

CPUSA Holds National Convention

Sharpen Struggle Against Revisionism!

During the last week of June, the revisionist Communist Party, USA (CPUSA) held its 21st National Convention. It took place amidst a storm of publicity and hoopla designed to give the impression that the CP is "on the offensive." To push this message and whip his troops up, CP number one man Gus Hall resorted to bald-faced fantasy: "Who can seriously question the fact that we are now the most visible, most influential, the fastest growing, the best organized, the most youthful, the liveliest, perkier and most unified force on the left bank of U.S. politics?"

While all this stuff about "fastest growing...best organized...liveliest..." etc. is simply an attempt to prop up the CP's image—among its own members as well as others—the phrase "left bank of U.S. politics" is for real—and very revealing. For it is exactly the role of the CP to act as the "left" wing of *bourgeois* politics, and a "left" cover for various bourgeois schemes to sidetrack and ambush the struggle of the working class and masses of people.

The CP revisionists' avowed intention is to use this Convention as a "turning point" in their efforts to go out among the masses of people, both openly and in disguise, to spread their revisionist poison and build up their strength. Hall's report to the Convention emphasized repeatedly that the CP must push itself by hook or crook into the "many areas where life has presented a vacuum."

It is not "life" but the deepening imperialist crisis that has created the situation the CP so openly hopes to exploit. The U.S. working class is responding to the monopoly capitalists' effort to put the burden on their shoulders with a major upsurge of struggle. Increasingly workers are actively rejecting the class collaboration peddled by the top trade union hacks and taking the fighting stand, "It's not our crisis and we won't pay for it!" This typifies the seeds of class consciousness created in every intense struggle against the capitalists.

Objectively the situation is excellent for these seeds to bloom and bear fruit. The masses are beginning to question the foundations of monopoly capitalist rule. The Vietnam war and Watergate inspired such mistrust and hatred of politicians and the government as to shake the hold bourgeois democratic institutions have had on the U.S. working class. The situation will continue to be favorable for the working class. The crisis is deepening, further weakening the ruling class and exposing the rot and contradictions at the heart of the monopoly capitalist system.

But an objectively favorable situation does not guarantee the advance of the working class. Only to the extent that it has revolutionary class consciousness can the proletariat take full advantage of every opportunity the objective development of the class struggle provides. The class becomes conscious of its historic role through the work of its vanguard, the Marxist-Leninist party, which enters into all the struggles of the masses, helps them sum up and see the road ahead,

and nourishes the seeds of class consciousness that are born in the struggle. There are other forces attempting to enter the struggles of the masses, who seek to turn the present good situation into its opposite, to use it to advance their own narrow interests at the expense of the working class. Among these is the revisionist CPUSA.

What Is Revisionism?

Revisionism is Marxism-Leninism with the revolutionary heart cut out of it, which means that it isn't Marxism-Leninism at all. It denies what is most central to the science of revolution—that only the working class can lead the struggle to abolish the capitalist system, that this can only be accomplished by the armed overthrow of the bourgeois state, and that only the rule of the working class—the dictatorship of the proletariat—can open the way to classless society, communism.

The CPUSA is proud of this denial. Not only does it refuse to even mention the dictatorship of the proletariat, but its draft constitution, presented at the Convention, provides for the expulsion of any member caught advocating "force and violence"! For all that the CP proclaims itself the party of the working class, it raises the class stand of the petty bourgeoisie (and thus the ideology of the bourgeoisie) as a banner against the proletariat.

Like the most backward petty bourgeois, the CP regards itself as the repository of all knowledge and virtue and has only contempt for the workers. The Draft Main Political Resolution to the Convention crows about how "our struggle" against the war, "our stand" against foreign aggression, "our views" on Watergate have been adopted by the masses. And, as these revisionists see it, only the CP can save the workers from "the morally corrupting effect of racism on whites, a process which begins in the earliest grades of school and which has placed a hideous moral blot on the white population of our country."

Look as you will, you won't find any Marxism, any class analysis or any fire directed against the bourgeoisie in all this. The masses are cursed with a "hideous moral blot" and only the CP—representing the outlook of the bourgeoisie—can "save" the masses from themselves—and "save" capitalism from the mass struggle, which is the real point.

Nowhere is the CP's petty bourgeois class stand clearer than in their desperate attempts to deny the class nature of the enemy, and the need for its violent overthrow. The CP proclaims that the fight is to "control" the "monopolies." Here is the simultaneous resentment and respect of the petty bourgeois for the big bourgeois. In other words, the CP wants a piece of the action! They want to ride the struggle of the working class to a position where they can share in (and some day control) the exploitation of the class—for its own good, of course.

The revisionists respect the ruling class as they never

will the workers. Their chosen road to power is using their ability to control and misdirect the mass struggle away from revolution as a bargaining chip with the U.S. ruling class.

Heart of Current Strategy

The heart of the current strategy of the CPUSA is to tie the masses firmly to bourgeois democracy in a way that will enhance its "political influence." At a time when millions of workers have a strong perceptual understanding that the government only cares about the rich and that politicians are corrupt, hypocritical and generally outright liars, the task of communists is to crystallize this into an understanding that "American democracy" is a very tattered velvet glove over the iron fist of the dictatorship of capital. The CP, on the other hand, is trying to patch the glove, explaining that the problem is that the "strong presidency" is "controlled by the monopolies," and Congress must be strengthened against it!

Because working to tie the masses to bourgeois democracy is so central to CP strategy, the biggest debates at the Convention were over the correct way to go about it. They centered on whether or not the time is right to pull together a third, "people's" party to compete with the Republicans and Democrats. So sharp was the debate that the scheduled nomination of the CP's candidates for president and vice president (Gus Hall and Angela Davis) was put off until next year, so that they would have more time to get together a unified line on the elections.

The CP will undoubtedly run open candidates not only in the national elections, but in dozens of state and local elections. The main purpose such campaigns serve is to give the CP publicity and a public platform, which are very important now with the current "offensive." But such campaigns will not serve to draw millions of cynical Americans back into electoral politics, nor would an occasional open CP member elected to a school board significantly increase the CP's political clout.

The CP revisionists desperately want to build a third party, but at the same time the very thought of it makes them nervous. The problem is that there is no way the CP can do it alone. The only way to create a third party is to bring together a variety of opportunist forces with different political bases. The CP can then work within such a party and struggle with the other opportunists for control.

The CP is angling for a variety of forces: "progressive" trade union hacks like Jerry Wurf of AFSCME and Arnold Miller of the UMW; "soft-line" social democrats like Michael Harrington, old anti-war forces, etc. Key among these are politicians, particularly "minority" politicians like the Congressional Black Caucus, who have already been elected to office as members of one of the two major bourgeois parties.

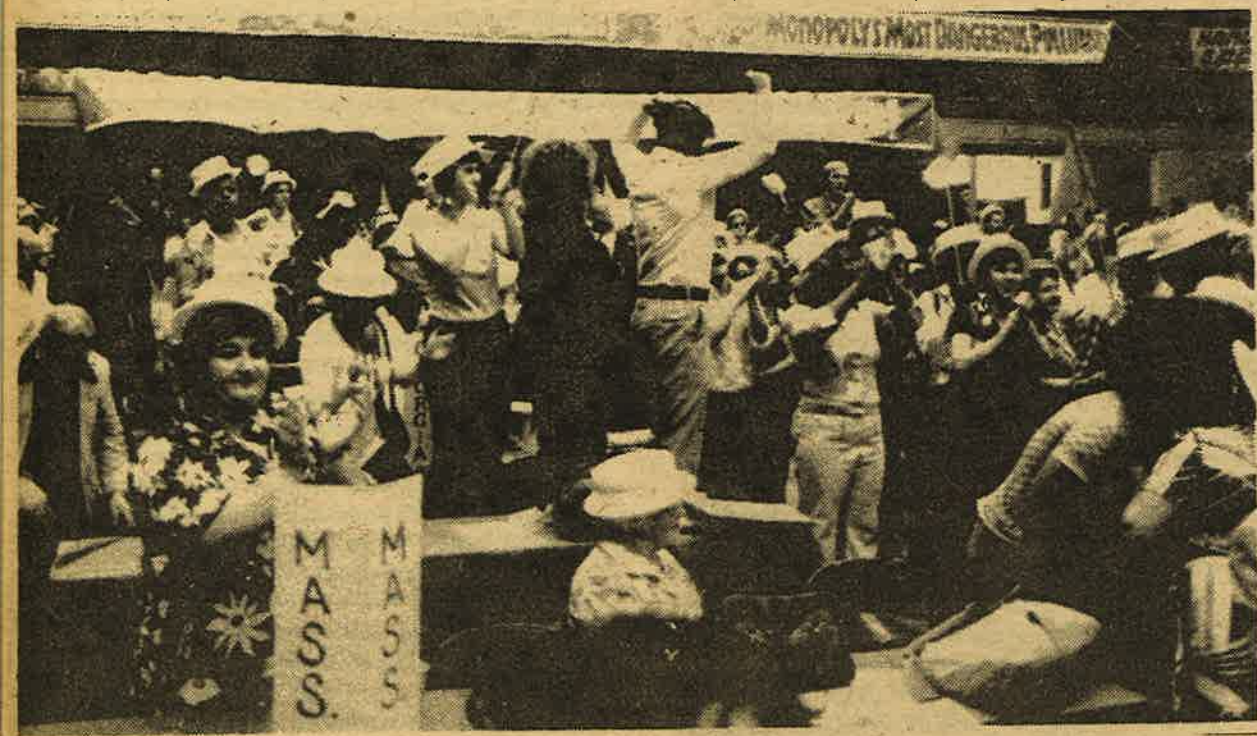
The CP knows that none of these careerists will come along unless a third party can offer them a good deal and solid future for "jumping leagues." CP strategists are having a hard time figuring out what kind of intermediate forms, or "new people's anti-monopoly political vehicle," will draw all these forces away from the two main parties to a point where a third party can be pulled together.

Some Say Stay With Democrats

There are others in the CP who argue that it is just too dangerous to pull out of the Democratic Party. The Draft Main Political Resolution warns against prematurely writing off work in the two parties. Instead of a "bourgeois candidate," one might nominate one or another "independent-minded candidate with a somewhat advanced position and an independent following." In other words, if somebody like Teddy Kennedy runs, play down the third party business for a while and bill him as a "people's anti-monopoly candidate." Although the CP may well go this route in next year's presidential election, the third party bid will not disappear. The masses aren't buying the Democratic Party as their savior, and getting in on the ground floor of a new party, should one develop, could provide the CP with a basis to expand its political power—and bargaining position with the ruling class.

Aside from the electoral quandary, the Convention made grandiose plans to lead the struggles of the nationalities, youth, women and the working class into a variety of ambushes. However, the CP will have no easy time attempting to insert itself into all the "vacuums" it sees, for it is an organization racked by problems and contradictions.

When the Draft Resolution talks about the CP's internal life, it reads like an autopsy: cadre in work places don't want to build rank and file groups because it's too difficult; collectives, even at the national level, don't meet regularly; membership has barely grown; members won't admit they're in the CP to the masses; many don't even believe a



The revisionist Communist Party, USA re-organized its basic units a long time ago, basing them not principally in the factories and on the needs of the revolutionary class struggle, but on bourgeois electoral districts. Now, at its 21st National Convention, the CP has donned the straw hats and picked up the state banners so dearly loved and jaundily displayed by the Republican and Democratic Parties at their National Conventions.

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vanguard party is really necessary!

But the CP faces a contradiction even more basic than its organizational mummification—its effort to serve the bourgeoisies of both superpowers, the U.S. and USSR. The loyalty of the CP's leaders is to the Soviet ruling class, which props it up financially as well as in other ways, provides tourist trips to conferences and other events in various parts of the world, and stands as a model of the kind of "socialism" that appeals especially to the petty bourgeoisie. This is a "socialism" based on giving a new class of exploiters—a new bourgeoisie that arose within the Soviet state when it was still socialist, and succeeded in subverting socialism and restoring capitalism—the chance to ride on the backs of the workers and exploit them, a "socialism" that is not socialist at all, but social-imperialist (socialist in words, imperialist in deeds and in fact), but trades on the great prestige that the Soviet Union won as the world's first socialist state.

On the other hand, much of the membership and social base of the CPUSA is most directly concerned with winning some reforms to improve its position within the U.S., and this is the basis on which these forces are attracted to the CP. But this requires collaboration with the U.S. ruling class and promotion of its interests, which are in ever sharper conflict not only with the U.S. working class—the class in fundamental, antagonistic contradiction to the U.S. bourgeoisie—but with the Russian ruling class—representing the other superpower in the world. The CP is thus walking a razor's edge, because contention, not collusion, is the principal aspect of the relation between the two superpowers, and this contention is growing sharper all the time.

Trying To Serve Both

The CP's main answer to this has been to try and blur over the contradiction and serve both imperialist ruling classes by peddling *detente*. This sham love-in between the two superpowers has served both as a mantle of peace-loving righteousness that the two can cloak themselves in to deceive the people of the world, and as a form of political contention between the two, contention which threatens to erupt in a world war focused over control of Europe.

The CP aims their pitch at the sincere desire of the masses for peace and holds up *detente* as a magic potion that will bring not only peace but full employment. If swallowed, this tissue of deceit disarms the masses twice, once by concealing that the war danger is on the rise and thus preventing struggle against it, and secondly by presenting war as a result of "bad policies" and not of the very nature of monopoly capitalism itself, thus holding back the struggle to overthrow monopoly capitalism and eliminate the source of war and the other evils of capitalist society.

As their *detente*-peddling proves, the weakness of the CP by no means renders them harmless. Small snakes sometimes have the strongest venom. One of the most valuable services the CP performs for capitalism is simply being revisionist—presenting the masses with a caricature of Marxism-Leninism which will seduce a few honest fighters into the CP and turn off many more to revolutionary ideology and politics.

In doing this the CP plays on its long history, the fact that it once was the genuine vanguard of the U.S. proletariat and did lead tremendous mass struggles against the capitalists. With the CP's new offensive it will be playing on this history even more to convince the workers that its ragged reformism and class collaboration is the real thing.

To maintain this impersonation, the CP resorts to every kind of attack on the growing influence genuine Marxism-Leninism has in the class. The Draft Main Political Resolution again and again attacks "Maoism," while claiming that it is "on the decline." The hatred of the revisionists for the People's Republic of China, which has ripped the covers off the "socialist" pretensions of the USSR and has led a worldwide united front aimed at isolating and defeating both superpowers, is unbounded. It carries over to those in this country who uphold China's revolutionary line and struggle for revolution here, for by their very actions they shine a bright spotlight on the treachery of the CPUSA. No wonder George Meyers, CP labor secretary, called at a Convention work shop for CP members to unite with the union hacks (and the companies) to red-bait and "smash" "Maoists" out of the plants.

It is also dangerous to underestimate the ability of the CP to mislead the masses in their immediate struggles. The revisionists perform an important service for those labor traitors, poverty pimps, dema-

gogues and petty politicians they proclaim to be "progressive." They provide "troops" who work to build such opportunists up and they provide them with a "left" cover of support from the CP and its paper front groups to help get them over among the masses better as "fighters for the people."

The same thing is true of the CP's feverish attempts to infuse new blood into the institutions of bourgeois democracy, particularly their attempts to develop "anti-monopoly" political forms, dead-ends into which the bourgeoisie will try to channel all manner of struggles, particularly those of the working class.

There are clearly elements among the ruling class who are willing to overlook the CP's ties to the Soviet Union, at least for the present, for the benefits it is able to provide, and who also want to use the CP—for now at least—to promote *detente* to disarm and confuse the masses. The CP has recently been the subject of flattering shows on educational TV, complimentary magazine articles, publicity for its convention. The CP is not getting any big push—just an opportunity to run for daylight, to prove it can be a real hindrance to the development of the revolutionary workers movement and not just a barely functional sect.

The CP's Convention holds several important lessons. The Communist Party, USA is not just a joke. For all its weakness, it represents a threat to the working class. The CP, and all manner of similar beasts, are looking for ways to turn the growing difficulties of the capitalists and the rising struggle of the masses to their own advantage—but, of course, for the preservation of capitalism, with one face or another.

Communists have great responsibilities to move forward the struggle of our class, the proletariat, no matter what roadblocks the bourgeoisie or its servants place in the way. We stand on the threshold of the formation of the genuine proletarian party in the U.S. The main task of this Party will be to intensify its work among the masses of workers, not to fill some opportunist's "vacuum," but to build the struggle, class consciousness and revolutionary unity of the working class and its leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle, and lead it toward the goal of socialist revolution.

A Question of Line

At its very foundation the Party of the U.S. working class must grasp the most basic lesson of the CP's history and its degeneration into a revisionist agent of capitalism. Revisionism is not simply or essentially an organizational question, it is not something that is peculiar to the CP, which was not always revisionist. Revisionism is fundamentally a question of line, of world outlook and program based on that outlook. It is the promotion of the outlook and interests of the bourgeoisie within the working class movement.

The essence of revisionism—as with the bourgeois outlook in general—is to see the working class as only

good for producing and only concerned with what it gets in exchange for producing for the capitalists. Revisionism denies that the working class is the most revolutionary class in history, the class that will transform all of society, by overthrowing capitalism and eliminating all aspects of class society, and will usher in a whole new epoch in human history, where mankind "voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world." (Mao Tsetung)

Under the rule of capital, revisionism in outlook leads to economism in political activity—to limiting the workers movement to the struggle for better terms within capitalist wage-slavery, in place of the struggle to eliminate wage slavery. Revisionism leads to confining the struggle to accommodation to the bourgeoisie, using the mass movement, at most, as pressure to win a few reforms under capitalism, and covering this with the illusion that socialism can be achieved peacefully through a series of such reforms. It is a defense of slavery—specifically capitalist wage-slavery—in the guise of championing the emancipation of the slaves.

