of French workers and farmers. The alternative obviously did not occur to the cretins of Humanite.

DeGaulle's "Force de Frappe", as Mitterand argued, is a farce; for our part, it is not farcical enough! DeGaulle weakens NATO, undermines the Common Market; the more the better; DeGaulle threatens to cash in Eurodollars for U.S. gold, weakening the U.S. economy, threatening the Pound--the more the better! We do not, like SP adventurer or his CP lackeys, criticize for deviating from U.S. imperialist policy. As Trotsky pointed out our principles to sundry ultra-left idiots decades before, if even a fascist government chooses to ship arms to the Viet Cong, we encourage them; we even go so far as to disperse our picket lines for exactly as long as is necessary--and no longer-- to hasten the forwarding of those shipments. This does not lessen our struggle against the fascist regime. We "support" the "Force de Frappe" exactly to the degree that it is anti-NATO and at the same time attempt to dissolve the "Force de Frappe" as a menace to French workers.

Neither alternative posed in the French elections offered the worker or farmer any opportunity but to cut his own throat at the polls. An independent revolutionary party's slate and platform for a French Workers and Farmers Government would not have carried this election, but it would have attracted the votes and attention of all revolutionaries and militants, and begun a desperately needed process of change in French politics.

There are those who will point to the French elections as proof that all betrayals of the working-class come from "ideologues" and "doctrinaires." But the blame for the rotten role of French workers in that election does not lie entirely with Stalinism. French workers would have voted in the same way if there had been no CP. (Even Stalinists are hard-pressed to match pace with the betrayals of Walter Reuther or the sell-outs of Britain's labor fakers.) The real significance of French Stalinism does not originate so much in Moscow as in the role of French Stalinism as the spokesman and representative of certain backward tendencies in the rank and file of the French working class, just as Reuther and Wilson base

themselves on the reactionary tendencies of the U.S. and British organized labor movements.

The need in France is for a revolutionary party that will sweep away the Stalinists, the Mitterrands, Defferres and the "Reuthers and Meanays" of the French labor movement, that will base itself more militant and youthful layers of the French working class. For such work a party is needed which can comprehend and act upon revolutionary, working-class solutions to the tasks thrown up by current economic, social and political developments.

Thus, the lesson of France is the importance of the growing Trotskyist organizations in France which are preparing themselves for this indispensable work. The recent election shows how rotten-ripe the French political scene is for the emergence of such a revolutionary force in continental politics.

WHY THE GOVERNMENT FORCED THE NEW YORK SUBWAY STRIKE

The 1966 New Year's Day strike by subway and bus workers of New York City was deliberately forced upon them by the city. This represents a sharp change in policy and gives widespread public notice that government labor policy is being shifted from the previously prevailing "sweetheart" relationship among union officials, employer associations and the so-called "liberal" and "pro-labor" public officials who make up the public advocates of the "Great Society" policies.

Under the new policy, the government decrees wage and price policies, backing up its edicts on wages with court injunctions obtained even before negotiations are begun with unions representing government employees. This is widely heralded as "free collective bargaining." In the present transit strike the new policy has already resulted in the jailing of leaders of the two transit workers unions just one year after the leaders of the striking Welfare Unions were jailed. In 1964 Johnson sought and received the support of trade unions in order to prevent just such a policy advocated by former senator Goldwater, the Birchites and their followers. But in this period the government is forced to a hard line against labor by military-economic problems facing the country which compel them to disrupt the previously desirable "sweetheart" arrangements.

The government wage-price policy has demanded and so far gotten the collaboration of union leaders in the mass production industries. Wages have been held close to Johnson's decreed 3.2% wage increase while the administration has demanded that some price increases by giant corporations be rescinded. Government by decree and pressure has obliterated the "laissez-faire" approach. The tendency toward increased government management of the economy is further heightened by its need to finance the expanding war in Southeast Asia and attempt to redress the deteriorating balance of payments problem.

The TWU and the Administration

The problem of the New York City transit workers came about when they presented two major demands last autumn. First, they demanded a 30% increase in wages in the current negotiations in

order to bring up their wages to the levels paid by government in other sectors and by private-enterprise in unionized industries in the area. This assertion of such a sharp display in wages has not been challenged by anyone. Secondly, they asked for shortening of the workweek to a 4 day, 32 hour work week in place of the 5 day-40hour week. Both demands violate the decreed labor policies of the "Great Society" "liberals" in charge - of federal, state and city government.

In answer to the unions demands, the New York City Transit

WHAT MAKES MIKE QUILL RUN

"...a platform man painfully explained that what's aggravating is they threaten to raise the fare if we demand what other city workers get. It scares the hell out of the public. So everybody blames us for higher fares instead of blaming City Hall and the TA. We're caught in the middle."

All this dissatisfaction was revealed in a recent election in Local 100 (the NY subway and bus division) in which a rank and file caucus got 4,000 votes out of a reported 16,000 total - but Quill's machine counts the votes and has complete control of the post office box to which the mail ballots are sent. So far we haven't been able to break that grip," pointed out one worker...

