

Bulletin

weekly organ of the workers league

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**What is
Spartacist?**

part iii

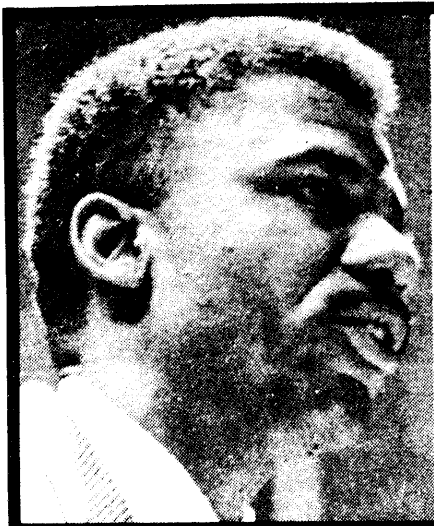
APRIL 1966 I.C. CONFERENCE

Ranks Must Reject Pact

LEADERS CALL OFF NY HOSPITAL STRIKE



1199 hospital workers march around Beth Israel hospital in recent noon work action.



**BEHIND BILL EPTON'S
EXPULSION FROM
PROGRESSIVE LABOR**

C.P. Dominates Chicago Conference

Two Articles On Chicago Rank & File Conference



Workers League Fights For Labor Party

BY DENNIS O'CASEY

The National Rank and File Action Conference held in Chicago last weekend was called for the purpose of diverting the tremendous upsurge now gripping the American working class, into an alliance with the trade union bureaucracy and the liberal bourgeoisie, that is, into the popular front.

The only force that came forward in struggle against the Stalinists who ran this conference lock, stock and barrel and their counterrevolutionary policies was the Workers League.

Against the conception of a bloc between the working class and the liberals in the Democratic and Republican parties, the Workers League fought for Trotskyism, for breaking the working class politically from the entire bourgeoisie through an aggressive fight at this conference, around the call for a labor party now.

No other tendency took up this fight.

The role of the Socialist Workers Party at this conference was one of complete abstention. The SWP had obviously made a decision to restrict their activity in the conference to that of taking notes for a forthcoming article. They did not intervene. Their role in Chicago, thus together with their role in Cleveland the week before, made their capitulation to Stalinism complete.

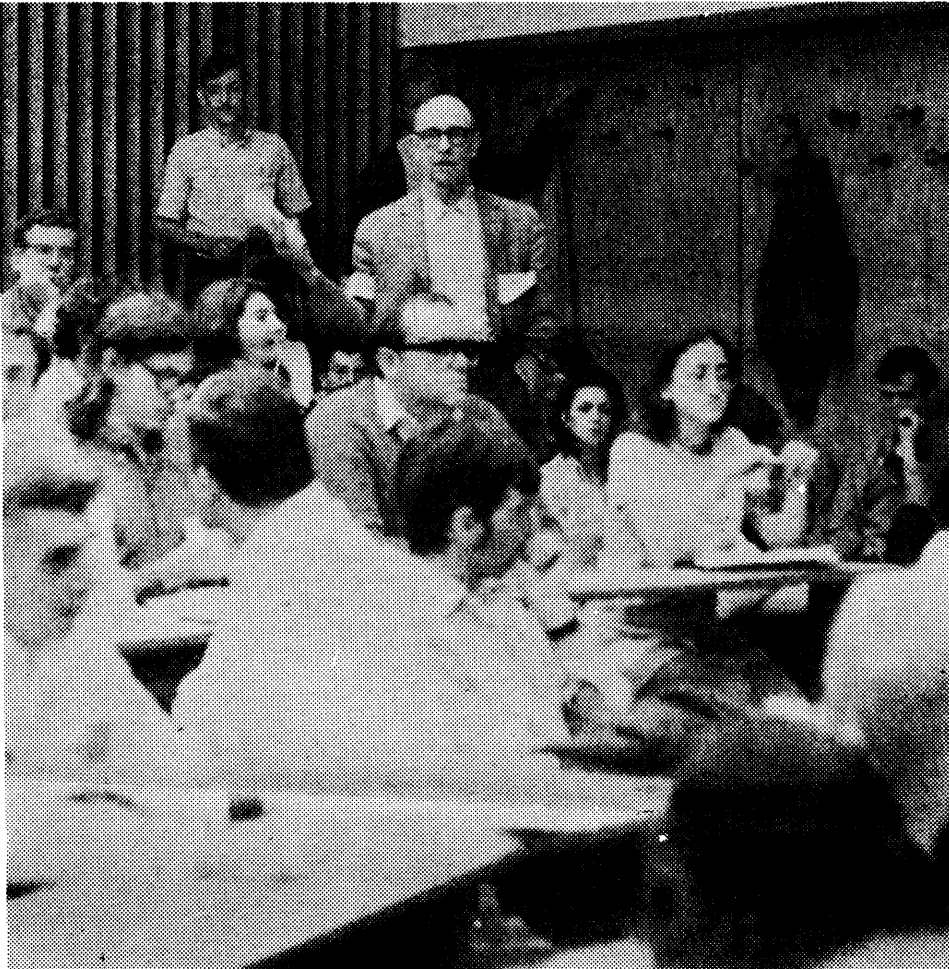
SWP

In spite of Sidney Peck's denunciation of the Cleveland conference, as a "Trotskyist maneuver," and the CP boycott which severely undercut its labor support, and in spite of the complementary attack launched in the conference by PL, the SWP-YSA refused to raise the question of Stalinism and its bloody betrayals even once.

However if in Cleveland they had their usual rationale, the cover of their single issue peace movement conception, to excuse themselves from taking the Stalinists up, at Chicago they stand even by

their own criteria completely exposed.

Frank Lovell, in reply to the call raised in the Labor workshop at the Cleveland conference by the Workers League for a labor party now, had replied that this demand was all right in the shops but did



Frank Lovell of the SWP speaking at Labor Workshop at the Cleveland Conference.

not belong in the SMC.

But this same Frank Lovell, when confronted by 800 trade unionists organized by the Stalinists, many right out of the shops in Chicago, sat back in the conference and refused to intervene. Thus we say that the SWP which in the SMC is pumping the heads of thousands of youth full of the politics of Stalinism and the popular front, now compounds its crime by leaving the field clear for Stalinism on the trade union front.

What we want to know from the SWP is—if you do not fight Stalinism on the floor of the SMC, or now, in a trade union conference organized by the Stalinists, just what do you consider a proper arena for that fight?

By refusing to take on the Stalinists even in the face of the extremely dangerous strength they now reveal in the trade union movement, the SWP-YSA stands guilty of aiding them resurrect the popular front, and prepares the ground for the defeat of the working class on the order of the 1930s. This is being done at a time when a principled struggle against Stalinism can, like never before, lead to its being undermined and smashed.

Progressive Labor, for its part, ab-

STALINISTS PUSH

BY A BULLETIN CORRESPONDENT

CHICAGO, June 28—The National Rank and File Action Conference held on the weekend of June 27-28 attracted over 800 trade unionists from many branches of industry and every section of the United States.

The conference was dominated by the Communist Party and bureaucratically manipulated from start to finish. The aim of the Stalinists was to carry forward their popular front program, to contain the working class upsurge through support to the liberal wing of the trade union bureaucracy and the capitalist class. To this end the main preoccupation of the conference organizers was to prevent serious political discussion, particularly on the need for independent political action by the working class.

The organizational maneuvers started even before the conference itself. When Fred Mazelis of the Rank and File Committee of Local 1199 submitted his registration several days before the Conference he was notified that it had been rejected, on the grounds that "your aims are not in accord with the aims of the

conference." Clearly the conference planners were disturbed at the prospect of political discussion and the fight for an independent labor party. Mazelis' aim was an independent class fight, and the aim of the organizers was class collaboration.

Mazelis made it quite clear that he was going to Chicago and intended to fight for his right to attend the conference. In Chicago the conference organizers immediately backed down and made no effort to prevent his registration.

At the conference itself the rules and agenda were so formulated as to make very difficult the introduction of any views contrary to the class collaborationist line of the Stalinists.

The Proposed Rules, for instance, stated that "controversial points which cannot be resolved on the floor within a reasonably

The difference is not at all terminological but reflects fundamental differences on issues of method and strategy.

This is why, though chased after throughout the conference by these elements, and asked to collaborate in signing this statement, the Workers League refused to do so.

STRATEGY

The strategy behind these various formulations for a rank and file based workers party, expressed most openly in the past by the IS, and now embraced by the Spartacists and Turner, is really no strategy at all.

It begins with pessimism, the impossibility of breaking the hold of the bureaucracy within the unions, and substitutes in the place of this necessary fight the idealist conception of cultivating a revolutionary movement of the rank and file outside of the struggle against the existing bureaucracy, as if this could somehow provide a guarantee against bureaucracy and reformism.

The logic of this Shachtmanite method was the British International Socialists turning their back on the Labour Party in the last general election. The same method leads to their refusal to defend the Soviet Union from imperialist attack.

PRAGMATIC

The Spartacists and Turner of course, could care less about all of that. They may disagree on abstention in the British general elections or defense of the Soviet Union, but are hardly about to allow questions of principle or the historical and class role of the people with whom they are dealing, or whose resolutions they sign, stand in the way of immediate, pragmatic gains.

The behavior of the Spartacist League, in particular, in the Cleveland, and the Chicago conference where they found themselves in two successive weeks, first in alliance with PL, and then the state capitalists, reveals the completely pragmatic and unprincipled character of their politics.

The pragmatism which dominated the entire intervention of these centrists was further revealed in the fact that none of them saw fit to break with the Stalinist conception of keeping Marxism as such out of this conference. They took quick exception to the Workers League's actually raising the question of Stalinism on the floor. By refusing to fight for the labor party and refusing to take up the question of Stalinism, Spartacist, Turner, and the IS, did no more to fight Stalinism at this conference than Progressive Labor or the SWP.

The fight at Cleveland and at Chicago was the fight for the future of the American working class. The ideological struggle like the one that took place at these two conferences will immediately tomorrow determine the fate of millions of American workers in struggle. There can be no leading of the mass of the American working class along the revolutionary road without a sharper ideological struggle today against those political tendencies, Stalinism and its hangers on who would lead this working class into a reformist swamp.

Bulletin

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POPULAR FRONT ON RANK & FILE

short time or which jeopardize the time schedule of the conference shall be referred to the Credentials and Contingency Committee for consideration..."

The agenda provided for keynote speeches on Saturday morning and workshops in the afternoon. A plenary session was scheduled only on Sunday. As we shall see this was also altered so as to prevent political discussion on the floor of the conference itself.

The policy of popular front, of alliance with the bosses, was made unmistakably clear in every statement and resolution at the conference.

The Statement of Purpose affirmed at great length that the conference was not anti-leadership, i.e., did not seek to replace the trade union bureaucracy with a new leadership. What was needed, said the statement, was unity between the leadership and the rank and file, not a struggle against the present leadership.

COLLABORATION

The Declaration for Peace and Against Repression spelled out the class collaboration perspective even more clearly:

"We oppose the tragic war in Southeast Asia which...is the cause of...the erosion of our living standards and domestic tranquility...We call for an immediate end to the war now, for the immediate resumption of peace talks, for the withdrawal of all our troops by Christmas as the only honorable way out of a morass which has brought shame and censure against our country from all quarters of the globe... Force and violence as a means of policy of settling international disputes has... proven bankrupt."

Here the policy of peaceful coexistence is carried so far as to substitute the demand for withdrawal by Christmas for immediate withdrawal. It is also suggested that "domestic tranquility" will be rescued if only the war is ended. Even youth in the Young Workers Liberation League and others close to the Communist Party objected to this crude liberal rubbish.

The defenders of the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia pose as pacifists opposed to "force and violence," even as the Vietnamese workers and peasants are demonstrating every day the possibility and the necessity of fighting imperialism.

In the Declaration of Labor Political Independence the authors make crystal clear that labor political independence is the exact opposite of what they have in mind. They say:

"...we recognize that there are individual Democrats and Republicans who are pro-labor, pro-peace, anti-racist and anti-repression, who merit labor's support, few as they are... To those who say that organized labor should form a Labor Party or a Farmer-Labor Party here and now, we declare that we have no opposition in principle to such a party, that such a party may become the only way out of the many crises wracking our country in the near future, but that such a party would be premature in 1970."



Al Evanoff of Dist. 65 speaking in the Political Action Workshop at Chicago conference.

The conference organizers were forced to deal with this question in print in order to prevent discussion on the floor of the conference itself. There is undoubtedly great sentiment for a labor party amongst the workers and youth with whom the Communist Party is working. The Stalin-

ists must reply to this sentiment while preventing the Trotskyists from speaking on this question, preventing a discussion which could expose their true role.

To speak of the labor party as premature nearly 35 years after the birth of the CIO, in this year of the greatest economic crisis and uncertainty for the bourgeoisie since the war, is the most calculated betrayal of the working class. The Stalinists speak openly on behalf of the so-called progressive bureaucrats. They and the bureaucrats they defend will advocate a labor party only when the upsurge of the working class gives them no choice but to try to contain this upsurge by directing the independent political action into reformist channels. To them a labor party is not

revolutionaries" who had dared to criticize the UE and IUE leaders during the GE strike. He characterized this settlement, which was voted against by tens of thousands of workers, as a victory and evidence of the importance of progressive leadership.

ALTERNATIVE

The alternative to the Stalinist popular front was clearly expressed at the conference in a leaflet issued by 6 trade unionists entitled "Build a Labor Party Now." The signers included Dennis Cribben of the SSEU-371 Committee for New Leadership, Fred Mazelis of the Hospital Workers Local 1199 Rank and File Committee, John Zupan of Local 1497, AFSCME (Detroit), Mark Pilder of the Rank and File Caucus of Local 2175, Steelworkers (Minneapolis), Earl Gilman of the Rank and File Committee of Local 400, City Employees (San Francisco), and Charles Hickson of Local 64, Communications Workers (Toronto).