Revisionism arises even within the Party of the working class, exactly because the Party exists as a part of—and not separate from—class society with its "division of labor" (between mental and manual work, etc.), and because of the influence of the reactionary philosophy of the bourgeoisie. If it is not exposed and struggled against, both within and outside the Party, revisionism will lead to the transformation of the Party itself from a weapon of the working class in the struggle against the bourgeoisie into a weapon of the bourgeoisie against the working class, as happened with the CP.

As the crisis of imperialism and the class struggle intensifies, the ruling class will foster and promote reformist illusions, phony "progressives" and revisionism within the working class movement. Because of the loyalty of its leaders to the Soviet Union, the CP can have only limited value to the U.S. ruling class, though its perversion of socialism, as represented by the Soviet Union, does aid the U.S. ruling class in slandering socialism and trumpeting that there is no real alternative to capitalism. But as a philosophical and political trend, revisionism will increasingly be promoted by the bourgeoisie in its efforts to subvert and crush the working class struggle, and this will find organizational expression in various groups and formations, besides the CP.

The working class and its Party must be vigilant against this, and, as a key part of its class warfare against capitalism, must continue to wage a fierce and tireless fight to expose and defeat revisionism, in any form, including those that arise within the ranks of the Party itself. In this way, the Party will be able to lead the working class in fulfilling its great historic mission of smashing the rule of capital and continuing the revolution to emancipate all mankind and achieve classless society, communism. ■

VVAW/WSO...

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work around "Decent Benefits" in some cases did not unfold the other demands around this. This error does not unite with the understanding that the masses of vets have—that vets who are laid off need benefits, and when they go to the VA they don't see this as an alternative to getting a job, but part of the same struggle for a better life.

When work was done correctly, chapters were able to unfold the other demands and show how they are all inter-related. In doing this, vets could see that it is the system of imperialism that is the target of these demands, and that it is necessary to direct the struggle more squarely at the ruling class and its system.

Other Incorrect Tendencies

Another incorrect tendency was to see the program as a series of demonstrations held mechanically on dates put forward in the program, and not actions that flowed out of the campaigns being built in each particular area of the country. Chapters tended to just build these actions and not really unite with the struggles of the vets in their area.

At the same time, there was also the tendency not to link the local work with what's going on in the rest of the country, isolating the vets' struggle to just local conditions and not pointing out how a vets movement is growing around the country and being linked up with the overall working class movement.

Overall, though, the understanding of how to build a fighting vets movement, and the work done in the last six months to build that movement, has taken great strides. Because of that work, the National Office of

VVAW/WSO was able to put forward a draft program to the NSCM in Milwaukee. This draft, after being discussed and struggled over in detail in various workshops, is the basis on which VVAW/WSO will unite masses of vets in a revolutionary way. This program reflects what VVAW/WSO is and, as put forward at the meeting, "Our program IS our organization!"

Of particular importance for the immediate future was the discussion of the postal workers' struggle and what role VVAW/WSO could play in supporting their fight for a good contract. Many postal workers are vets—hired under special federal programs. Also, the importance of how to reach out to the National Guard and Reserves to show them how the ruling class works to use them as strikebreakers, was discussed. Vets can play a special role in reaching the Guard and Reserves, since they can speak from a common experience.

The meeting correctly summed up that VVAW/WSO cannot lead the postal workers, but that the organization should work closely with the National Committee for a Good Contract and help build the struggle of the PO workers. The NSCM wrote a leaflet directed to the National Guard and Reserve, speaking to them as a fighting vets organization and bringing out how acting as strikebreakers was not in the interests of the GIs, but only in the interest of the ruling class. This leaflet was recently passed out to the Guard and Reserve nationwide.

By breaking with the old period, VVAW/WSO is boldly out to build a fighting vets organization, linking up with the revolutionary workers movement and dealing increasingly sharper blows to the imperialists. The 15th National Steering Committee Meeting of VVAW/WSO, by laying the foundation for bringing the particular experience of veterans to the struggle of the working class, and by directing the blows of veterans at the ruling class and its system, has firmly pointed the organization towards the new period.

As put forward by one of the new members at the meeting who had come into the organization through the national program, "I came to build a fighting vets movement, so let's get it on!" ■