'When all is said and done,' said a motorman, 'the only solution is a free fare paid out of government subsidies. Otherwise it's just playing games, putting the burden on us and the riding public.'

--from Challenge Dec. 21, 1965

PORTRAIT OF A TRANSIT WORKER

John (Sarge) Barrett who is 59 years old has been a transit worker for 28 years. A chunky man with wavy gray hair, he is a motorman in the UND "A" Train... But yesterday Mr. Barrett was on strike.

"The general public doesn't understand that we're underpaid", he said. "...Our working conditions are hazardous; you're on edge all the time."

Working underground as a motorman he said, "takes 15 or 20 years out of your life---you go home and you stay half an hour in the bathroom blowing the steel dust (from the tracks) out of your nose."

--from New York Times, Jan. 3

Authority with the approval of Mayor Lindsey made absolutely no counter offer. As a couple of months dragged by, the Transit Authority instead applied to the courts for an injunction prohibiting a strike. A few hours before the old contract expired, the Authority finally offered a 3.2% wage increase toward closing the 30% wage gap. Despite all the endless chatter by government officials about putting more unemployed people to work, the shorter work week demand was rejected out of hand.

How did it come to pass that the 36,000 transit workers were paid wage rates some 30% lower than those paid union workers elsewhere? The same union leadership has held the top spots since the union was successfully established in 1935 some 31 years ago. During all of the time, the TWU

headed by "Mike" Quill had powerful political connections with every New York City administration without exception. For the first 15 of these years Mike was working closely with the Communist Party in its policy of successfully lining up the workers behind the Democratic Party. This was supposed to bring economic benefits to the transit workers. The miserable bankruptcy of this policy is only too obvious.

Prospects for Victory

There is little question of the ability of the transit workers to win this strike which means both breaking with the 3.2% wage freeze and successfully defying the infamous Condon-Wadlin Act (which makes strikes by government workers illegal in New York State) if their union leadership stands up under the attack.

The strike has tied up transit to such an extent that businesses cannot get enough workers to carry on all their normal business functions. Retail stores are virtually deserted and the Times Square area at times resembles a ghost town. Newly installed Mayor John Lindsay demagogically calls upon "non-essential" workers to stay home during the crisis urging employers to pay full wages to them. The answer of most employers is--no work, no pay--or, "you better get to work--Lindsay's not your boss!" Although there has been widespread support for Wagner's do-nothing policy and Lindsay's union-crushing policy; many capitalists, especially in retailing and light manufacturing, have lost their appetite for the conflict. Within a few days they began screaming for any kind of quick settlement. They now cry that "the game is not worth the candle".

Many workers, educated in the school of "every-man-for-himself", finding themselves unable to get to work and thus without wages, curse Quill and the strikers, but they also demand an early settlement of the strike at any cost. The big question is who will pay the bill? Workers in other industries are understandably concerned about a threatened raise in transit fare to pay for a settlement. There is a tendency to see justification in Lindsay's demagogic attack on Quill. It is up to the transit workers to expose this demagogy by raising such demands as free public transportation. The subways can be financed by corporate and real estate taxes. The TWU must demand political support for this from the intire labor movement.

It should be clear that the old patched up social peace is being smashed to smithereens as government by decree meets up with increased resistance from workers defending their living standards. Whild at first glance it appears to the newly-involved fighting workers that their problems ar economic, the transit strike points up the need to organize a political party which will unite the working class instead of pitting the "consumers" against the "producers". They must free themselves and their class from tailending the "liberal" political hacks who serve as slick front men for the class of employers.

The great power of the organized workers is expressed in this "war" (to use Lindsay's term) between the transit workers and the capitalist government. It is about time radicals took this power into consideration rather than spreading myths of building movements separated from the working class whether they be on a race or a student basis. Instead we must forge a link between the organized workers, the minority peoples, and militant students in a common struggle for

a shorter work week for jobs for all, and for an end to wars against oppressed peoples everywhere. Such a struggle must inevitably be a socialist struggle, a struggle to break the strnaglehold of the capitalists, their political agents, and their trade union flunkeys--in the U.S. and throughout the world.

MASS DEMONSTRATION SUPPORTS TRANSIT WORKERS STRIKE

New York City, January 10--

The picket line around City Hall today was as thick as a rush hour crowd on the trains that have been still for over a week. The demonstration, called by the New York City Central Labor Council in support of the TWU strike, brought out steel workers, maritime workers, typographical workers, workers from the building trades who left a nearby construction site to march with their red helmets still on. There were large contingents of workers from the S.S.E.U., employees of the City's Department of Welfare; from District 65 of the RWDSWU; from local 1199, the Hospital Workers; and from as far away as Philadelphia (TWU local 234). All of these were in addition to the many thousands of transit workers there in the first place.

With the transit system completely shut down, workers were transported from all corners of the metropolitan area by chartered buses; and each bus that arrived was greeted by a volley of cheers.