This leaflet proposed that the conference adopt the following program for the fight back by the working class against all the economic and political attacks of the employers:

- Fight inflation with the wage offensive!
- Stop unemployment with the four day week!
- End Repression - Hands off the Panthers, No more Augustas, Jacksons and Kents! No Laws against the Trade Unions!
- Immediate withdrawal of all U. S. troops from Indochina!
- For a mass million strong Labor Day labor march on Washington against the war!
- Build a labor party now!

In spite of the efforts of the Stalinists, and in spite of the complete silence of the Daily World on this question in its report on the conference, there was discussion on the critical question of the labor party and the need for a class break with the bosses and their agents.

In the Saturday afternoon workshop on "peace and labor political action," chaired by Al Evanoff of District 65, many trade unionists were able to speak out against the class collaborationist policies being pushed at the conference. A vote was taken on a number of motions, including one that the conference call for the formation of a labor party based on the unions. This was rejected at the workshop by the narrow margin of 24 to 17. From that point on the main preoccupation of the Stalinists became to prevent this dispute from coming to the floor of the conference.

On Sunday morning the conference chairman repeatedly pushed through procedural motions and in some cases even without procedural motions introduced various ceremonial and organizational points in order to postpone political discussion. A long discussion on the women's workshop was used to divert discussion away from the central issues facing the working class and the conference. The chairman ruled all motions to move to discussion on political action and the labor party out of order without a vote.

Dennis Cribben of the SSEU Committee for New Leadership denounced these maneuvers as desperate measures designed to impose the Stalinist popular front line as against the class struggle fight for a labor party. He was immediately ruled out of order. The conference leadership was incapable of answering politically any of the charges leveled against it. It could only resort to organizational measures and slanders.

CP

The ability of the Communist Party to build this kind of conference of trade unionists is another indication of the growth of their influence in the deepening class struggle. They are the most sophisticated exponents of class collaboration policies under the cover of Marxism and the class struggle.

At the same time the Stalinists are vulnerable to attack. Many youth and trade unionists were disturbed at the bureaucratic maneuvering and the extreme reformism on display at the conference. Over 200 copies of the Bulletin and nearly 50 copies of Trotsky's discussions on the labor party were sold to the delegates. There was a great willingness to hear Trotskyist policies.

In order to fight the capitalists it is necessary to expose and politically destroy all of their agents within the working class movement. That is why the fight against Stalinism at Chicago was so important and why it must go forward on the political and theoretical front.

Chicago Teamsters Upset Nixon's Wage Freeze

BY A BULLETIN REPORTER

Speaking for a major section of millionaire industrialists and bankers, the New York Times in its editorial of June 29, has urged Nixon to stop "evading" the attack on the working class and get on in earnest with the iron hand against the unions. That is what the Times means beneath its politely worded plea to Nixon for "effective action to

arrest the wage-price spiral."

The immediate targets of the Times' plutocratic wrath are the Chicago Teamsters who after 11 weeks on the picket line voted overwhelmingly to reject the contract proposals which were "carefully tailored by the trucking employers, in close cooperation with top federal labor officials." The rejected offer was designed to avoid "wrecking the more modest 39 month contract recently ratified by 450,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters." Obviously not interested in "modest" offers after being hit by inflation for so long, the Chicago drivers

upset the bosses' appercart.

What they held out for was \$1.65 an hour over 36 months rather than over 45 months. The latter "carefully tailored" offer would have been consistent with the national pact. This agreement was ratified only after the Teamsters bureaucracy under Frank Fitzsimmons with tremendous difficulty was able to beat back the militant rank and file and wildcatters. In fact, the only way the leadership was able to push the ratification through was by agreeing to a reopening of the wage question "if drivers in the Chicago area win contracts with higher wages than the national agreement." That is precisely what is now possible as a number of major Chicago trucking employers have already agreed to the \$1.65 over 36 months.

ALARM

What bothers the Times is that all the connivance of the bureaucrats with the bosses to hold back the drivers may have been in vain. What the Times is even more worried about is that workers in other industries such as the auto workers who take on their employers in the fall will be encouraged to hold out for bigger wage gains. In short the Times is sounding the alarm against the wage offensive of U.S. workers who refuse to be left behind as the burden of inflation and taxation continues to rise. The targets of their attack are the rank and file and not the bureaucrats who the Times makes clear need to be strengthened in their resistance to the ranks.

We say, well done to the Chicago Teamsters who have shown what must be done by every trade union member in the U.S.

We say, be on the alert against this movement of the employers to institute a wage freeze for a six month period as proposed by "liberal" Harvard economist Kenneth Galbraith. Take up the fight now for the formation of a labor party which will have the power to stand up to the attacks now being urged by the Times and all the Democratic and Republican politicians.

West Coast Labor Council Holds Antiwar Conference

BY A BULLETIN REPORTER

SAN FRANCISCO—An antiwar conference sponsored by the Santa Clara Labor Council was held recently at Stanford University.

Addressing the meeting were an official of the Teamsters, Art Carter, Secretary Treasurer of the Contra Costa Central Labor Council, the editor of the ILWU newspaper, the Dispatcher, the secretary of the Santa Clara Central Labor Council and the President of the Metal Trades Council in San Francisco.

These labor officials combined with a number of professors from Stanford, along with a Democratic Party Assemblyman. The whole schema of things was very clear. They tried to set up a situation in which the militancy of the students could be hooked up to the control of the trade union bureaucracy. The line of the labor officials was that the students have to coordinate themselves with the labor bureaucracy. They made all sorts of proposals along these lines to the students, even to the point of a proposal that there be a student union which pays dues to the Central Labor Council.

OPPOSED

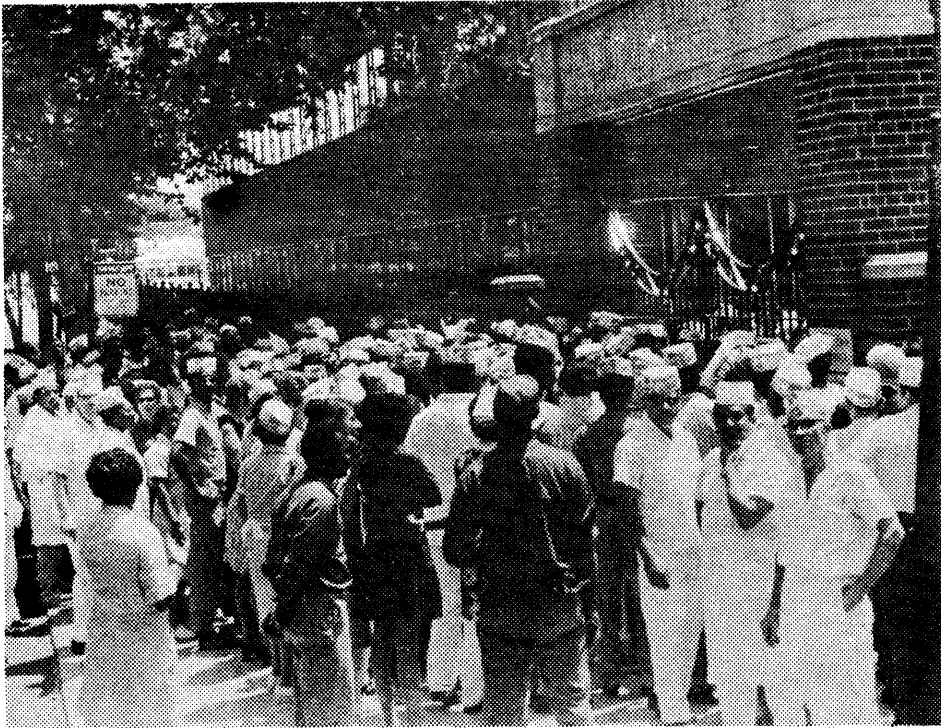
The Workers League opposed this whole orientation of subordinating the students

to the bureaucrats, centering its fight on the demand for the labor party and the independent mobilization of the working class against the war. The bureaucrats reacted to the labor party proposal with fear. Basically their perspective was that the students should go out and campaign for the Democratic Party. The editor of the Dispatcher made this clear when he said that students should go out and ring doorbells for Edward McCloskey, the Democratic Party "peace candidate."

What was absolutely clearly posed was the attempt to carry out the line pushed by the Communist Party in the Peoples World, with these bureaucrats coming in and trying to line up the students as a force to support the Democratic Party. This is an effort to stem the student militancy, and was countered strongly by the Workers League in what was a very significant meeting.

In this meeting a section of the trade union bureaucracy has taken the lead in collaboration with the revisionists just as they did at the Cleveland and Chicago conference to try to channel student radicalism into popular front politics. While the Communist Party played a major role in the Stanford meeting, it is equally significant that the Socialist Workers Party was not present at all.

1199 Leaders Call Off Hospital Strike



1199 workers at Kingsbrook Jewish Hospital in a lunch hour work action last Monday.

BY AN 1199 MEMBER

NEW YORK, July 1—Local 1199 and the League of Voluntary Hospitals have agreed to a tentative settlement that wins few of the union's major demands. The settlement must now go before the ranks for ratification. Hospital workers must vote no and must carry out their strike threat to win their demands.

The proposed agreement provides for a minimum wage of \$130 over two years, instead of the proposed \$140—\$18 or 15% the first year and \$12 or 10% in the second year. The other major demands were reduced to virtually nothing. The cost of living clause does not go into effect until the second year of the contract and then only if the cost of living rises more than 6%. The 35 hour week was thrown out and a classification system is to be sent to arbitration. In exchange for compromise on these key demands the union got

an extra holiday for Martin Luther King's birthday, a dental plan, and slight improvements in sick days and vacation.

This settlement was reached before the fight had really begun. In the course of the all night negotiating sessions before the deadline the bosses increased their offer from 15% over two years and then to \$24 across the board over two years, both of which were rejected by the union. Had the union carried out its strike threat and stood firm on the \$40 and other demands

there is no doubt that they could have forced the bosses to back down. Davis' strategy from the start was to avoid this kind of confrontation. He accepted the settlement precisely when the union was in its strongest position.

CAPITULATION

The last minute deal represents Davis' capitulation to Rockefeller who intervened through his principal state mediator, Vincent MacDonald. Davis gave into the pressure put on the union by MacDonald and even agreed to cancel the strike at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday morning, although both sides were still considering MacDonald's proposal. Davis' role was to keep a militant cover until the last minute and then appear as the savior who had averted a terrible "crisis." In reality, he was forced into a near strike by the militancy of the ranks. At the same time he was only too happy to end it at the first opportunity.

On Tuesday evening a delegates meeting was held to hear progress and what action would be taken. Davis made it very clear to the delegates that he was going to "come down a little" on the wage demand. When a member of the Rank and File Committee proposed a motion to fight for the \$140 there was a tremendous response from the delegates. The delegates stayed all night at the hotel until they were sent to man the picket lines at 5:00 a.m. As soon as they reached the hospitals they were told to return as a tentative settlement had been reached. At the final meeting Wednesday morning Davis consciously tried to discourage discussion by removing the microphone which had been there all night. While the settlement was approved by the delegates many simply did not vote from lack of time to consider the proposals.

MINIMUM

The \$30 increase is only \$6 more than the increase won two years ago and without a real cost of living clause the wages will be seriously eroded by inflation, now at around 7% a year. For the workers now making the minimum of \$100 it is 10% less than the original proposal while for higher paid workers it is 5% less. The proposed \$140 minimum is a rock bottom demand for lower paid workers and cannot

be negotiated on. The 35 hour week is also a blow against the lower paid workers most of whom still work a 40 hour week. The skilled workers must unite with the lower paid workers in rejecting a contract which does not meet all the workers' needs.

The arbitration on the classifications is the most dangerous retreat. In every contract struggle where workers have made any kind of wage gains Nixon and the employers answer is to increase productivity and create more unemployment. The price hospital workers will pay for their wage increase is more speed up and job cuts. Layoffs are already beginning at Yeshiva Hospital where 24 workers were laid off on June 30. The union leadership has refused to fight for any guarantees against this. An ominous sign is that the union did not say whether the right to subcontract work and abolish the seniority committee was given to the bosses as they had demanded.

PRESSURE

The fact that Davis had to practically call a citywide strike and could not accept less than \$130 reveals the tremendous pressure that he was under from the delegates and rank and file. The union had only begun to demonstrate its strength when the strike was called off. The ranks must insist that the tremendous power of the union be used full force to win all the major demands. Hospital workers must go on the offensive against the bosses and the government and give an important lead to all workers facing the threats by the employers and the government to hold down wages. Vote to reject the offer and take the fight forward with a citywide strike until all the demands are met.

SHANKER TRIES TO BREAK UFT ORGANIZERS UNION

BY TOM GORDON

NEW YORK—Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers, has begun a campaign to break the Teachers' Representatives Union, which represents 21 UFT office staff and organizers. On June 1, four UFT field representatives (organizers) struck the union over the suspension of one of them. They have all been fired. These are the men who organized the New York City school paraprofessionals into the UFT.

This dispute began with the founding of the Teachers' Representatives Union in the fall of 1969. Shanker refused to bargain with the union and threatened to fire its president, Charles Loiacono, for his attempts to organize UFT district representatives. The TRU filed complaints with the NLRB, which caused Shanker to back off temporarily.

FIRED

Then in the spring of this year Jim Howard who had organized paraprofessionals into the UFT was fired as soon as the UFT won the election. A replacement was hired and given no job security and no health, expense, or pension benefits. Shanker now plans to staff the UFT offices only with those who have shown "loyalty" to his regime. On May 29 he suspended Vincent Speranza, another TRU member, for going to Los Angeles to aid the teachers strike at the request of the AFT. It was this suspension which precipitated the June 1 strike.

Shanker's actions, along with the repeated delaying of a strike call to win decent wages and union protection for the paraprofessionals, begin to sound like a plan to destroy the militancy of the UFT.

As the TRU members who were fired point out, despite Shanker's claim that he stands for "dignity and justice" for teachers, he "has led the fight against dignity and justice for employees of the UFT." The question which the fired four raise is: "Can we survive as a union if we turn our backs on this perversion of the very tenets we hold so dear?"

WARNING

The action against the organizers is warning to all UFT members. Behind all his rhetoric, this is the way Shanker is prepared to defend the union—by crushing any opposition to his leadership and along with it the basic rights of union members.

All members of the UFT must demand that Shanker reinstate the fired UFT organizers. This must be seen as a step towards an all out fight for a new leadership in the UFT.

Gotbaum Opens Door to Lindsay's Job Cutting Plans

BY A SSEU-371 MEMBER

NEW YORK—The recently published list of District Council 37 "Complete Citywide Bargaining Demands" completely capitulates to the City's attempt to hold down wages, cut thousands of jobs and increase productivity.

The demands raised by the leadership of DC 37 in no way confront the continuing attacks on the ranks by the City. Recently it was reported in the *New York Post* that Mayor Lindsay has been perusing the LaGuardia "Furlough Plan." Undertaken by the great "friend of labor" Fiorello LaGuardia during the 1934-1937 depression years, this plan provides civil service employees with "holidays" of up to 6 months, without pay, and then reemployment "at the City's discretion."

GOTBAUM

Victor Gotbaum, head of the District

Council, has responded to this threat in a recent issue of the *Public Employee Press* by minimizing the danger claiming that Lindsay is not LaGuardia and that we are not living in the same kind of period. He dismisses the whole thing as nonsense.

Gotbaum's position could not be more dangerous to the rank and file of the District Council. Today the city government together with the entire capitalist system is in fact facing the most serious economic crisis since the 1920s and 1930s and every politician from Nixon to Lindsay has made it clear that the workers are going to pay for it through unemployment and wage freezes. The measures the City has already taken in the Department of Social Services through reorganization, eliminating thousands of jobs, doubling the workload, stopping promotions, is warning enough. This same process is going on in all city departments.

OPENING

Gotbaum is opening the door to Lindsay. Omitted from the 113 demands are any guarantees of job security. Although pen-

sion and time and leave rules are carefully and legalistically worded, there is no mention of arbitrary transfers within departments through liquidation of Civil Service titles. Recently, Hospital Care Investigators and Employment Counsellors saw their titles wiped out in the Welfare Department. Case aides, auxiliary personnel without college degrees, are performing caseworker jobs, along with clerical workers, at reduced pay. These measures are preparing the grounds for even more vicious schemes such as wholesale layoffs.

DC 37 has merely stipulated the need for a 35 hour week with 30 hours during the summer. At the same time the threat to employment on a permanent basis is answered in demand number 14 which creates "A joint union-City task force... to conduct a review of all Civil Service rules and regulations, Civil Service Law and Practice. The review shall cover the pertinence of existing practices, the operation of the Department of Personnel and the Civil Service Commission, and union participation in the promotion of new regulations." This task force is then empowered to make necessary legislative recommendations. In other words the unions are to have the "right" to participate in the work of eliminating jobs and the destruction of working conditions!

The SSEU-371 Committee For New Leadership is beginning a fight within the District Council to stop this wholesale sellout of the ranks. The CNL says that the central demands which must be raised in Citywide bargaining are:

- Twenty year half pension.
- Thirty Hour Week at Forty Hours Pay.
- Ironclad guarantees against attrition, layoffs, and "furloughs."
- An escalator clause to combat inflation.

The CNL is also demanding that any citywide agreement be ratified by the membership of each local and that if these crucial demands are not met preparations be made for a strike by the entire District Council.

This is the fight that must be taken into every local of the District Council.

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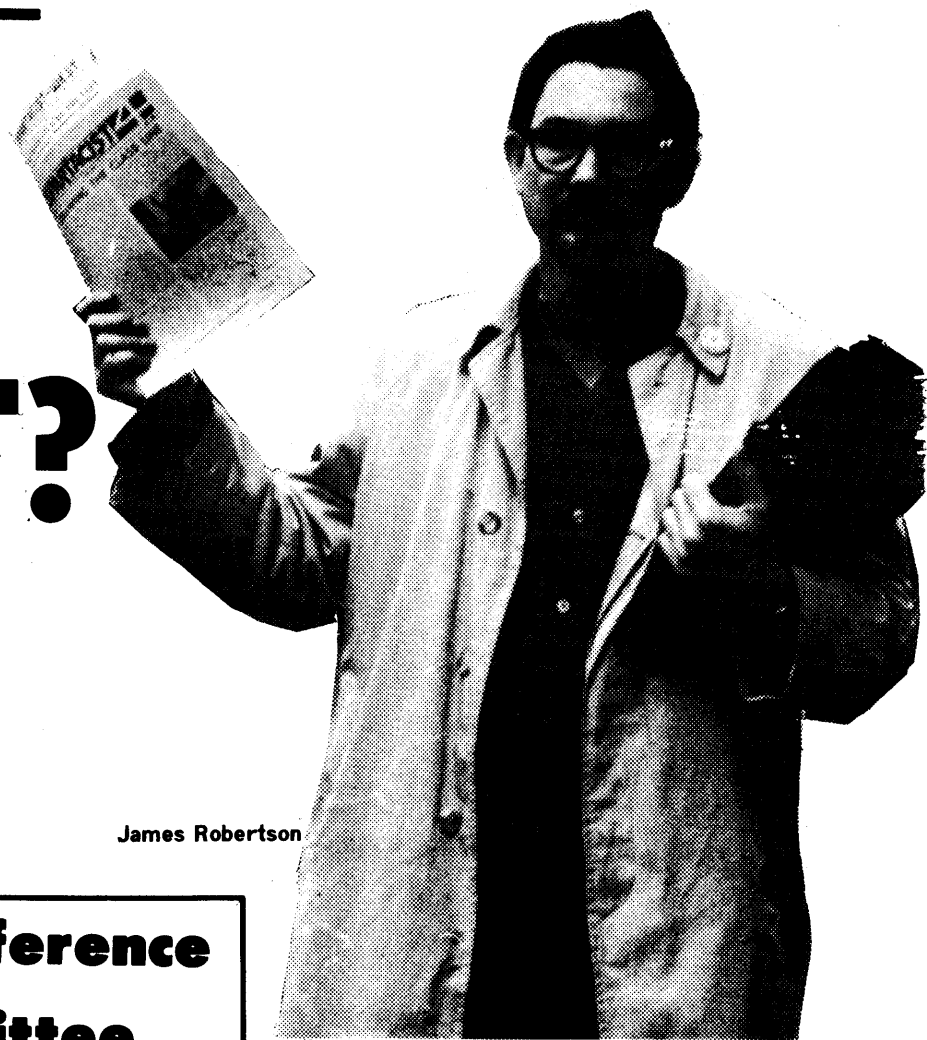
a series by **TIM WOHLFORTH**

WHAT IS SPARTACIST?

"If we subtract everything accidental, personal and episodic, if we reduce the present groupings in struggle to their fundamental political types, then indubitably the struggle of comrade Abern against comrade Cannon has been the most consistent. In this struggle Abern represents a propagandistic group, petty-bourgeois in its social composition, united by old personal ties and having almost the character of a family."

—Leon Trotsky - In Defense of Marxism p. 61

James Robertson



PART THREE— The 1966 Conference of the International Committee

THE 1966 CONFERENCE of the International Committee became the turning point in the development of both the Workers League and Spartacist. The break between the two organizations was from that point on definitive and by the same token the commitment of the Workers League to the construction of the Fourth International unswerving.

This conference was the test of the political nature of the two organizations; it sorted out the essential from the secondary and in the process made clear even the secondary political points. Questions which could not be resolved on the national level became crystal clear on the international level. For these reasons Spartacist to this day cannot look squarely at this conference and present an explanation of it beyond the level of scandal mongering and in this respect in any sense distinct from that of the Socialist Workers Party itself.

The recent issue of Spartacist West, which we have been discussing, states that we have:

"charged Spartacist with rejecting internationalism, and what was the proof? The leading Spartacist delegate to the 1966 conference of the International Committee (Healy's group) in England would not yield to Healy's demand that he admit our supposed, petty-bourgeois American chauvinism by apologizing for being unable to attend a session because of extreme fatigue! (see Spartacist #6)." (1)

We have already pointed out that this charge did not come out of nowhere and that the relations between the Robertson group and the international movement date back to 1961, include a split from the international IC tendency in 1962, and a refusal to vote against reunification with the Pabloites in 1963. Now with this as background we can turn to the 1966 period.

PABLOITES

Not only were political and tactical questions in dispute between the ACFI

(American Committee for the Fourth International, predecessor organization to the Workers League) but the relationship of Spartacist to the Fourth International was even more confused. From the time of Robertson's split with the IC in 1962, through his expulsion from the SWP and the first issues of Spartacist, this group claimed to be in political solidarity with the International Committee. Yet in 1963 it had refused to vote against the SWP's reunification with the Pabloites internationally and in 1964 was appealing to the United Secretariat of the Pabloites on the basis that it urged the SLL and other sections of the IC to go along with this reunification.

As late as May 18, 1965 Harry Turner wrote in the name of the Spartacist Resident Editorial Board a letter to the United Secretariat requesting attendance at the upcoming Pabloite World Congress in order to "appeal the 'Resolution on Robertson group' of the United Secretariat of April 1964..." (2) Thus as late as May 1965 Spartacist was still keeping a foot in the Pabloite door.

POSADAS

But it had its foot in another door as well. Following a trip by members of Spartacist to Cuba, the Spartacist group established close fraternal relations with the Posadas Pabloite tendency in the 1964-1965 period. Posadas' group, which held "leftist" positions on some questions, was actually an extreme Pabloite split-off which adhered to Pablo's 1950 "war-revolution" thesis which supplanted the class struggle with international war between imperialism and the worker's states. This led Pablo to the conclusion that the Trotskyists should liquidate themselves into the Stalinist parties which in turn would be revolutionized by the impending war with the capitalist nations.

While Pablo dropped the formula when the impending world war did not impend, Posadas persisted with it taking it to the point where he called for preventive nuclear war by the Stalinists against the urban centers of the imperialist powers. Such a position not only substituted military action for the action of the working class but posed the very physical extinction of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries.

For instance Spartacist Number 3, issued in January-February 1964, contains an article "Freedom for Cuban Trotskyists!" which defends members of Posadas' organization in Cuba against Castro's attacks and persecution. (3) But the article does more than this—it is clearly a statement of political solidarity with the Posadasites who are referred to over and over again as "Trotskyists" and as "that wing of the Fourth International led by

Juan Posadas." (4) At no point did the article in any way differentiate itself politically from this extreme revisionist tendency.

The very next issue of Spartacist, May-June 1965, issued around the same time Spartacist appealed to the United Secretariat, included a letter from Theo Melville of the Posadas group in England. This letter thanks Spartacist "warmly" for publicizing the Cuban Posadasite case, attacks the Socialist Labour League for "their complete loss of Bolshevik perspectives" and concludes: "You have rendered a service to Trotskyism in the USA in the very citadel of imperialism." (5) This letter makes clear not only the close relations between the Posadas people and Spartacist but that hostility to the IC was one axis of agreement with Posadas.

This relationship with Posadas continued after the 1966 conference and the definitive break with the IC. Another letter from the British Posadasites appeared in the November-December 1966 issue of Spartacist thanking them once again for their defense of various Posadasites arrested—this time Adolpho Lilly and others in Mexico—and concluding: "We thank you for your efforts, and send to the 'Spartacist' comrades the warm fraternal greetings of the British section of the IV International." (6)

ATTACK

This relation existed until the January-February 1967 issue of Spartacist which featured an article "Posadas in the MR-13" which refers to Posadas' organization as a "remnant of the Pabloite model" and states: "his position on the party is a centrist one: Posadas' practice, in Guatemala, for example, was openly liquidationist of the Trotskyist program." The article concludes: "Posadas' cadres, if they do not cleanse themselves of Posadas' opportunism and unprincipled revisionism, will play no part in the building of a Latin American proletarian vanguard..." (7)

This was Spartacist's first mention of any differences with Posadas. It may be of interest to note that this attack on Posadas followed a lengthy public denunciation of Spartacist by Posadas printed in all the organs of his tendency.

Thus Spartacist in 1965 maintained it was in political solidarity with the International Committee and its political differences with the IC were of a minor character. At the same time it still favored a position that the IC forces should have gone along with reunification with the Pabloites and itself appealed its exclusion from the Pabloite international. Meanwhile it carried on the closest fraternal relations with the ultra-Pabloite

Posadas tendency. While one can and must question whether Spartacist held an internationalist outlook and perspective there was certainly no question as to its activity on the international scale.

MONTREAL

In October 1965 a conference was held in Montreal attended by a representative of the International Committee and by delegations from the ACFI and Spartacist organizations. The purpose of this conference was to clear up once and for all the relationship between Spartacist and the Fourth International. As Gerry Healy wrote later:

"following his expulsion from the SWP Robertson kept up the formal pretense of general political agreement with the International Committee, but this by itself was not enough.

"The main question involving the political reasons behind Robertson's split from the International Committee in 1962 still remained unsettled. A further attempt had to be made to see if the political experience of his group had produced a change in this respect for the better or whether or not the gap had widened." (8)

At Montreal the two groups agreed to seek unification and to attend the 1966 conference of the IC. The two organizations "accepted the principles embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International, the resolutions and documents agreed to by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International and the International resolution on perspectives adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International Conference April, 1966." (9)

This represented a very extensive, a very fundamental level of common agreement. The two organizations were to push aside factional questions, collaborate with each other in a fraternal spirit while jointly seeking to arrive at a common American document within the framework of the above international agreement. The agreement on paper was solid and principled and whether or not this was a real agreement in practice could only be revealed through the common struggle to develop an American perspectives document on this basis and to participate in the International Conference.

The two organizations were pushed towards serious unity negotiations and the International Congress by objective political considerations quite outside the individual motivations of the participants. While there were no doubt forces within Spartacist resisting any kind of unification—and these forces were to predominate through Robertson—there were other forces heartened by the prospect of

unity and being part of the International Committee.

Most important was the objective political consideration that the political relationship of Spartacist to the International Committee had not yet been resolved and this in turn also meant that the political nature of the American Committee for the Fourth International as well had not been fully sorted out.

During a period of generally non-factional fraternal relations a number of discussions were held to produce a common American perspectives document. Robertson volunteered to come in with the draft. On March 20, 1966, at a joint membership meeting of the New York branches, virtually on the eve of the actual conference, Robertson came in with a document "Draft Theses on Building the Revolutionary Movement in the U.S." The document contained an overline stating "rough outline" which was probably the understatement of the decade.

The document consisted of a series of quotations and brief notations. For instance the entire section of the document on trade union work went as follows:

"9. The SL trade union work:
—transitional demands: specifically adapted forms of '30 for 40' labor party
—considerations in trade union fraction building
—intervention in strikes
—recruitment from Negro struggle a short cut to working class." (10)

But even more important, those sections which had any detailed content in them reflected very much a Pabloite outlook. The first paragraph sees the aim of the fused organization to build the revolutionary party. The second paragraph reiterates from the joint unity agreement:

"The SL based on the principles embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International, the resolutions and documents agreed to by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International and the International resolution on perspectives adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International Conference April, 1966." (11)

CANNON

The third paragraph actually consists of a quote from James P. Cannon in 1954! The quote refers to the "defenders of the orthodox doctrine" and the "uncorrupted revolutionists." (12) But James P. Cannon himself, the greatest defender of orthodox doctrine and the most uncorrupted of revolutionists was to lead the SWP back into the camp of revisionism only a few short years later. Rather than assessing how Cannon, basing himself on narrow orthodoxy rather than an understanding of dialectics and an international perspective, evolved in this fashion, the document simply quotes Cannon to illustrate what our tasks are today.

By the fourth paragraph we have already travelled a great distance from the principles of the Communist International, the founding conference of the Fourth International and the perspectives of the International Committee. The Cannon quote was but the road to this paragraph which begins not from the international perspectives but from pessimism about the United States:

"The SL effort to develop and apply in the U.S. the theoretical understanding won by the world Trotskyist movement and its historic revolutionary predecessors starts from a necessary low level. SL weighed down by combination of decades of international setbacks and disorientation of proletarian vanguard together with particularly hostile American milieu. This recognition a precondition for greater mastery." (13)

The real perspectives of this document thus proceed from international setbacks and disorientation to a particularly hostile American milieu. It is with this disoriented outlook—so similar to that of the Pabloites which saw hope only in the "third world"—that the tasks of the SL were to flow. Next comes two quotes from Antonio Gramsci which make up paragraph five. This quote states in part:

"In reality one can foresee only the struggle and not its concrete episodes; these must be the result of opposing forces in continuous movement, never reducible to fixed quantities, because in them quantity is always becoming quality." (14)

In the context of this document the quote takes on an idealist character saying in effect that one can not predict and therefore one cannot base the tactics of the party on a strategy derived from an understanding of developments in the material base of society.

Flowing from this, paragraph 6 states:

"The SL tactical aim in the next period toward building the revolutionary party is the emergence of a large propaganda group capable of agitational intervention in every social struggle in the U.S." (15)

Thus the strategy of building the revolutionary party which is the first paragraph of the document becomes transformed into the tactic of building a "large propaganda group" (we will see what happens to even this concept in the future evolution of Spartacist) with a quote from Cannon, some pessimism on the U.S. and a quote from Gramsci in between.

Next comes paragraph seven which states that "The SL tasks projected in the context of general economic and social conditions which are significantly less stable than in the decade of the 1950s." (16) Rather than seeing a sharp crisis of a fundamental character, Robertson sees only less stability in which to build his propaganda group.

Finally comes paragraph eight, the last in the section of "General Tasks":
"Hence the SL must act consciously to intervene alertly as the shifting opportunities permit, rather than press on with newly inapplicable tactical formulae." (17)

Here we find the meaning of the Gramsci quote—or more accurately, the use to which Robertson puts it. Everything is in flux so one just stands alert watching the opportunities shift, building a propaganda group in a hostile milieu in which the economy is only a bit less stable than it was in the boom period of the 1950s.

What we have here actually is a document which in no way represents a qualitative break with Pabloism. As with the SWP, lip service is given to historical continuity with the program of the early Communist International and the Fourth



During the period of unity discussions Spartacist and ACFI collaborated fraternally in common activities like above intervention at a Washington peace demonstration.

International and to an international perspective. But the tactics flow, not from this continuity and international perspectives, but rather from American conditions. Further, these American conditions are seen in an impressionistic way, reflecting all the pessimism of the petty bourgeois radical. They cannot be seen in any other way separated from an understanding of the international character of the capitalist crisis and thus our tasks. This leads to the perspective of building a propaganda group which will drift along and in a pragmatic fashion intervene in whatever happens to be going on.

The document was rejected by ACFI, not without certain internal strains, but at the same time ACFI was unable in the short time before the conference to come up with its own document. The writing of such a document was assigned to Lynn Marcus, whose evolution we will discuss more fully later, and his draft reflected Pabloism in another form. His orientation was a completely middle class one towards "radicals" whom he saw as distinct from the working class, and his objective, like Robertson, was to build a propaganda group. Under such circumstances ACFI could not put forward any document officially as its own.

What this reflected was that Pabloism was expressed not only within the Spartacist group but had penetrated into sections of ACFI. To the extent that American "conditions" dominated both groups, their petty bourgeois composition would pull them back towards the very revisionism they had fought against to begin with. The conclusion which we drew from this situation was not some sort of arrogant rejection of unification because of the Pabloite political positions of Spartacist. Rather we oriented all the more toward the April IC Conference with an understanding that the American movement as

a whole had much to learn from the international movement, and the hope that together in a unified organization we could make greater progress in the development of an American perspectives document which was an expression of the IC's international perspectives, not in contradiction to it.

UNITY

In this light the Coordinating Committee of ACFI passed the following motion on March 20, 1966:

"1. We are confident unity can and will be brought about on schedule.

"2. In the opinion of the Coordinating Committee, the Spartacist draft outline is not a basis for a sound fusion.

"3. Therefore we will draft an alternative draft to present, as stipulated at the Montreal meeting, in April.

"4. We should not interpret this as anything but a natural outgrowth of the Montreal meeting. These possible problems were foreseen in Montreal and provisions were made for them; in the final analysis the unification will be the stronger for proceeding in a principled way." (18)

Such was the state of affairs at the time of the April IC conference. It was not a good situation, but after several years of separate existence of the two groups and a certain history of these groups it was certainly a situation which was understandable. The lesson of the failure of the two groups to arrive at a mutually agreed upon American perspectives was that the central question which must be arrived at if unification could take place was the international question. If there was agreement to proceed at all times from this perspective and as a loyal part of the international movement willing to learn from the experience and history of this movement, then an American perspectives document could be worked

erroneous estimation would have at its point of departure an enormous over-estimation of our present significance, and would accordingly be disorienting." (20)

Here we have all of Robertson's American pessimism and petty bourgeois radical complacency. He sees no sharp and deep crisis. He sees revisionism playing no class role as a cover for Stalinism in a period when a new generation is coming into the struggle, a generation largely hostile to Stalinism. Above all he does not wish us to overestimate our present significance. We must look upon ourselves as insignificant radical propagandists conducting essentially an idealist battle with other propagandists in which the stakes are not really very great as there is no sharp crisis. What becomes revealed here is that the essence of Spartacism, to the extent it exists as a separate tendency from and in opposition to the Fourth International, is unseriousness.

Then Robertson proceeds to the point which led him to abstain on reunification in 1963:

"Nevertheless, there are now four organized international currents all claiming to be Trotskyist, and spoken of as 'Trotskyist' in some conventional sense. This state of affairs must be resolved through splits and fusions." (21)

He supplements this with the statement that the Cuban Posadasites "were in the main excellent comrades struggling with valor under difficult conditions." Soon thereafter Posadas himself had to denounce these "excellent comrades" for repudiating any international affiliations as a condition to be released from jail. Soon after that Posadas was to condemn Spartacist itself and Spartacist was to write the sharpest of denunciations of the "Pabloite" Posadas tendency.

What this reveals is that Robertson did not come to the IC Conference with the conception that the International Committee represented the continuity of the Fourth International politically and organizationally, while the other three international groupings represented factions of the Pabloite revisionists in the process of disintegration. Rather he saw four groups, each as "Trotskyist in some conventional sense" as the other. His purpose at the IC Congress was therefore to carry through "splits and fusions" much as he would if he were admitted to the United Secretariat Congress or the Posadasite Congress. Robertson began with Spartacist, its narrow prejudices and positions, and on that basis approached all the international tendencies much as a fisherman among the lakes of Northern Minnesota.

CUBA

Then Robertson launched into a lengthy exposition of his theory on the class nature of Cuba, expressing his agreement with the SWP that Cuba is a workers' state. His only difference with them was his claim that this workers state was degenerated—a position which in time most of the revisionists were also to come to. In order to maintain this view Robertson came up with the extreme revisionist theory of "the possibility of a social transformation led by the petty-bourgeoisie" (22) in which he went even beyond the Pabloites to openly proclaiming that the petty bourgeoisie were capable of creating workers states—albeit of a deformed character. So much for the historic role of the working class in the socialist revolution!

Then he proceeds to the American question and he begins by stating:

"The principal aspect of our task which may be obscure to foreign comrades is the unique and critically and immediately important Negro question." And concludes: "In the U.S. the qualitatively heavier burden within the class is borne by the black workers. In quiescent times they tend to be divided from the white workers as in the lower levels of class struggle such as are now prevalent. Therefore the black youth in America are the only counterparts today to the sort of militant white working class youth found in the British Young Socialists." (23)

Robertson sees the United States as in a "quiescent" period, notes the strong race divisions within the working class in such a period, and then proposes a tactical course based on this assessment and these divisions. Proceeding in this way he ends up right where the SWP ended up with an orientation which saw the white working class as quiescent and at least for now hopeless, and thus sought to adapt to the black movement as a separate movement. He even notes that these "peculiar" American conditions may be "obscure to foreign comrades." He, Robertson, above all understands America and the foreigner may have difficulty

out in the period after the Conference.

CONFERENCE

With this as background we can now turn to what Spartacist characterizes as "undoubtedly one of the most hilarious organizational atrocities ever" (19) which expresses the seriousness with which they today view their break from the Fourth International. Following the report on the International Perspectives resolution—the resolution upon which Spartacist originally agreed to unity and attendance at the IC meeting—by Cliff Slaughter, secretary of the IC, Robertson made a political presentation. The presentation was in fact a political attack on all the fundamental positions of the International Committee, of the International Resolution and of Slaughter's report. In this sense it represented a summation of everything upon which Spartacist stood in opposition to the IC.

This report of Robertson did not come out of nowhere. It is clear from our brief sketch of the political development of the Robertson group since 1962 that every point in this report had an antecedent in Robertson's own history and political positions. The point is that it stood in contradiction to that other strand of Robertson's tendency from its origins—its claim of political agreement and solidarity with the International Committee. It was thus a political declaration of war against the IC rather than a serious political effort to come to a common understanding with the IC. Let us now look at this statement.

First Robertson commented on the question of Pabloism. He stated:

"We take issue with the notion that the present crisis of capitalism is so sharp and deep that Trotskyist revisionism is needed to tame the workers, in a way comparable to the degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals. Such an

fathoming this peculiar American reality with its race divisions, its quiescent white workers and its hostile environment.

Robertson then concludes his speech with a reference to his draft document already dealt with at length which proposes the perspective of building a propaganda group.

The speech was a declaration of political war against the International Committee. It was a summation of every error of Spartacist in the past put forward as a political alternative to the perspective of the IC—a perspective Robertson had declared his agreement with. But if there was any question as to the meaning of this political statement it was to find expression in Robertson's actions following the speech.

EVENTS

The events which followed this speech are summarized in the "Statement of the International Committee on the Robertson Group (USA)":

"In the conference after the secretary's report on International Perspectives based on the resolution 'Rebuilding the Fourth International', Robertson spoke at length on the third day of discussion (Wednesday, April 6). Despite Robertson's claim to agree with the resolution before the conference his contribution showed very clear disagreement with the main political line of the report and resolution. After making this contribution Robertson failed to appear for the subsequent session of discussion on the grounds that he was tired due to his having worked overnight on a draft document on American Perspectives for the conference.

"The conference expressed the unanimous opinion that Robertson must immediately return to the proceedings. Not only were his reasons for his absence quite unacceptable, but he had made no approach to the chairman of the conference before leaving.

"Robertson saying that he was 'not available' refused to return to the conference for the whole of the session in question in which a number of comrades made serious criticisms of points made in Robertson's contribution.

"On Robertson's return for the Wednesday evening session, the Secretary began his reply to the discussion by saying that Robertson's absence from the exhaustive discussion on his own contribution was utterly irresponsible and that Robertson's request for permission to be absent had been rejected by the conference as inadmissible in a communist organization. Here Robertson interjected on what he called 'a point of personal privilege'. In the first place, he explained, he had not requested permission to be absent and did not know of any rule requiring him to request such permission. He was present at the conference not as an individual but as part of his delegation; his delegation was fully empowered to note the discussion and participate in it during his absence. It was pointed out to Robertson that his responsibilities to the international movement through its highest body, the conference, were clearly involved, and he was asked to apologise to the conference. This he refused to do.

"A motion was then put demanding an apology from Robertson and stating that if he refused then he must leave the conference. In the course of discussion on this motion Robertson again stated that he did not know the rules of the conference. The original motion was modified to say that its application would take place only at the end of the general discussion and the vote on the resolution and report of the Secretary of the International Committee, thus giving Robertson an additional opportunity to reconsider his position. This motion was carried, and Robertson stayed to the end of the discussion, reply and vote on the report and resolution of the International Committee. Robertson and the Spartacist delegation voted for the amended resolution but abstained on the report.

"In accordance with its earlier resolution, the conference then asked for Robertson's statement on his absence the previous day. He again refused to apologise. Thus, the resolution applied only to Robertson's breaking communist discipline in refusing to accept the decisions of the International Conference and not to the rest of his delegation. The chairman asked Robertson to leave. He then left followed by his delegation."(24)

It is clear that at no point was Robertson asked to admit his "supposed petty bourgeois American chauvinism." What did happen was that in the opinion of the International Conference Robertson's refusal to apologize for his conduct of blatant disregard of the discipline and



Leaders of the International Committee at the Third Conference: (l to r) Mike Banda (standing), Pierre Lambert, Gerry Healy, a Greek comrade, Stephan Just, and Cliff Slaughter(standing) who gave International Report which Robertson attacked.

wishes of the conference was a reflection of this petty-bourgeois and nationalist outlook. If, on the other hand he had made a serious attempt to subordinate himself to the international movement by apologizing for his actions it would have been a step in the direction of placing the development of the international movement, the construction of the international party, above his own prestige and wishes. That the Conference went to great lengths to give him a number of opportunities to make this step is abundantly clear from the record.

EXPRESSION

Robertson's walkout of the conference sessions was an expression of the political positions in his report. It made crystal clear not only the character of these positions but their purpose. By this action Robertson made clear that he was counterposing the Spartacist organization to the International Committee. Robertson was not expelled from the conference for his political views and if he had taken a step towards the International movement through an apology it would have meant that it was quite possible that the political differences, in time and with common experience and discussion, would be resolved as part of an international movement.

Once again the Spartacist leadership whipped up an hysterical campaign against the International Committee which went even further than the 1962 one with cries of "authoritarianism," "bureaucratic centralism" and the like. The current statement from Spartacist West gives the flavor of it:

"The Workers' League conception of internationalism is a minuscule parody of the old Moscow-oriented Communist parties—only in this case it is a tiny band of pseudo-Trotskyists spouting British chauvinism instead of Russian."(25)

In this we find an open appeal to every petty bourgeois swine who begins with national prejudices. The Fourth International is equated with Stalinism and even Stalinism is seen as a matter of "Russian chauvinism" rather than as an expression of a bureaucracy much in the way the anti-Soviet enemies of the early Comintern posed it.

But this was only a beginning. Driven by its hatred of the International Committee Spartacist formed a working relationship with the revisionist SWP against the International Committee. In so doing Spartacist only made all the clearer the significance of its break with the International Committee. And, as we will see, this working relationship was no mere episodic matter.

Harry Turner wrote to Gerry Healy in 1966 stating:

"You indicate that Spartacist 'may for

a while exist on the basis of renewed hostile activity toward the International Committee.' This concept is also completely erroneous. We have never initiated hostile activity toward the I.C. and do not contemplate it now. We intend to maintain a correct attitude toward the I.C. indicating that we share with them the same spectrum of political views. We consider ourselves to be a part of international revolutionary Marxism. We will defend ourselves from public attack, but it is not our desire to advertise the unprincipled attacks on Cde. Robertson and Spartacist by the SLL leadership. We will, of course, reserve the right to disagree publicly with the SLL when we do so in principle."(26)

We read these comments now with a bit of scepticism from page 24 of the pamphlet "Healy 'Reconstructs' the Fourth International" featuring a preface by Joseph Hansen and published in June, 1966 by the Socialist Workers Party. If this is not "advertising" we would like to know what is.

This is what Spartacist West writes today of this business:

"To clinch their argument, the Workers' League charges that we handed over to the SWP documents on the 1966 conference which were then published in a pamphlet by the SWP. When challenged by a Spartacist at the WL conference to prove this charge, Wohlforth, head of the WL, could only mutter, 'We will,' but they still mention no facts in their paper (in fact, the documents were taken by the SWP from a mutual contact). We have distributed the pamphlet because it contains mostly our documents and nothing by the SWP except a relatively accurate introduction by Hansen. Our position on the SWP's revisionism is quite clear in Spartacist, for those who can read."(27)

Your position, we might add, on the SWP's revisionism is very clear in Spartacist West, for those who can read. Every accusation we 'have' made on the collaboration of Spartacist with the SWP against the International Committee is here openly admitted in that one quote. It seems, if we are to believe this statement, that the documents related to the split with the IC were not given directly to the SWP but through a mutual contact. Why, may we ask, did Spartacist give these documents to a person known to them to be in contact with the SWP and thus in no sense trustworthy to keep the documents secret from the SWP? Even if we dismiss the suspicion that they were given to this contact precisely because he was in contact with the SWP and could be counted on to hand them over, we are left with the inescapable conclusion that Spartacist gave this anti-IC material to an SWP contact because Spartacist was convinced it would make a favorable im-

pression on this contact. In other words Spartacist was seeking to win someone away from the SWP by making clear its own hatred for the International Committee.

RECORD

For the record we state that Spartacist by its own admission handed over the documents of the controversy to a contact of the SWP who in turn handed them over to the SWP. Spartacist must take responsibility for the transmission of these documents into Hansen's hands. They came from Spartacist and no other source.

Next Spartacist admits that once the SWP published this material it then proceeded on its own to distribute the pamphlet with Hansen's introduction. This introduction is characterized as "relatively accurate." Even now in 1970, Spartacist refuses to criticize politically Hansen's introduction. Even now in 1970 the SWP continues to peddle this document. So we must conclude that even now in 1970 the common bloc between Spartacist and the revisionists is maintained.

Now this is truly an anomalous situation. The SWP goes to the expense of printing a pamphlet, Hansen puts in the time to write a "relatively accurate" introduction, and the SWP then distributes this pamphlet for four years. Why? As an educational service to the enquiring public? Because it begins at all times from the perspective of aiding Spartacist in building its organization? Because they are just a bunch of good guys up at 873 Broadway?

HANSEN

Hansen's purpose is clearly to use Robertson to discredit the International Committee so as to build up the Pabloite United Secretariat and seal off the ranks of the Pabloites from the political criticisms of the IC. Hansen not only refrains in his introduction from any serious criticism of Robertson but actually works himself up into a sympathetic sweat over Robertson's health at the conference. Then he states his own conclusion quite clearly:

"Last December, while Healy was getting out the publicity for his coming circus, the Fourth International held the Second Congress since Reunification (the eighth since the movement was founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938). There was no attempt at describing it as more than it was, or pulling any bluffs.

"Differences of opinion on some points were freely expressed at the congress. This was expected and, in fact, was welcomed as an indication of the democracy and free atmosphere reigning in the internal life of the movement.

"It was a serious gathering of delegates and observers from well-established sections and parties in a number of countries. Their main objective was to consolidate the reunification, bring the main political analysis of the movement up to date, and open a new stage of expansion for the world Trotskyist movement."(28)

Is this a "relatively accurate" description of the nature and role of the Pabloite international? Or was Spartacist so choked up over Hansen's sympathy for Robertson's health, so twisted in their bitterness towards the International Committee, that this defense of Pabloism was dismissed as unimportant, a minor matter, almost unnoticed.

Not only does Hansen defend the United Secretariat as the Fourth International but he labels the "Second Congress Since Reunification" as the "eighth since the movement was founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938." This one "relatively accurate" statement wipes right out of the history of the Fourth International the entire experience of the International Committee from 1953 to 1963, recognizing the Pabloite faction congresses in that period as in retrospect legitimate congresses of the movement Trotsky founded in 1938.

Ah, but all this matters little in the eyes of Spartacist West. The main thing is that all the dirt get out against Healy and Robertson's noble battle for honor, his unbending head, be printed up in a nice edition and be distributed as widely as possible!

TATE

The relationship between Spartacist and the SWP over the "Healy Reconstructs" pamphlet was to be only the beginning. This collaboration was soon to take on a new, vicious form in the so-called "Tate Affair."

Contrary to the slanders of Hansen and Robertson the 1966 Conference of the International Committee represented a fundamental step forward in the construction of the Fourth International. This and this alone explains the great effort which the Pabloites resorted to in slander-



Spartacists agreed with the Pabloites that this banner should not be raised because of the objections of the Belgian Stalinists at the Liege international demonstration.

ing the conference. What Robertson and Hansen held up as an example of the weakness of the conference—the political break with Spartacist and the French Voix Ouvriere Group (to be dealt with later)—was in actuality the great strength of the conference. It was the other side of the affirmation of the International Committee as the continuity of the Fourth International. It was precisely this which threatened the Pabloites as well as the Spartacist group.

It was at the IC Congress that a youth commission was set up which laid plans for the collaboration of the British Young Socialists and the French Revoltes group in the upcoming Liege anti-war demonstration. A call for this demonstration had been issued by the Belgian JGS youth organization, which was under the leadership of the Pabloite Ernest Mandel. The British and French youth decided to respond to the call and prepared to bring serious forces to Liege, Belgium for the demonstration in the fall of 1966. This work represented the beginning of the international youth collaboration which was to lead to the International Youth Assembly held in the summer of 1967 and this in turn was a step towards the International Youth Conference scheduled for later this year.

LIEGE

The British YS brought 500 youth to Liege and the French Revoltes 400 youth and these two contingents alone made up almost half of the entire march. Liege proved concretely right in the heart of Europe that the International Committee, far from being "ultra-left sectarians" had been able to assemble youth forces on a mass scale.

More than that was expressed at Liege. The IC contingents were politically cohesive marching in a disciplined manner with Trotskyist banners and chanting "Long Live the Fourth International!" in French. The British contingent was made up almost entirely of young workers who had never before been out of the country and who had been transported a great distance through a large campaign to participate in the demonstration. Liege marked the re-emergence of Trotskyism among European youth on a mass scale. As such it threw the Pabloites into the deepest crisis and panic.

The demonstration took place on the tenth anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and banners carried by both the French and British youth commemorated this event linking the struggle against Stalinism with the international struggle for the socialist revolution. Youth of the Belgian Communist Party announced they would refuse to march in the demonstration if the Hungarian banners were carried. The Pabloite leaders of the JGS acceded to this blackmail and demanded that the British youth not carry their Hungarian banner. At one point they actually threatened to call in the police against the British Trotskyists and in defense of the Stalinists. Only by the determination of the British and a public appeal over a loudspeaker was this attempt of the Pabloites thwarted.

The IC Congress and the Liege demonstration stand as a political background to the Tate Affair. The affair was in actuality a very small incident which was turned into a major campaign by the Pabloites to divert their membership and others from the growth of the IC and its political program. On November 17th, just after Liege, the SLL held a public meeting in Caxton Hall, London to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution. The Canadian Pabloite Ernest Tate, at that time the SWP's personal representative in England, was as usual in front of the meeting hawking—you guessed it—"Healy Reconstructs the Fourth International."

FACTS

Here is an account of exactly what happened in front of Caxton Hall issued by the International Committee. It has been attested to by a number of independent witnesses. Accusations by Tate to the contrary were withdrawn by various British papers on threat of legal action attesting to the fact that these allegations had no basis in fact.

"Tate's account of what actually happened outside the meeting is completely false. He was one of a large number of people selling the literature of their various tendencies. Comrade Healy entered the meeting together with Comrade M. Banda and Comrade P. Lambert. On his way to see the caretaker to make final arrangements for the meeting, Comrade Healy asked the Steward on the door to ensure that the entrance was kept clear for the coachloads of people disembarking outside the hall. The steward requested the sellers of literature to move, and they all complied with this, except for Tate. Refusing to move, he insisted the stewards would have to call the police before he would move. It was at this point that the exchange of blows took place. Comrade Healy was not present when the scuffle began. Emerging from the caretaker's office, he saw the incident and immediately took steps to ensure that it stopped. Tate and the SWP leaders are concocting outright lies when they allege that the incident took place under the direction of Comrade Healy. They lie when they say that physical violence was used to prevent him from selling literature critical of the SLL and its leadership."(29)

Following this incident Tate ran a whole international campaign claiming hooligans at Healy's direction beat him up to prevent him from selling literature which he had been freely selling many times before at SLL gatherings. He openly appealed to all kinds of hostile anti-Trotskyist middle class circles like Peace News, the Socialist Leader, and the Tribune.

CAMPAIGN

Tate, for instance, wrote:

"Neither a fascist Mosley nor an ultra-left Gerry Healy who imagines himself to be a Trotskyist, should be allowed to curtail our democratic rights."(30)

Along the same lines, but even more explicit, the Posadasite Red Flag wrote: "Imperialism is very weak, it is in-

capable of mobilizing big fascist currents but it will use what can be used and the SLL outfit is ideal with its gangster methods and fascist mentality which prevails within it."(31)

Anarchist Laurens Otter adds his voice in a letter to Freedom stating:

"Not merely is the thuggery of the SLL consistent with Trotsky's actions when in power, but Comrade Tate belongs to the American SWP which for years countenanced Healy's disciplinary measures against dissidents, Fryer, Cadogan, Pennington, to name but four..."(32)

And so we go the complete circle and the anti-Trotskyist character of the campaign around Tate begins to lash home at even its initiators in the SWP!

On November 17, 1966 Farrell Dobbs of the SWP wrote James Robertson of Spartacist as follows:

"In view of the declaration in the November-December issue of Spartacist that your organization remains in 'essential political agreement' with the organizations headed by Thomas Gerard Healy and Tim Wohlforth, the main spokesman in the United States for the SLL, your own stand on the issue of the employment of physical violence against members of other workers organizations is placed in question.

"We trust that you will clarify your stand—and its relation to your expression of political solidarity with Healy—in an adequate way and as rapidly as possible."(33)

SPARTACIST

Robertson responded as rapidly as the infrequent publication schedule of Spartacist allowed and the January-February, 1967 issue printed the screaming headline "Oust Healy!" Robertson definitely clarified his stand and in particular as far as political solidarity with Healy was concerned. Spartacist simply printed in its entirety the Tate letter with its comparison of Healy with Fascist Mosley. It repeated every slander of the Pabloites taking every accusation at face value and adding his own venom.

Spartacist concluded:

"In the event that the grip of Healy's clique on the Socialist Labour League is too strong, or Healy's leading collaborators on the International Committee too cowardly, to intervene directly to oust Healy, we think it appropriate to force a workers' inquiry to expose this



Ernest Tate found a strong supporter in Spartacist for his slanders of the SLL.

fraud who disorients and corrupts the Trotskyist movement by posing as a revolutionary leader."(34)

No doubt Robertson would nominate for membership on such an "inquiry" body, the editors of Red Flag, the anarchist Otter, the editors of Peace News and Tribune, and Farrell Dobbs!

LOGIC

But the matter does not end here. We turn to the next issue of Spartacist (May-June, 1967) and find the article "Healy at Liege and Peking." Referring once again to "Healy's bureaucratic Cominternist organizational maneuvers" it states:

"If the politics of a group such as the SLL remain formally 'correct' while the organizational practices of its leading clique increasingly degenerate into Stalinist gangsterism, this contradiction must inevitably set up a tension urgently in need of resolution: either the rotting leadership must be thrown out or the political life of the organization will be increasingly contaminated."(35)

If we seek patiently to wade through the logic of this statement then what Spartacist seems to be saying is that the SLL has gone over to Stalinism in its organizational behavior and that this will in time find expression in its political life. The proof of this political contamination is in the very next sentence:

"The sectarian provocation committed

at Liege in October 1966 by the Healy-Banda proteges, the British Young Socialists (YS), indicated that the second alternative was being realized."(36)

This "sectarian" provocation is described:

"The YS appeared at the anti-imperialist demonstration carrying a banner in support of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution."(37)

Such is the warped reasoning of Spartacist! The organizational Stalinism of the SLL finds its political reflection in the raising of a banner defending the Hungarian Revolution! This is then, in chorus with the Pabloites, denounced as "sectarian." The grounds given are that it offended the Stalinist youth present and thus it would "drive them away" rather than winning them over. As if one could break Stalinists from Stalinism by hiding one's Trotskyist convictions and banner!

MIDDLE

As with the SWP, Spartacist could not explain Liege. As with the SWP, Spartacist began with its fear and hatred of the new development of the Fourth International. It is this mutual hostility to the forces of Trotskyism which drew the SWP and Spartacist together in 1966 and 1967 and it is this hostility which holds them together today on major issues.

The quick evolution of Spartacist following the 1966 Congress revealed the hostile nature of this group and the impossibility of building a revolutionary current separate from the Fourth International. As Trotsky commented many a time there is no middle ground between Stalinism and Trotskyism. Those who reject the Fourth International end up serving in one fashion or another revisionism and revisionism serves as an all important prop for Stalinism.

Says Spartacist West:

"Our position on the SWP's revisionism is quite clear in Spartacist, for those who can read."(38)

We can read! We can read!

FOOTNOTES

1. Spartacist West, Number 18, March 27, 1970, page 4.
2. Spartacist Internal Information Bulletin, June 1965, "Letter to the United Secretariat of Harry Turner for the REB, 18 May 1965.
3. Spartacist Number 3, January-February 1965, page 1.
4. *ibid.* page 13.
5. Spartacist Number 4, May-June 1965, page 3.
6. Spartacist Number 8, November-December 1966, page 14.
7. Spartacist Number 9, January-February 1967, page 6 ff.
8. Problems of the Fourth International by Gerry Healy, page 30.
9. *ibid.* page 30.
10. Draft Theses on Building the Revolutionary Movement in the U.S., page 3.
11. *ibid.* page 1.
12. *ibid.* page 1.
13. *ibid.* page 1.
14. *ibid.* page 2.
15. *ibid.* page 2.
16. *ibid.* page 2.
17. *ibid.* page 2.
18. Some Comment on Perspective for the Fused Movement by Tim Wohlforth, page 5.
19. Conversations With Wohlforth Marxist Bulletin No. 3 (part iv-1965), page ii.
20. Spartacist Number 6, June-July 1966, page 7.
21. *ibid.* page 12.
21. *ibid.* page 12.
22. *ibid.* page 12.
23. *ibid.* page 13.
24. Fourth International Vol. 3, Number 3, page 119.
25. Spartacist West, *op. cit.*
26. Healy Reconstructs the Fourth International, page 24.
27. Spartacist West, *op. cit.*
28. Healy Reconstructs, *op. cit.*, page 12.
29. International Correspondence Vol. 1, No. 1, February 6, 1967, page 6.
30. Spartacist Number 9, January-February 1967, page 2.
31. International Correspondence, *op. cit.*, page 10.
32. *ibid.*, page 8.
33. Letter, November 21, 1966.
34. Spartacist Number 9, page 4.
35. Spartacist Number 10, May-June 1967, page 2.
36. *ibid.* page 2.
37. *ibid.* page 2.
38. Spartacist West, *op. cit.*

Socialist Party Convention Moves Right of Liberals



Michael Harrington of the Socialist Party.

BY TIM WOHLFORTH
THE RECENT SOCIALIST Party Convention will probably go down in the infamous history of the social democracy as the only time the social democracy was out of step with the liberal bourgeoisie by being to the right of them. The SP declared by a vote of 52 to 21 against unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam.

The majority resolution stated in part: "How can the United States bring about a speedy end to this war without completely abandoning the many innocent Vietnamese to what is sure to be a brutal, bloody totalization of the society."

It answers this question by proposing a slow withdrawal: "the pace of withdrawal should only be conditioned by two factors: the security of American troops and offer of refuge to any South Vietnamese, who wishes to claim sanctuary in the United States."

The Socialist Party thus proceeds from the point of view that a victory of the NLF would be the worst possible alternative and it is this, not imperialism, which would be "brutal, bloody." It states this after My Lai. It also proceeds from Nixon's point of view of the security of American troops and the puppet Vietnamese supporters of the U.S. who might wish "sanctuary."

OPPOSITION

The opposition to this point of view was led by pacifist Dave McReynolds who claims the SP is controlled by Max Shachtman.

"In the past 12 years, Shachtman and his supporters have steadily moved to the right and, using the SP as a base, have managed to penetrate a number of other organizations," McReynold charged. He

charged that this controlling group had actually supported Hubert Humphrey in 1968. Mike Harrington, chairman of the SP and a Shachtman supporter, came out at a press conference in the convention against even a liberal third party on the grounds it would "guarantee the re-election of Richard M. Nixon in 1972." It is the battle between the liberals and conservatives within the Democratic Party," he stated. "And when a new party emerges in this country—a first party with a majority following, not a third party on the fringe of society—it may well call itself the Democratic Party."

Among Harrington's recent pronouncements has been a call for the McCarthy and Humphrey wings of the Democratic Party to unite through ignoring their differences over Vietnam! This will give some indication of what Shachtmanite Harrington has in mind as a "new party" in America!

SHACHTMAN

This latest example of the degeneracy of the Shachtman tendency—which should not be simply dismissed as it does carry a certain weight within layers of the labor bureaucracy where it plays the advisor role Lovestone used to play—requires a harsh look at the evolution of the Shachtman tendency. The International Socialists in particular who still look to Shachtman for their theory of third campism and which historically has emerged from a wing of the Shachtmanite movement must be held accountable for the evolution of their former leader. But the YSA could also learn much from the origins of the Shachtman group as Trotsky analyzed it in *In Defence of Marxism*.

The Shachtman group began with a pragmatic reaction to the upcoming war in 1940 and the invasion of Finland and Poland by the Soviet Union in that period. This was combined with a deep hostility to the discipline of the proletarian party and an organizational struggle against the Cannon leadership of the SWP. Shachtman himself claimed to have no position on the nature of the Soviet Union but to agree on "concrete facts" about Finland and Poland.

Trotsky concentrated his fire on the question of method. He explained that the Shachtman-Burnham-Abern bloc was formed on the basis of the anti-Marxist pragmatic method which Burnham openly espoused. Once broken from the Marxist method and reacting only to the "facts" around them, they became prey to the pressures of the capitalist class through the petty bourgeois "public." It was these class pressures which drove this minority into a factional fury against the SWP majority and the Fourth International as a whole. It has been these class pressures which have determined the evolution of the Shachtman group in all its factions ever since.

IS

The present leadership of the IS group was formed in this Shachtman tendency. Hal Draper, in particular, actually led the majority section of YPSL-Fourth, the SWP youth group at the time, out behind Shachtman. Hal Draper remained Shachtman's righthand man right down to his recent break with Shachtman just a few years ago. For over 25 years Draper participated in the political direction of the Shachtman movement and he and the IS must accept responsibility for this history now. Sy Landy's history in the Shachtman movement does not go quite as far back but he can chalk up a good 15 years in Shachtman's service.

Shachtman's present position on Vietnam is nothing more than the expression of the political and class logic of positions taken by his movement at a time when the present leaders of the IS were actively responsible along with Shachtman for the direction of the Shachtmanite organization. It was as early as 1946 that Shachtman, in an article which coincided with the beginning of imperialism's cold war drive against the USSR, declared: "Bureaucratic collectivism is the source of the new Russian imperialist power as early capitalism was the source of British imperialist power." Thus Shachtman saw Russian "imperialism" threatening the world precisely at a time when Churchill was declaring the same thing and America began to encircle the workers states with military bases.

The record shows that in this period it was Hal Draper together with future Dissent editor Irving Howe who had fought

Shachtman from the right demanding that he assess the USSR as imperialist!

COVER

By 1951 Shachtman had swung around in the position which leads him today to stand with Nixon even against a McCarthy! He wrote: "Without hesitation or ambiguity, we can say that the only greater disaster that humanity could suffer than the war itself, which would be disaster enough if it broke out, would be the victory of Stalinism as the outcome of the war." Thus Stalinism is seen as even worse than nuclear war and the "third camp" becomes revealed as a cover for defense of capitalist imperialism!

Let us remember that these lines were written in the height of the Korean War with its McCarthyite witchhunt of those principled socialist who exposed and fought that imperialist war. Let us remember that Draper and Landy were not only members of Shachtman's group at that time but were to remain with Shachtman for another decade.

Let there be no misconception that Shachtman in that period held any kind of even verbal connection with Trotskyism and the Fourth International. We need only turn to Shachtman's own testimony before the government over the listing of his organization (Independent Socialist League) by the Attorney General. In 1956 Shachtman was asked about passages from the Transitional Program and Labor Action, organ of the ISL, answered: "The reading of the quotations showed that what-



Max Shachtman

Shachtman or are they perhaps making a division of labor with him?

Clearly it is the latter which is involved. Today with the bourgeoisie itself split over questions of tactics in regards to Vietnam and its whole international and domestic position, the social democracy is also split. The IS, which has actively supported a non-working class liberal party like Peace and Freedom, emerges temporarily independent of the Socialist Party in order to develop social democratic positions among youth who will not touch the SP with a 100 foot pole.

The IS stands together with Shachtman in its assessment of the nature of the Soviet Union, in its opposition to the construction of the Leninist Party, in its scepticism about the Transitional Program and the fight for the labor party, in its willingness to support non-working class political formations. The IS as much as Shachtman reflects the pressure of imperialism through the petty bour-



Shachtman's "third camp" theory was cover for supporting U.S. imperialism in Korea.

ever the historical merit of the document, the developments in the past almost twenty years showed it to be outlived and above all it had no living relationship at all to the organizations."

DRAPER

Thus the Shachtmanites defended themselves against the witchhunting Attorney General's list by claiming the whole thing was a matter of mistaken identity. Their organization bore no relationship to revolutionary Marxism. The government obviously agreed and soon removed the ISL from the list. Let up point out that the Labor Action which made those remarks was edited at the time by none other than Hal Draper!

In 1956 and 1957 Shachtman proposed that the Shachtmanite organization liquidate itself into the moribund and reformist Socialist Party. In opposition to this emerged a tendency in the youth, the tendency which after its expulsion was to merge with the SWP youth to form the YSA. In this period not only did this tendency have to fight the right wing Shachtman group but Draper and Landy as well. These two in particular specialized in witchhunting this tendency as "Cannonite" and voted for its expulsion!

Draper and the rest of the IS initiating leadership broke with the SP only when they discovered that the SP was a failure and the mass of the radicalized students were completely by-passing it! Would they have left the SP if it had been perhaps a bit more of an organizational success? Have they assessed the theoretical and methodological roots of Shachtman's evolution. Have they really broken with

geoisie at a time when imperialism is of two minds as to the methods by which it must preserve its rule. Shachtman today is what the IS will be tomorrow under conditions of reaction just as the IS leaders yesterday stood together with Shachtman.

YSA

The lesson in all this for the YSA and the SWP is just as critical. Trotsky's attack on Shachtman was not simply for his particular position on the Russian question but for the method which underlay it. His conclusion was that with the pragmatic method one is forced to accede to the pressures of imperialism through the petty bourgeoisie. Today there has been an abandonment within the SWP and YSA of any serious struggle for theory and the Marxist method. Beginning with existing opportunities the YSA has been borne along by bourgeois pressure to the point that even when physically attacked by Stalinists it cannot politically fight Stalinism.

In Cleveland it could not even demonstrate against the Stokes liberal wing of the bourgeoisie, even though it was this wing which had called in the troops against wildcatting Teamsters, troops which then were mobilized against the Kent students who were in turn fighting back against the Cambodian war.

Shachtman today is as much the future of the YSA and SWP as it is of the IS as long as these organizations continue to embrace pragmatism instead of dialectical materialism. Now is an excellent time for militants within these organizations to take up a serious study of Trotsky's *In Defence of Marxism*.

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Jerome, Epton, Milt Rosen, Scheer. Bill Epton was leader of PLP until his expulsion.

BY LUCY ST. JOHN

On June 9 Bill Epton, founding member and leader of the Progressive Labor Party was expelled. His expulsion from PL together with nine other members reflects the deepening crisis inside this organization.

Dissent is rampant within PL. It is expressed sharply within its older cadre, its leadership, its working class, black and Spanish speaking cadre and among serious youth forces. The slandering and expulsion of the 10 members by the leadership is one manifestation of this crisis. The other is the frenzied, disruptive actions and hysterical chanting of the SDS youth at the Cleveland conference, the physical attacks on the SWP-YSA, and the anti-Trotskyism being whipped up among these youth. It is not accidental that the leadership's fear of the Epton tendency which has roots in the working class sections of the party is combined with an attack on Trotskyism.

The roots of this crisis go back to the very origins of Progressive Labor. While PL originated as a break from the Communist Party, it never confronted its own history. Above all it never probed the roots of the revisionism of the Communist Party in Stalinism and refused to confront the question of Trotskyism.

This crisis in PL now comes to a head precisely because of the crisis of capitalism and the offensive of the working class. In this situation the struggle for the leadership of the working class is sharpened and the historical question of revolution or reform, of Trotskyism versus Stalinism cannot be avoided.

This is the political context underlying the expulsion of Epton. Epton together with Fred Jerome, Milt Rosen, Walter Linder, Mort Scheer and Jake Rosen were the leaders of the left faction inside the CP which after breaking from the CP in 1960 formed the Progressive Labor Movement and later the Progressive Labor Party. In the spring of 1963 Epton was put on the Editorial Board of Progressive Labor together with Rosen, Scheer, and Paul Ault. In 1963 Epton, a member of the IUE ran as a working class candidate against the Democrats and Republicans

in the New York Councilmanic elections. Later Epton was elected Vice President of PLP.

It was Epton who took the brunt of the witchhunt after the Harlem riots in July 1964. Epton was arrested and indicted on charges of criminal anarchy and rioting.

As recently as August, 1969 Epton co-authored with Fred Jerome and Walt Riley PL's statement on the Black Panther Party (August 1969 issue of PL). Up until his expulsion Epton had major responsibility for PL's work with black workers.

This is the man who is now labelled 'a cop' by the leadership of Progressive Labor.

PURGES

The action against Epton and the other nine members is not an isolated incident but is part of a whole series of purges by the leadership directed against all opposition inside the party combined with forced and voluntary resignations by leading members. As we reported in the June 1, 1970 issue of the Bulletin (see Documents from PLP, Suppressed Discussion of Trotsky) the editors of Desafio, Juan and Helena Farinas were expelled for submitting a document to the internal discussion bulletin which raised the question of Trotskyism. At about the time of the expulsion of the Farinas, Charles Rosen, a founding member of PL was forced to resign because of his opposition to the leadership's "reorganization" of the party. Steve Martinot, an early member and leader resigned. More recently Ray Agostini, leader of the PL fraction in the SSEU-371, who also had leading responsibility for work with the Latin American cadre and was made editor of Desafio after the expulsion of the Farinas, resigned and was then expelled by PL.

The crisis in PL openly erupted in the fall of 1969. It reflected the deepening offensive of the working class and the bankruptcy of PL's pragmatism. In an attempt to work out a line on major political questions, a discussion bulletin was opened. But when the question of Trotskyism was raised, as it had to be, the discussion was immediately suppressed. At the same time the leadership was forced to admit the failure of its "experiment" of sending students into the factories and its failure to recruit workers to the party. This problem was viewed not as a political and theoretical problem but as a result of the weaknesses in the student cadre and as an organizational question.

Instead of probing these problems politically and the continuing internal discussion, the leadership of PL instituted its so-called "reorganization" plan.

RESIGNATIONS

This was combined with a breast-beating session by the leadership. After this session Bill Epton, Jake Rosen, and Jared Israel were forced to resign from

Progressive Labor

the National Committee. We print here excerpts from this discussion included in the document "Leadership Evaluation—Report of PLP NC Meeting November, 1969" in order to point out the level on which the leadership confronts political questions:

A. Bill Epton: Bill has not successfully developed our work among Black workers and students primarily because he failed to work well with the people with whom he came in contact....He wrote 'The antagonisms between me and those I was working with developed from my view of myself and my work in the Party.... As a result of the intense criticism and self-criticism period Bill recognized that he has been prevented from giving good leadership to the Party and the working class by his own individualism.... 'I am trying to rebuild myself at 38. I think I can make a contribution to Marxism-Leninism.' The NC agrees and the NSC is going to work closely with Bill in the coming period.

B. Jake Rosen: Jake said of himself: 'The essential aspect of our line is basebuilding. I understood this. But I did not basebuilding. I knew better though I hid behind legalisms. My problem is that I suffer from 'big-shot-itis.'...The NC was hearted to get this self-criticism with which it agrees. Jake has to change his attitude toward people....

C. Jared Israel: ...Jared mainly suffers from petty-bourgeois egotism and a childish attitude...As Milt said, 'Jared is potentially a blackbuster (sic) but if he persists in his childish attitudes—won't clean the house, wash the dishes, general selfishness—it will come out in building the Party (it already has)...Among the proposals offered by Jared and others were: Jared shall be entirely responsible for cleaning his house...Jared will keep a daily log; Jared will concentrate on making friends among the people he lives and works with....

"The changes in the NC were adopted in a spirit of enthusiasm and understanding that this is a part of a more serious approach to the Party in general...."

STALIN

On a lesser scale, of course, this approach recalls the confession method used by Stalin against leaders of the Bolshevik Party during the Moscow Trials. This method as used by Stalin and Rosen today is a way of preventing a political discussion in the party and to crush all opposition to the leadership.

But as time has shown the political problems in the party and the leadership could not just be dismissed by reducing them to personal weaknesses through confessions, reorganization, or by suppression of political discussion. This is the significance of the group of ten including Epton which began a struggle in the party raising questions about PL's perspective. It was for these political differences that Epton and the nine others were expelled. In fact they were expelled before they could even present them objectively to the party.

Although the document prepared by the Epton group is unable to probe theoretically to the roots of revisionism in PL, it is a serious and objective effort and raises fundamental questions about PL and ultimately (though this is not stated) about the nature of Stalinism. In fighting the leadership, the document relies heavily on quotes from Mao. It begins with a brief statement that the crisis of U.S. imperialism is deepening. "We are engaged in one of the most decisive battles that has ever faced the world proletariat." In this context the document raises the question of democracy in the party.

"The leadership has been, and is, unresponsive to criticism and suggestions. Criticisms are taken as being 'anti-party,' and those people raising them are called anti-communist. Many of the criticisms that we are raising have been made by many comrades in the past....

"We feel that we have not broken democratic centralism because in our party today there is 'centralism' without 'democracy.' That centralism is centered, primarily, in the person of the party chairman....

"Centralism which permits the leadership to stop debate which has gone through proper channels, which changes lines without explanation, which demands upholding anti-Marxist-Leninist ideas, is not democratic centralism, it is 'erroneous centralization.'"

The document goes on to raise a number of questions and criticisms of PL's perspective and attacks its pragmatic

solutions.

"At our founding convention and at our second convention (the next is not scheduled for three years) we made attempts to turn the party towards the working class and away from the missionary 'community work.' We also attempted to turn the students toward the working class around the Worker-Student Alliance (WSA). The results have been, essentially, that the party is still a party of mainly college students and intellectuals. So now the party has adopted get-rich-quick schemes and political gimmicks to solve a basic political problem...The conclusion that is drawn (by the leadership-editor) is that students and 'intellectuals' cannot integrate with the working class because of their petty-bourgeois background and then some 'history' of what happened in the old revisionist CP is given as proof that it can't work! But even more, the cadre whom we are trying to build as Marxist-Leninists are told that they are armed with working class science and that they cannot integrate with the same working class that we are trying to win to make the revolution...."

"To sum it up—the blame was placed on the cadre and the leadership was not self-critical that maybe they incorrectly interpreted M-L and that is the reason for the cadre not being more successful."

A very central and significant part of the Epton document is devoted to the question of racism within PL. The opposition accuses "the steering committee of deliberately and systematically carrying out this racist campaign against the black, Latin and other minority comrades and workers around the party."

"At this point, seven black members of PL in New York have left the party or been expelled in the last few months. Scores of others who were close to the party are now alienated from it. Further, the 'internal bulletin' that discussed Desafio indicated that a series of Latin editors have (every one!) left the party. The expulsions were covered up by the leadership's saying that they were never party members! We have not heard of any attempt by the leadership to deal with this disaster except by slander, half truths and out-and-out lies. For a M-L party in the U.S. this is a severe body blow that cannot be answered by slander and lies....

"Further! The leadership is spreading lies that all of the black comrades have left the party or are being expelled because 'they weren't any good anyhow,' 'they weren't building a base,' 'they are unstable,' 'they are anti-party' (of course because they express a criticism or disagree with something), 'we should not have recruited them in the first place,' 'they are cops,' and on and on. Well, this ducks the fundamental political question as to how in the only political formation on the 'left' in this country, that had any black members—and workers at that—it came to pass that they are leaving and being expelled...."

The opposition ties the growth of revisionism in the party to the "wholesale expulsions and driving away of friends from the party here in N.Y. (black and white)."

Epton's group also takes up the question of PL's break from any connections with an international movement expressed in the disbanding of World Revolution. This the opposition describes as "U.S. chauvinism".

Rather than confronting these questions politically, as the Epton group points out, the PL leadership has sought solutions pragmatically through organizational schemes and measures. More and more it has abandoned any pretense to strategy, rejecting the program for the independent political mobilization of the working class for power. This is the only strategy that can provide the basis for the unity of the working class, black and white, and the unity of the workers and students.

RIGHT WING

The emergence of the Epton group with roots in a working class section of the party is in part a reaction to the growing right wing, anti-working class tendencies in this organization. While the PL leadership viciously attacks the working class and minority cadre, the serious students and those who are raising questions of theory, it is encouraging the growth of the middle class radicals in SDS. By their own admission, SDS is reformist and its program is nothing more than a rehash of student powerism ("Off

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Expels Bill Epton, Founding Member and Leader

Rote") and idealist worship of the spontaneous struggles of the working class ("Support Black Rebellions"). The right wing anti-theory tendency in SDS which prides itself on its ignorance of Marxism and hostility to the revolutionary party is openly encouraged by the PL leadership which is more and more dominated by the Stalin worshipers like Scheer.

The political content of PL's position is the subordination of the working class to reformism and to capitalism; it is the perspective of the popular front. The political expression of the struggle against this perspective is the struggle of Trotskyism against Stalinism. PL itself is forced to admit this. As PL more and more openly moves to the right, its turn is expressed most sharply in its attack on Trotskyism.

The Epton document states:

"Everything must flow from the basic theoretical foundation that we lay down. The problems that have arisen in the party cannot be resolved by shifting the cadre around like checkers and through constant reorganization without examining what the basic theoretical foundation is that we are working from and why most comrades have not built a base wherever they have workers. That's a political and ideological question and not an organizational one. And until we re-examine the Marxist-Leninist principles that we have set down for ourselves and examine all questions from that framework we will continue to be playing at revolution and be irrelevant to the working class."

THEORETICAL

This is the point but Epton does not get to the theoretical foundations, to the political and ideological questions. Like the leadership of PL he has not confronted the roots of PL in Stalinism and has not confronted its alternative in Trotskyism.

It was precisely this question which came forward in the internal discussion and was answered by Scheer reaffirming Stalin and the suppression of this discussion. This is the question which the editors of *Desafio* raised inside PL. Without confronting these questions Epton and others will only follow the road of the PL leadership into pragmatism and counterrevolution. This is the lesson of the degeneration of PL.

It is not enough as the Epton group contends "to integrate ourselves into the working class at the point of production, learn from them, struggle with them." This was precisely the perspective outlined by PL in its early period and maintained by the leadership today. The penetration of the working class is above all a theoretical struggle based on the whole development and continuity of the Marxist movement and its development in the class struggle today.

The expulsion of Epton marks a new



Bill Epton, shown above leading march through Harlem, had led a tendency within Progressive Labor which is based on working class, minority section of the party.

period of degeneration of Progressive Labor. This is clearly shown in the way in which the leadership reacted to this tendency. As soon as the leadership got wind of the opposition it began a vicious slander campaign. This document reveals the complete political bankruptcy of this organization.

The document's beginning is an attempt to cover over the seriousness of the crisis in PL in a bombastic statement on the growth of PL ("In short thousands of workers are coming around the party all over the country").

Then the leadership contends: "Inner-party struggle is a good thing. Many people think otherwise. They are afraid of it. They suppress it.(!)"

It then reviews briefly the struggles from the very origin of PL in the CP to the discussions of *Road to Revolution I* and *II* to the current "reorganization" plan. The conclusion drawn from each period is that: "We grew," "moved our party ahead" and "tied it closer to the class struggle."

However, the seriousness with which the leadership approaches the internal struggle is expressed in the statement: "Virtually all those who fought against the party and quit were arrogant, individualistic, and often nuts." To discredit the Epton opposition, what follows is probably the crudest, sickest piece of slander ever printed in the Stalinist movement. There is absolutely nothing amusing about this

business, it represents not the growth but the complete degeneration of this tendency.

Under the subtitles "A Number of Tales Which all Lead to the Toilet Bowl" and "The Road to the Toilet Bowl Gets you Right In," the leadership attempts to slander one member of the opposition as a pervert and to implicate Epton by association. Five and a half pages of this fifteen page document are devoted to this rubbish. This is followed by an attempt without any concrete evidence to tie the opposition to the ultra-Stalinist American Communist Workers Movement. The opposition is described as "weirdos" and "nuts."

Of Bill Epton, a leader of the party up to the time of his expulsion, the leadership says: "To sum up, Bill Epton always had the seeds in his line to destroy the party."

The document ends with the most blatant contempt for theory. Rather than quoting Marx or Lenin the leadership ends its statement with:

"Vince Lombardi popularized the idea of following the game plan. In a football game, you fall behind and abandon your strategy to catch up. Or you get way ahead and get careless." and "As Leo Durocher once said: 'Nice guys don't win ballgames.'"

This statement sums up the real method of the PL leadership—American pragma-

tism.

We are seeing the degeneration of Progressive Labor from a tendency which supposedly split from the Communist Party because of its betrayals of the working class to an organization which is today a thin shadow of the CP.

When PL began to tackle its history and the history of the CP it retreated from the implications of this struggle maintaining Stalin and Stalinism against Trotskyism. Contrary to Rosen's contention PL's refusal to confront the fundamental theoretical questions in *Road to Revolution I* and *II*, has "tied it closer" to the CP not the "class struggle."

PL has dropped almost all criticism of the CP in its press concentrating its efforts at the SWP-YSA and behind this on Trotskyism. While PL physically attacked the YSA-led SMC in Boston and mobilized its forces to disrupt the Cleveland conference, it stayed clear of the recent CP called Chicago conference.

The evolution of PL has lessons not only for the Epton opposition and the members of PL and SDS but for all those in the working class movement who think that a revolutionary movement can be built by avoiding the fundamental questions of the history of the Marxist movement, the struggle against revisionism, the fight for theory and principled politics.

Dubcek Expelled by Czech Stalinist Leaders

BY MELODY FARROW

On June 26, Alexander Dubcek was expelled from the Czechoslovak Communist Party by a majority vote of the Central Committee, just two days after his removal as ambassador to Turkey. This expulsion is by no means merely a formality but confirms the preparation of Stalinist trials in the near future against Dubcek and others.

It has been reported that Dubcek has suffered a "breakdown" after "intensive questioning." This "intensive" questioning can only mean that the most brutal methods are being used to force Dubcek to "confess" to being an agent of imperialism and thus provide the basis for his show trial. Oldrich Cernik, the only other party leader from the original Dubcek government in 1968, has now "resigned" from his post on the Board for Technical and Investment Development. It is expected that further party discipline possibly expulsion, will be taken against him.

The expulsion of Dubcek not only exposes the deep crisis of the Stalinist regimes but marks a new stage, a definite turning point in the way this crisis is to be handled. The expulsion of Dubcek came after a long internal struggle in the top bureaucracy which culminated in the victory of those who want an immediate return to political trials and a full scale economic crackdown on the Czech working class. This right wing section headed by Alois Indra, Vasil Bilak and Strougal, present Premier of Czechoslovakia, won the vote for

Dubcek's expulsion at a meeting of the Presidium on May 25 by a vote of 7 to 4. The opposition was headed by Gustav Husak and Svoboda. Following the vote the other supporters of Husak, Peter Colotka, Premier of Slovakia and Evzen Erban were removed from their posts on the Presidium.

FAILURE

The split in the bureaucracy and the final vote is a tacit admission of the failure of the policy of "normalization" which in the two years since the invasion has not been able to stabilize the situation or neutralize the opposition of the workers and students. Husak and others, far from representing any real opposition have simply outlived their usefulness to the Soviet bureaucracy. The Stalinists must now throw off the mask of normalization and find others in the Czech bureaucracy who will lead the new full scale attack against the Czech working class.

Just as Dubcek was discarded in 1968, Husak will not be saved by his policy of conceding to the right wing Stalinists. Husak will of course accept the new line but there is little doubt that a complete

change in the top leadership of the party is ahead. While the capitalist press presents the struggle as only a power play at the top it is actually a reflection of the prolonged resistance of the students and workers who fought the Soviet tanks in 1968.

The Czech bureaucracy is wasting no time. The new president of the Academy of Sciences, Jaroslav Kozesnik, has declared that the "first duty" at hand must be a complete purge of all "anti-socialist" elements on the Academy staff. Many philosophy professors at the Charles University, a stronghold of the "liberals," have been suspended. On May 29, Premier Strougal denied that trials were in preparation but affirmed that "legal measures" would be taken against those who held such "anti-socialist" views. Despite Strougal's assurances, it is well known that subpoenas have already been issued to reformers and the judiciary is being reorganized in preparation for trials which may begin as soon as the end of August.

The concern of the bureaucracy is now focused on the youth whose hatred for the leadership continues to grow with the new purges. A CP journal, *Tribuna*, openly admits that the defiance of the youth in 1968 has now turned into "silence." The *Tribuna* writer explains that the youth must be won over by showing the youth that the Soviet Union and its allies "are on the side of the revolution" and should be supported.

The purge is also running into trouble

in the trade unions. The Central Council of the Czech trade unions has pointed out that the most difficult aspect of this purge is at the lower levels, among the rank and file. The Central Council has ruled "that the purge in the trade union enterprise and primary organization should be completed by September 30th."

This seemingly confident statement cannot hide the bureaucracy's growing desperation at the impossibility of their task. "The Stalinists know that physical terror alone will not assure their victory over the working class. Then why do they now carry out measures which can only lead to greater resistance to their rule? They are driven to it by the logic of Stalinism, thrown into mortal crisis by the crisis of capitalism which opens up a new revolutionary upsurge that threatens the continued peaceful coexistence of the Stalinists and capitalists."

DEFEND

The Trotskyist movement has consistently led the campaign against the Stalinist trials and we will not be silent now. It is the task of the revolutionary parties, particularly in Western Europe whose actions have such deep impact on the workers of Eastern Europe to expose this return to Stalinism and demand the release of all political prisoners in the Stalinist countries. The mobilization of the working class in all countries to defend those on trial will play an important role in building a movement within Eastern Europe to overthrow the bureaucracy.



Nixon fears rebellion among GIs, here flashing the peace sign as they leave Cambodia.

Nixon Escalates Air War As Troops Leave Cambodia

BY PAT CONNOLLY

As U.S. troops are withdrawn from Cambodia, liberation forces control over one third of the country, and the capital city of Phompenh is surrounded and cut off by guerrillas who move throughout the countryside at will.

Meanwhile Nixon is claiming publicly that the invasion was a "success" and that U.S. troops have captured over half of the guerrillas' arms caches.

But it is clear that U.S. forces, combined with American equipped and supplied Cambodian and South Vietnamese puppet troops, have been unable to stop the liberation forces.

The reports of the newly released American journalists who were held by guerrilla forces for several weeks, make clear that the Cambodian guerrillas move through a vast area of the countryside with the active aid and cooperation of the peasantry. One of the journalists, Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, wrote:

"We saw a well organized movement of Cambodian and Vietnamese guerrillas in a determined war against American tanks and planes.... At each village an angry faced crowd of men and women gathered and climbed the tailgate for a look at the hated westerners...I suppose the villagers thought we were downed fliers from one of the American planes that had been bombing Cambodia since Sihanouk's overthrow last March."

U.S. imperialism has absolutely no intention of withdrawing from the fight in

Cambodia, for that would mean the almost immediate victory of the liberation forces, and a powerful impetus to the revolutionary upsurge of workers and peasants throughout all of Southeast Asia.

The South Vietnamese troops, true to their position as a puppet of imperialism, have engaged in such widespread rape, looting and pillage that they are hated among the Cambodian workers and peasants. A Cambodian puppet officer, Major Seoung Kimsea, admitting that the South Vietnamese troops looted everything in sight, said "the population now has more fear of the South Vietnamese than of the Viet Cong."

Secretary of State William Rogers has announced that the U.S. will escalate and continue heavy bombing deep inside Cambodia as well as provide air support for ground troops.

Pulling the troops a few miles back across the border into Vietnam is a propaganda effort by the Nixon Administration to undercut the dissention in the army which reached its highest pitch when many U.S. soldiers refused to cross the border into Cambodia at the beginning of the invasion.

The fight against this war in the U.S. is inseparable from the fight to mobilize the American working class politically in solidarity with the Vietnamese and Cambodian workers and peasants. The fight against the war is inseparable from the fight for a labor party in the U.S., for the mobilization of the labor movement on a class basis to oppose the attacks of the ruling class at home and in Asia.

Wildcat Strikes Shutdown Mines

BY MARTY JONAS

Between 15,000 and 20,000 miners in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio went out on wildcat strikes last week, closing down more than 50 mines. The action was in response to the procrastination of President Nixon and the Mine Bureau in implementing the 1969 Mine Safety Bill.

Late in the week an injunction was handed down by Federal Judge Gourley banning the strikes. As of this writing there has been little success in getting the men back into the pits.

The miners are determined to get a mine safety bill with teeth, one that will abolish the kind of conditions that resulted in 29 mine deaths in April and May of 1969 and 34 in April and May of this year.

First, the mine operators squawked that all the new safety requirements—spark-free wiring, more escape routes, adequate ventilation—would put them out of business. So they shut down two hundred mines. Then they took the matter to court and won a delay until at least September. The safety regulations were to have gone into effect April 1.

The Mine Bureau has used the court

delay, really only applicable in Virginia, as an excuse to suspend the regulations nationally.

The health provisions are supposed to go into effect July 1. Most likely they too will be suspended.

What is clearly involved here is the outright collusion of the mine bosses and the Nixon administration against the miners.

Also cooperating with Nixon and the employers is the head of the United Mine Workers, Tony Boyle. Boyle has done nothing to fight for the safety of the miners, and has in fact bargained their safety away for the sake of fattening the Pension Fund of which he is chief trustee. He has disowned the recent strike of thousands of miners.

The miners have had to go out on the picket line not only against the government and the bosses, but against their own union leadership.

The ranks of the UMW must go on the offensive against the mine owners and Nixon who claim they cannot implement mine safety regulations because it will endanger profits. The ranks must demand now that the mines be nationalized under workers control and run in the interests of the working class. Central to this fight must be the struggle for the political independence of the union from the government through the fight for a labor party.

Penn Central Collapse Sends Tremors Through Wall Street

BY DAN FRIED

The spectacular financial collapse of the sixth largest U.S. corporation, the Penn Central Railroad, which on June 21 was forced to file for "reorganization" under federal bankruptcy procedures is the latest and possibly most explosive development in the crisis-ridden U.S. economy.

The fall of the Penn Central was accompanied by a further severe downturn of the New York Stock Exchange averages and points the way toward a further loss of confidence by investors and thus a heightening of the current recession. At the same time, the bankruptcy of the Penn Central endangers not only its employees whose jobs and paychecks are in question, but puts the Company's creditors on the spot to find loans in order to avoid bankruptcy themselves.

BANKRUPTCY

Rather than bailing out the Penn Central by guaranteeing a \$200 million loan from two New York banks, the Nixon Administration decided to let the company go into bankruptcy. Under present conditions the Administration thus shows little confidence in the ability of the Company to make itself solvent through MORE borrowing. What Penn Central was stuck with was a situation of having only \$7 million in the bank while having to meet an immediate payroll of \$20 million, a debt of \$75 million falling due by June 30 and an additional amount of \$600 million in debt falling due by Oct. 31. The bankruptcy proceedings filed in federal court allow the railroad to continue operating while all payments of interest and principle in the Company's total \$2.6 billion debt are temporarily suspended.

The Administration, yielding to pressure from some of its own economic advisors and from Democratic Congressmen, decided to try and weather the storm

SOVIET LEADERS WELCOME TORY VICTORY IN BRITAIN

BY FOREIGN REPORTER

Fast on the heels of U.S. imperialism, the racist government in South Africa, and reactionary regimes all over the world, on June 18 the Soviet bureaucracy welcomed the Tory victory in England.

In broadcasts beamed to Britain on June 19, Moscow Radio made it clear that they have great hopes for the Conservative Party of Edward Heath and Enoch Powell:

"It is timely to recall the serious rebuke made by Mr. Heath to the Labor government during the election campaign. He claimed that during the past six years the government let others treat Britain as though she were a second rate power. If this was not mere campaign invective we can expect the Conservative Party to put maximum effort into restoring Britain's prestige on the world scene as a big power, and this entails a more important foreign policy than the one the Labor government was following."

"When Mr. Heath rebuked Labor for permitting Britain to be regarded as a second rate power, was that just election verbiage or was it the expression of a serious intention to steer Britain out of this fix?"

"The answer can only be supplied by what Mr. Heath's government does."

PRAISE

What Mr. Heath's government is going to do to restore Britain's prestige as a big power is already amply clear. This week the Foreign Minister of the apartheid South African regime is in London arranging for the lifting of the embargo on arms shipments, and the sale of \$480 million worth of arms to South Africa. This is only the beginning.

The Kremlin's praise for the Tories projected foreign policy is only a part of the "independent foreign policy" admired and carried out by the Stalinists as well. It is part of the recent turn by the Stalinist bureaucracy toward reactionary regimes all over the world. It is a continuation of Polish strike breaking in Spain and now in Ireland, of Soviet economic aid to the Greek regime, and the maintenance of diplomatic relations with the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia.

of the bankruptcy and the possibility of "panic" in the business community rather than risk undermining its anti-inflationary program.

The attitude of Nixon and the dominant section of U.S. capitalism is that the only way out in this attempt to slow inflation and the drain on gold reserves is to make the working class pay through a deepening of the recession. The sharp rise in the unemployment rate will continue and may easily reach the 6% mark by fall. Some investors and stockbrokers may "bleed" a bit and even go under. Construction of housing will remain in a crisis. Bankruptcies of small firms as well as mammoth corporations like Penn Central and Chrysler are threatened as corporate profits continue to plummet.

RECESSION

It is this very recession and the efforts to restore falling profits, not the "mismanagement" of the company, that lies behind the Penn Central debacle. As a close associate of the Penn Central's former chief executive officer noted, "If bad management drove the Penn Central over the brink, the disease appears to be spreading." He was referring to Transportation Secretary Volpe's statement that three or four (or six?) other railroads face a similar immediate crisis and that 21 of the country's 74 major railroads operated in the red last year. It is not "mismanagement," but capitalism that brought on the collapse.

The current recession was the straw that broke the camel's back as far as the efforts of Penn Central to begin operating in the black. Operating revenues failed to keep up with rising costs and the huge accumulation of indebtedness as interest rates soared. The Company found it even more difficult during the economic downturn to make up its losses on passenger operations through increased freight revenues.

CONTAINERIZATION

The predecessors of the Penn Central, the New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroads faced the same problem since the post war period as all the other railroads today—the continual decline in railroads in competition with other means of freight hauling by air, truck, and ship. This decline has been accelerated by the containerization revolution which has more and more meant a link-up of shipping and trucking.

The efforts to restore profits meant a huge investment in modernization based on huge loans and has only led to a further lowering of the rate of profit. The trend toward merger was also an attempt to overcome the decline of railroads, and the merger of the two former competitors as Penn Central in 1968 was the major example of this trend. But the merger, brought with it new problems. The corporation took the road of the conglomerates by a big program of investment in non-related industries, thereby tying up large sums of capital needed to repay loans. The need to make the two railway systems technically compatible in order to achieve the long range reduction of costs, proved at first to be far more costly than imagined.

At each critical point, the Penn Central was forced to borrow. Like the U.S. government, it had to borrow more and more in order to pay off what it had already borrowed. This situation was naturally aggravated by the steady rise in interest rates and the current recession. The bankers on Wall Street and in the government finally said "no more credit."

Nationalization, by all means is required but under workers control. The need for nationalization not only of Penn Central but of all the railroads is made more apparent than ever by the inability of private ownership to continue to function without throwing the entire economy into a crisis. The need is not simply for the government to take over an ailing company but for the nationalization of the entire transport industry, including the lucrative airlines, and their operation in the interests of the working people.