The standard shout on the line was "Jail O'Grady--Free Quill!" (O'Grady is head of the Transit Authority) The sentiment for Quill is not so absolute though. Conversations with transit workers during the past week revealed dissatisfaction with Quill's neglect to put the issues before the rest of the working class and get them on the side of the strikers. Nonetheless, even the TWU members most dissatisfied with Quill's history of collaborationist policies and actions were there in force demanding his release from the bosses jail.

Red-baiting was occaionally attempted against members of ACFI and Spartacist as they distributed leaflets to the line, but for each worker that snarled "Commie propoganda", another would say "Look, it says support the transit workers!"

It is difficult to estimate the number encircling City Hall today but it was certainly far larger than the figure given by WQXR, the radio station of the New York Times.

Such a strike and mass demonstration should not be taken lightly by those radicals looking for the forces that will stop the war in Vietnam and build a new society. The working class is obviously beginning to move and, given revolutionary leadership, will strike and demonstrate for more than simple economic issues.

REPORT ON AFL-CIO CONVENTION

Bureaucrats Seek to Rally Workers to War Effort

It might have been an Elks or Lions convention if not for the neon sign over the dais, flashing the letters AFL-CIO and showing two hands (both white) clasping. Supposedly a labor convention, most of the speeches this reporter heard were about Vietnam. By coincidence, all the speakers agreed with the official U.S. government position! Emil Mazey, of the UAW, attacked "serious foreign policy blunders" by the U.S., but then ended up by supporting the resolution in favor of the war.

Unionization of the 30 million non-union workers in the U.S. was made the top objective of the AFL-CIO. Unfortunately, no funds were approved in order to do it. However, to make up for this, an appropriation was approved to increase President George Meany's salary from \$45,000 to \$70,000. Elmer Brown, head of the International Typographical Union, accused most of the delegates of acting "like trained seals." He pointed out that "there is no secret vote here," and that the balloting was done by blocs representing the international unions.

During the course of the convention a demonstration was called by Workers United for Political Action, an organization of rank and file workers which demands that the trade union movement debate the question of Vietnam and calls for the organization of the unemployed. In pouring rain, demonstrators heard striking grape pickers from Delano, representatives from various Vietnam Day Committees and rank and file workers. During the demonstration a delegate to the convention ran to the platform and grabbed the microphone to defend the record of Walter Reuther. Unlike the practise inside the convention, he was allowed to speak. A resolution was approved by the demonstrators which called, among other things, for the formation of an independent labor party.

Victor Riesel, in an article on the final day of the convention revealed what the labor leaders were not saying publically. "Word among the nation's thousand top labor chiefs who have been conferring in San Francisco is that the campus spirit of automatic rebellion, and a desire for elephantine instant improvements in every new wage contract, has spread among the newcomers to the work force." Victor Riesel calls them "beatnik workers" and blames them for the strike in Olin Mathieson which stalled the production of certain types of ammunition destined for Vietnam, in which the rank and file voted down the contract signed by the union leadership. "Beatnik workers" are also blamed for the strike in McDonnell Aircraft which stalled the production of Phantom jets-- also to be sent to Vietnam. An AFL-CIO vice president told Riesel that the Olin Mathieson strike was a spill-over from the McDonnell strike and "hoped that spill-overism will not spread across the country."

Jack Potofsky, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers was invited to the Pentagon to discuss the speeding up of production of millions of uniforms. Riesel writes: "Everywhere the word is that labor must prepare to supply the equipment and the weapons for a

land army of 500,000 troops in Vietnam."

The significance of the actual resolutions passed at the AFL-CIO convention is probably most clearly expressed in a card which was enclosed with every delegates badge. The card says: "A convention badge is more than a means of identifying the wearer as a member of your organization in convention. After the business sessions and entertainment are over it is often the only tangible memento of the meeting." There is no doubt that this convention will go down in history as having the prettiest badges yet.

#

BULLETIN PUBLICATIONS

order from: BULLETIN
rm. 305
339 Lafayette St., New York, N.Y. 10012

- ___ copy(s) BLACK NATIONALISM and MARXIST THEORY @ 20¢
- ___ copy(s) LENIN ON DIALECTICS by Cliff Slaughter @ 50¢
- ___ copy(s) THE THEORY OF STRUCTURAL ASSIMILATION by T. Wohlforth @ 75¢ (a marxist analysis of the social overturns in eastern Euarope, Yugoslavia and China)
- ___ copy(s) YOUNG SOCIALIST vol. 3, no.4 @ 25¢ (magazine published by Trotskyists in Ceylon)
- ___ copy(s) CRISIS OF AMERICAN SOCIALISM Bulletin Supplement FREE
- ___ (copy(s) QUESTIONS FACING THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR MOVEMENT Bulletin Supplement FREE
- ___ sample copy, the NEWSLETTER, weekly organ of the Socialist Labor League of Britain FREE
- ___ one year subscription to the BULLETIN @ \$ 2.00
- ___ Ten issue introductory subscription @ \$.50

Name (please print) -----

Street -----

City -----State-----Zip-----

Make check or money order payable to: BULLETIN OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM