

Revolutionary Communist Youth NEWSLETTER

10¢

Number 11

March-April 1972

DEFEND ANGELA DAVIS!

BERKELEY--The Revolutionary Communist Youth (RCY) held a rally here in late January for the defense of Angela Davis. Invitations were sent to other tendencies on the left including Progressive Labor, Workers League, Worker-Student Alliance, International Socialists (IS), Young Socialists for Jenness and Pulley, Revolutionary Women, Campus Friends of the AFT, Campus Friends of the NLF, Student Mobilization Committee (SMC), Revolutionary Union, Young Socialists, Female Liberation, Anti-Stalinism Study Group and Anti-Imperialist Coalition. Only the IS, Anti-Stalinism Study Group, Revolutionary Women, and Female Liberation responded positively; the other groups totally ignored this call to demonstrate class solidarity in the face of repression by the bourgeois state. The SMC went so far as to arrange to scab on the rally. Subsequent to being notified of the Defend Angela Davis rally, it called for another rally, to protest the presence of military recruiters on the campus--an issue which it had virtually ignored previously. The plan was to march the rally over to a "peaceful protest picket," but when this single issue evaporated (the recruiters refused to come to the campus) the SMC was left with nothing to organize and was forced to cancel its rally.

The RCY stands for Davis' unconditional defense against persecution by the bourgeois state. Davis' arrest, the Attica massacre and the recent killings in Baton Rouge once again demonstrate the depth and ferocity of racial oppression in this country and the state's intention to crush ruthlessly all rebellion.

Fight Racial Oppression!

Black youth have shown over the past several years an increasing determination to fight racial oppression and degradation; yet even at

its most radical and militant--e. g., the Panthers--this impulse has been unable to secure any permanent or basic changes for black people or to protect them from attacks by the state. The black movement has been unable to transcend reformism and nationalist illusions. Only a united working class, politicized and conscious of its power, can successfully challenge the oppression of blacks and other minorities or repressive measures taken by the bourgeoisie against those who rebel against their oppression. Struggle against racial oppression--particularly in the trade

unions--is crucial for proletarian class unity. Divisions along racial or sexual lines render the class impotent when faced with the ruling class' solidarity in its attack on the working people. The defense of Angela Davis is therefore obligatory for the left and the working-class movement. The obligation is not conditional on her "innocence" by standards of bourgeois justice, nor on support of the adventurist tactics of the Marin Court House incident, nor on agreement with the opportunist line of Davis' Communist Party (CP). Rather we must defend Angela Davis as an expression of class solidarity for mutual defense.

Who Will Be Next?

Without this class solidarity no proletarian organization is safe from bourgeois repression. No group can win exemption from persecution by disassociating itself from the organizations which first come under attack. Workers who acquiesced when reds were purged from their unions have been rewarded only by wage controls and anti-strike injunctions. SDS, which ever since Progressive Labor (PL) assumed its leadership, has been indecently eager to assure the bourgeoisie that its members "absolutely condemn and have nothing to do with terrorist bombings," has been banned from some campuses nonetheless. Even the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), notorious for sending condolences to the widow Kennedy and dismissing political terrorists as "berserk," has lately been the object of congressional "investigation." This stampede into the swamps of respectability is as incapable of securing safety as it is disgusting.

Lack of solidarity of the left frees the bourgeoisie to concentrate the full force of its re-



Continued on Page 2

JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE: JEWS AND AMERICAN FASCISM

The Boston RCY organized a demonstration against a meeting at Brandeis University last November featuring Meir Kahane, head of the Zionist-terrorist Jewish Defense League (JDL). The demonstration was part of our struggle for communist consciousness within the student movement, combatting all forms of reactionary ideology. Zionism is an extreme form of national chauvinism which places the imperialist interests and appetites of the Israeli bourgeoisie and its state above all other interests and fosters the myth, in attempted justification, that Jews cannot be integrated into any nation other than capitalist-clerical Israel. The JDL, like all reactionary nationalists, uses past persecution of their ethnic group as an excuse for blatant racism in this country and the oppression of non-Jews by the state of Israel.

The Brandeis demonstration was also part of our principled defense of the deformed workers

states against anti-communist demagogy and terrorism, since the JDL uses the issue of anti-Semitism in the USSR to whip up virulent anti-Soviet feeling. (The entire U. S. Zionist movement uses Russian anti-Semitism as a scapegoat, seeking to pressure the Russian government into allowing more massive emigration of Russian Jews to Israel, so that the Israelis can get more colonists without American Zionists having to abandon their comfortable lives here and move to Israel!) Anti-Semitism in the USSR, and Great Russian chauvinism in general, are old prejudices kept alive by the moribund Stalinist bureaucracy in order to prevent the revolutionary unity of Soviet working people and intellectuals against the regime. The Bolshevik revolution and the workers state it established have liberated Russian Jews from the severe economic and political persecution they suffered under tsarism. Today Jews are, by and large, well integrated into Soviet society and occupy good jobs in industry, science and education. Essentially free from the ghetto existence they suffered before 1917 (complete with official pogroms), Soviet Jews today are still vulnerable to personal prejudice, bureaucratic harassment and religious persecution. Unlike the JDL, which sheds crocodile tears over "the plight of Soviet Jewry" while pandering to every backward and racist sentiment among U. S. Jews, we put forward a program for political revolution in the USSR to wrest political power from the para-

sitic Stalinist bureaucracy and return it to the working masses, as an integral part of the international class struggle for socialism which will liberate all the oppressed.

The JDL--Part of the "Worldwide Radicalization of Youth"

Youth vanguardism, a major concept of the New Left, was taken over wholesale by the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party/Young

Continued on Page 2

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS:

Middle of the Swamp

Page 4

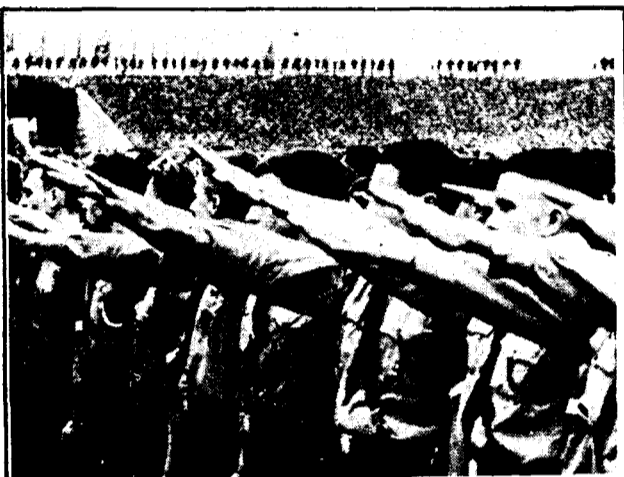


The real basis of American fascism will be "White Power," (at left) not the JDL of Meir Kahane (at right).

JEWES AND AMERICAN FASCISM

Continued from Page 1

Socialist Alliance, the principal purveyor of petty-bourgeois radicalism, and has now been picked up by the Workers League, a foam-flecked pseudo-Trotskyist group. This theory insists that youth as a whole are inherently revolutionary. But the rapid growth of the JDL, drawing mainly from student youth, is also part of the current "youth radicalization." The student youth are not inherently left-wing and do not spontaneously gravitate towards socialism, but often are drawn to right-wing movements. Volatile and relatively alienated from existing social institutions, youth seek fundamental ("radical") solutions to social problems. Thus, students will play an important role in all dynamic political movements--whether of the left or the right--particularly in their embryonic stages. As Lenin said in



Fascist "youth radicalization" Germany, 1938

Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder, what characterizes petty-bourgeois radicalism is its extreme instability, its faddism, its ability to shift rapidly from infatuation with communism to infatuation with reactionary nationalism. Meir Kahane has built his organization on the kind of (ethnic) youth militancy which the SWP/YSA and the Workers League regard as inherently the vanguard of socialist revolution.

Right-Wing Zionism and Left-Wing Ethnic Militancy

While drawing emotional appeal from Russian anti-Semitism and identification with the state of Israel, the JDL is basically the product of the conflict between the Jewish petty bourgeoisie and the black ghetto. The JDL is an extreme manifestation of the white urban ethnic backlash. It first came into prominence, significantly, by launching threats of violence against James Forman for demanding "reparations" from a Brooklyn synagogue. But the JDL is more than a localized reflex to black pressure. Where Kahane differs from the Hicks, the Marchis and the Rizzos is in his ability to build a para-military organization by present-

ing Zionism as the radical nationalism of an oppressed people.

The JDL is consciously modelled on leftist ethnic militant groups like the Black Panthers and Young Lords. This is why New Left and pseudo-Marxist ideologists of petty-bourgeois radicalism cannot cope with right-wing Zionism as a political movement. In his debate with Kahane at Brandeis, New Left academic Arthur Waskow did not attack the concept of the "Jewish community" (or any other "community") as a multi-class category, but instead argued that the JDL would better defend the interests of the "Jewish community" by allying with other oppressed minorities rather than with bourgeois reactionaries. But this is impossible as long as the concept of "community" is retained, for the community itself is made up of both oppressor and oppressed groups. Oppressed minorities and workers of all nationalities will find the solution to their oppression and exploitation only by waging a relentless struggle for their class demands-- including demands which unify the class by fighting special oppression along racial, national or sexual lines-- which must be posed sharply against any petty-bourgeois or class traitor attempts to ally with reactionary elements of the "community." The JDL is not the only example of Jewish reaction using the language of leftist ethnic militancy. The largely Jewish Forest Hills residents who launched a protest against the low-income (i. e., black) housing project did so in the name of "community control."

The Social Basis of Jewish Reaction

There is a difference, as Lenin pointed out, between the chauvinism of the oppressed and the chauvinism of the oppressor. But are American Jews an oppressed group? This is a complex question. Right-wing Zionism bases itself partly on the numerically insignificant small Jewish businessmen who exploit the black ghetto (slumlords, pawnbrokers, merchants, etc.), and partly on those Jewish skilled workers and petty bourgeois who feel threatened by the desire of black people for good neighborhoods, college education or civil service jobs. But the JDL-- with its slogan of "Never Again," referring to the Nazi extermination of the Jews-- also bases itself, ideologically and emotionally, on the historic oppression of the Jews and their insecurity in a Christian society. The struggle against the JDL requires placing the desire of Jewish working people for protection against anti-Semitism within a class perspective-- precisely what the New Left cannot do.

The growth of the northern black ghettos undercut the left-liberal tradition of American Jews. While backlash in response to black militancy and aspirations has affected all white ethnic groups, the Jews have been particularly affected. The path out of the black ghetto--for a very small proportion of black youth--through city and state colleges and a career in the corporate or government bureaucracy threatens the narrow economic base of the Jewish middle class, which strives, to an even greater extent than the Italians, Poles or Irish, for precisely that route to a professional career.

It is against this background that a deliberate effort is being made to ally the Jewish petty bourgeoisie to traditional American reaction. Kahane is a professional anti-communist public relations man who once changed his name to Michael King to found the "July 4th Movement," a group seeking student support for the Vietnam war. He donned a yamulka when he concluded there was a future for a right-wing Zionist organization with a sharp anti-black and anti-Soviet thrust, which could win American Jews over to general political reaction. However most American Jews realize that American reaction is tied to anti-Semitism, so that the JDL, while currently dynamic, remains an isolated current within the traditionally liberal Jewish petty bourgeoisie.

Jews and American Fascism

The emergence of the JDL has given birth to cries of Jewish fascism. The Labor Committee of Lynn Marcus and its theoretical parasite, the Workers League, sees in the JDL, as well as in

right-wing Black Nationalists like Leroi Jones, components of a rapidly-growing American fascist movement. To identify fascism as extreme ethnic nationalism is completely anti-Marxist. Fascism is a counter-revolutionary movement whose base is the bulk of the petty bourgeoisie and lumpen elements reacting to the proletariat's failure to take power in a revolutionary crisis. Ethnic politics, even in its most reactionary forms, is bound up with bourgeois democracy to the extent it makes concessions to pressure groups (or, for that matter, allows them to exist).

Fascism from the Back of the Bus?

The notion that in a racist and Christian-dominated nation the most reactionary form of bourgeois rule--fascism--will see Meir Kahane and Leroi Jones as heads of state is typical of the Labor Committee's fantasies. Fascism in power strives for the total atomization of the populace and the suppression of all popular movements, even in fact those which actually helped fascism to power. American fascism will use only one form of ethnic politics: that of white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Drawing on Christian fundamentalism, American fascism will be deeply anti-black and anti-Semitic. Thus Nixon's support for Billy Graham and George Wallace's drive for power based on racist and populist sentiment are far more ominous portents, within bourgeois democracy, than the JDL and Leroi Jones.

To be sure, the ideology of the JDL is fascist. To the extent that it feeds on magnified fears of past persecution to justify reactionary violence against the most oppressed sections of the American working class it is dangerous. But the prospect of Jewish-based or black-based fascism coming to power in this racist country is absurd. The Labor Committee and Workers League are anxious to inflate the danger of the JDL and then draw false parallels between it and New Left "ethnic liberation" politics in order to conceal the LC's and WL's own accommodation to backwardness among white workers.

The contribution of ethnic politics to fascism is basically negative. It divides the working class and provides a major ideological obstacle to socialist internationalism. The ethnic politics of oppressed minorities are tragically self-defeating. The JDL may be a fascist group in terms of its ideas and aspirations, but Jews will be victims and not a source of American fascism. It is this realization that mainstream American reaction is profoundly anti-Semitic that limits the appeal of Kahane's brand of Zionism. It is our task to win Jewish working people and youth to the understanding that their oppression can only be ended permanently by a proletarian revolution opening the road to the development of a socialist society.

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DEFEND AN

pressive apparatus against one individual or one group at a time. Finding little support from other leftists the persecuted victims may be tempted to seek aid from anti-working class "civil libertarians." Davis' defense, controlled by the sellout artists of the CP, has succumbed to this temptation and secured the "support" of such groups as the National Bar Association and the National Committee of Black Churchmen. These groups have no real interest in defending militant blacks from the capitalist state and if the going gets rough they will surely abandon the Davis case. Indicative of the manner in which the CP conducts her defense is the Peoples World comment on a church service honoring Davis: "Amidst choir selections and thoughtful prayer was a reverence that transcended... the place of worship, a reverence for justice." As Rosa Luxemburg said of Bernstein, the prototypical revisionist and class collaborator, we must say of the CP: In abandoning Marxism it returns "to the principle of justice, to the old war horse on which

Middle of the Swamp

Continued from Page 4

and Co. understand the situation far better than the IS. They consciously seek imposing wage controls on an increasingly rebellious rank and file.

The icing on this cake is IS' recent entry (via a "Militant Labor Caucus") into the PCPJ, which is led and dominated by the Stalinist Communist Party. Thus, the "super-democratic IS shows a capacity for simultaneous class collaboration with what, by their definitions, are two equally reactionary ruling classes!

Into the Swamp Again

Perhaps the grossest opportunism committed by IS under the banner of "independent political action" is its recent entry into the New American Movement (NAM). Workers' Power No. 48 called NAM's founding conference "a healthy step forward for the radical movement." IS continues its salubrious praise: "One of NAM's healthiest aspects is its understanding of the critical importance of democracy as a principle in building the movement and in the construction of a democratic society." The article goes on to amplify what NAM means by the "critical importance of democracy as a principle in building the movement," reporting that PL/SDS and the SWP were excluded from the conference. Not reported in the IS article was the reason for the exclusion of PL: "Those who disagree with our perspective should organize their own political strategy rather than trying to convince people at this conference." Nor does the article report that IS abstained on the anti-communist exclusion of PL. Nor does the article report that the keynote speaker for the conference was: the Democratic Party mayor of Davenport.

Coming after the clarifying June '69 split in SDS and the subsequent degeneration of the New Left, NAM represents an attempt by the old New Left's right wing to reconstruct the old social democratic SDS of the early '60's complete with participatory democracy, holding up the American Revolution of 1776 as a model. IS' entry into NAM must have been like returning to a second childhood.

Hiding from the Vietnamese Revolution

The IS finds it convenient to omit from its anti-war literature its analysis of the situation in Vietnam. The IS opposes the war not from a revolutionary class perspective but from a bourgeois democratic perspective. The actions of the American army in Vietnam are wrong because they are a violation of "self-determination" that is, the bourgeois national rights of the Vietnamese nation. Self-determination is used

here in its classic bourgeois sense, abandoning the masses of South Vietnam to the "self-determination" of their ruling class. Leninists have always combined propaganda about the "right of nations to self-determination" with a perspective of the independent mobilization of the working class for proletarian revolution. To the IS this represents a "retreat from the demand for immediate withdrawal" and a "denial of self-determination." !

These "revolutionary socialists" are not even capable of recognizing that there is a social revolution going on in Vietnam. See Workers' Power (Nos. 45 and 46) where a recent two-part series on the Vietnam war made not even a single reference to the Vietnamese revolution. From this perspective it is impossible even to explain the fact of an American military intervention. The failure of the 1954 Geneva agreement to stem the revolutionary tide and its upsurge through the early '60's were the reasons for the American military intervention. The Vietnamese workers and peasants, despite having been sold out twice (1946, 1954) have struggled for more than two decades against the Vietnamese ruling class whose counter-revolutionary efforts have been aided by the French and now the American imperialists. It is a matter of the most elementary revolutionary duty to defend this revolution and to put forward a program which can lead it to victory. None of this is of any concern to the IS. It is simply a matter of "self-determination." Only social democrats steeped in bourgeois anti-communism and desiring to cover this fact with opportunist twists and turns can attempt to deny the essential revolutionary character of the Vietnamese struggle.

Having rejected a class analysis of the Vietnamese struggle and finding a safe refuge in the bourgeois democratic swamp of "self-determination," the IS presents us with an analysis of the NLF which sees their actions as motivated simply by political dishonesty and not by actual class forces. The recent two-part series in Workers' Power compared the program of the NLF to a bourgeois election campaign program, i. e., full of promises. To Marxists, the NLF program is a typically Stalinist attempt to leave the door open to a bourgeois coalition government. But the Vietnamese working people's determined decades-long revolutionary struggle has destroyed the basis for native Vietnamese capitalism and following a military victory the NLF would be compelled to realize in a limited and deformed way the revolutionary aspirations of the South Vietnamese masses, and in the final analysis to overthrow capitalism or to face physical extermination at the hands of the bourgeoisie. Upon coming to power the Stalinists of the NLF will establish a deformed workers' state because the class forces they lead and the intransigence of U. S. imperialism leave them no other choice.

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The RCY Newsletter is published by the Revolutionary Communist Youth, youth section of the Spartacist League. We seek to build a revolutionary socialist youth organization which can intervene in all social struggles armed with a working-class program, based on the politics of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

sigence of U. S. imperialism leave them no other choice. Their program is not "dishonesty" but a reflection of the algebraic nature of the resolution to this class conflict, on one hand to capitulate to capitalism, on the other hand to go beyond its limits.

The IS' methodological break with Marxism, by which "democracy" becomes a supra-class, supra-historical, final arbiter for all political questions, lays the basis for both reformism and anti-communism. Failing to understand class forces, the IS also fails to understand the qualitative difference between proletarian democracy and bourgeois democracy, political forms of different class rule. Reformism is generally accompanied by real or apparent proposals for more bourgeois democracy. For the IS this eventually becomes sufficient.

Inevitably the Hartkes in the anti-war movement are seen in a more favorable light than the NLF. Max Shachtman used the same logic when he gave critical support to the Bay of Pigs invasion on the grounds that it was anti-Stalinist. Presumably the only thing which separates the IS from the same political conclusion is that this too would be a violation of "self-determination." The dividing line between the IS and present-day Shachtmanism is thin indeed.

The Trotskyist position on the "Communist" countries is that they are deformed workers' states. The character of a state is ultimately determined by its property relations (not even the IS contends that an anti-Stalinist revolution will represent a transformation in property relations). The fundamental class and property relations in the USSR (and other "Communist" countries) are those established by the October Revolution, but political power has been usurped by a privileged bureaucratic caste. What is required in these states is a political revolution in which the bureaucracy is ousted and the proletariat assumes the political reins through soviet democracy.

Reconstruct the Fourth International!

For the IS, "any movement which offers a revolutionary alternative to the PRG-NLF is to be encouraged." How such a movement will be built and upon what program, the IS has not a word to say. Everywhere, from Bangladesh to Hungary, IS awaits the "revolutionary alternative" which some day in some way will spring from below. Though they now call themselves International Socialists there is nothing internationalist about the IS except their anti-communism. The revolutionary alternative in Vietnam and the other deformed workers' states will be proletarian parties which are sections of the Fourth International. They will be based on the Transitional Program of Trotsky which explains how to both oust the bureaucrats by political revolution and defend the property relations against capitalist restoration and imperialism. Likewise, in the U. S. such a party will be built by ousting the bureaucrats from the unions and fighting for a communist leadership in the labor movement. IS, still calling on Vance Hartke to form a "labor party" and Victor Reuther to apply for membership, will be, along with all the other social democrats, swept aside by the proletariat as it breaks from bourgeois ideology and embraces communist consciousness.

GELE DAVIS!

Continued from Page 1

the reformers of the earth have rocked for ages, for the lack of surer means of historic transportation." This seemingly classless "justice" in fact aids the bourgeoisie, as do all class-"neutral" positions. The CP embellishes Bernstein's position only by draping his hobby horse in sacramental robes. Pandering to bourgeois ideology, the CP again eliminates itself as a revolutionary force, saving the bourgeoisie the trouble of doing so.

The CP's reconciliation with "respectability" does little to trick the bourgeoisie into being lenient on Davis but a good deal to disorient the proletariat. It might be argued that couching agitation in terms soothing to bourgeois sensibilities may not fool the ruling class, but will at least help suck the petty bourgeoisie (professionals, shopkeepers, artisans, many technicians, farmers, petty administrators, etc.) into the defense of proletarian militants. Such an argument implicitly assumes that the petty bourgeoisie is permanently wedded to its present world view, but actually it is the most

volatile of all classes. As bourgeois democracy begins to visibly crumble, the petty bourgeoisie tends to align itself with the class that seems most capable of supplanting chaos by its class dictatorship. If the proletariat is strong, conscious and organized the petty bourgeoisie can be won over to supporting the revolutionary cause. If the dictatorship of the proletariat appears unattainable, due to the weakness or incapacity of the proletarian vanguard, then the petty bourgeoisie will leap into the camp of the only force capable of restoring "law and order" on a capitalist basis--the fascists. "Left" pandering to petty-bourgeois forces reveals a profound pessimism about the ability of the working class to achieve political consciousness, and therefore reveals a rejection of the struggle for socialism.

Only a policy of class solidarity--in defense of victimized militants as in all other matters--can demonstrate to the proletariat and its potential allies that the left has the will and ability to lead them to revolutionary victory.

International Socialists:

Middle of the Swamp

Despite IS' sometimes revolutionary rhetoric and super-democratic posturing, its recent actions and positions lay bare its essential anti-communist, social-democratic nature. Thus, while IS rails against bureaucracy in the "Communist" countries, it sucks up to the bureaucracy within the trade union movement, e. g., the New York telephone strike (see Workers Vanguard No. 5) and the anti-war movement; it condemns the Popular Front in Chile, Ceylon and in the program of the NLF while entering every popular front that comes along in the U. S. (e. g., NPAC and PCPJ); it calls for the military victory of the NLF at the same time claiming that what would issue out of such a victory would be no better than the Thieu or Diem governments minus the U. S. military presence. IS now criticizes the Peace and Freedom Party for being based on the middle class instead of the working class, and attributes the PFP's failure to this fact, but it was IS which was the principal architect of the PFP. (Even the PFP marked a "left" turn for IS, which had earlier proposed a King-Spock presidential ticket!). It is impossible to take IS' (self) criticism of PFP as good coin in view of IS' current entry into, and intention to build, the New American Movement (NAM); the social patriotic and anti-communist old New Left garbage that makes up NAM stands far to the right of the crucially flawed but subjectively revolutionary groups like the Panthers and Progressive Labor who were part of IS' earlier experiment in classless, Progressive Party-style politics.

Beneath the contradictions of IS is a political tendency with a history as well as a character. The IS, formerly the Independent Socialist Clubs (ISC), originated in a split away from the Socialist Party (SP) in 1964, following the SP's dissolution of its youth group for refusing electoral support to Lyndon Johnson. The new group differed from the Socialist Party chiefly in that it used formal Marxist rhetoric about revolution which the SP had long abandoned. The sterile anti-communism of the SP was replaced by a more creative variety ("bureaucratic collectivism"--the theory which sees the Russian bureaucracy as a new type of ruling class) whose origins in bourgeois Cold War ideology could be at least partially cloaked in phrases about "socialism from below." In one sense the ISC represented the continuation of the old Shachtmanite Workers Party (WP) to which it had theoretical ("bureaucratic collectivism") and organizational ties. Following the liquidation of the Shachtmanites into the SP, Draper (who would later be the theoretical leader of the ISC) and his followers had remained a distinct political tendency inside the SP. The ISC's lack of discipline, centralized leadership or even a national organization: its rejection of Transitional Program; and its primary method of functioning, which was to support petty-bourgeois movements for their own sake while encouraging these movements to adopt a "working-class orientation," revealed that the ISC stood qualitatively to the right of the old WP. It indeed played the farce to the tragedy of the Workers Party. The IS' development since its split from the SP in 1964 (or its "transformation" from the ISC into the IS in 1969) shows that its break from social democracy has been superficial. For the unpopular anti-communism of the SP, IS substitutes "bureaucratic collectivism," which like social democracy equates Stalinism with capitalist imperialism. For the SP's open class collaborationism the IS substitutes the thinly disguised formula of "independent political action" which leads straight to participation in the class-collaborationist NPAC and PCPJ. For the SP's abandonment of socialist revolution the IS substitutes "socialism from below" which "merely" abandons the Leninist vanguard party and the proletarian dictatorship, the essential instruments of socialist revolution.

Is the IS a Bureaucratic Collective?

IS' organizational form is a parody of Leninist discipline. Until recently, IS spurned democratic centralism as "totalitarian" and boasted

of its "truly democratic" structure: there was no majority discipline and all members were free to express their views and differences in public. This practice--in keeping with IS' unseriousness--was in reality blatantly undemocratic. As IS' leaders could present their views much more widely--in speeches, articles, etc.--than could other IS members, IS' "democratic" policy boiled down to this: the leadership could present its views as authoritative IS positions, entirely free from membership control. IS' main political resolution from its 1970 convention describes its "new" organizational norms as follows: "Essential to our development as a serious national working-class tendency must be the election of a national leadership on the basis of a political perspective and line--within this context we are for a disciplined national line" ("Tasks and Perspectives," p. 8, IS' emphasis), but on the same page it states:

"The leadership must actively intervene in local branches to convince them of the wisdom and applicability of its line. . . . It is only through winning the IS membership to the politics and direction of its leadership [?!] that we can build an organization where discipline is more than a substitute for political weakness."

Either the membership elects the leadership on the basis of a political line, i. e., the leadership represents and carries out the politics of the membership (as is the case in democratic centralist organizations), or the leadership must "win the IS membership to the politics and direction of its leadership" (in which case IS is not more democratic than Stalin's Comintern which also had to "win the membership to the politics and direction of the leadership.") Perhaps the IS is a deformed workers' tendency, or is it a "bureaucratic collective"?

Building the Pop Front

The continued social-democratic functioning of the IS can be seen in its entry into the popular-front NPAC, forming the Militant Action Caucus (MAC), a loyal, slightly-to-the-left opposition caucus. IS/MAC refuses to call for the ouster of representatives of the bourgeoisie and presents a spurious "working-class orientation" for NPAC to carry out. The opportunist IS has not been consistent in its orientation to NPAC, but has flipflopped according to its appetites. Thus in 1970, when NPAC did not have a numerous following, IS stated that the SWP/YSA "mass marches objectively serve. . . to build support for the 'progressive' capitalist politicians" (IS, "Tasks and Perspectives," p. 35). However, after a rise in peace march body-counts, a resolution adopted by the IS National Committee in May 1971, states: ". . . we must openly state that building the anti-war movement has been an overall positive thing, and it is to the SWP's credit." From

this, we must conclude that IS believes that "building support for 'progressive' capitalist politicians" has been an "overall positive thing" and "to the SWP's credit."!

Given the current working-class upsurge, IS tries to mesh "independent political action" with a "working-class orientation." In Lenin's attack on the Economists in What is to be Done?, he states:

"There can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the only choice is--either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course for mankind has not created a 'third' ideology [or a 'third camp,' Lenin might have added] and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology."

But IS goes even further than the Economists. For IS "The real meaning of Independent Political Action (IPA) is the intervention of the movement in its own right into the electoral arena." But if the working class is incapable of formulating "independent" politics then certainly there can be no "independent" politics formulated by unstable petty-bourgeois radical student movements. "Non-class" political formations like IS' Peace and Freedom Party do not carry out "non-class" politics. Unless a political formation is based on an explicitly working-class political program, it will inevitably be bourgeois.

IS' new-found "working-class orientation" was embodied in a proposal which called "for NPAC to endorse and actively help build an independent formation of anti-war unionists, rank and file caucuses, and militants--to fight simultaneously for immediate unconditional withdrawal from Vietnam, against all wage controls, and for independent political action against the Democratic and Republican parties in 1972." How ludicrous! NPAC is a class-collaborationist popular front with a steering committee of bourgeois politicians (Hartke) and union bureaucrats (Reuther) who are enthusiastic endorsers of both wage controls and the Democratic Party! IS/MAC literature calls for no labor participation on the class-collaborationist Pay Board, but breathes not one word of criticism of the class collaborationism of the leaders of the anti-war movement: NPAC. Quite the contrary! The entire thrust of IS/MAC is to enthusiastically call for labor participation in NPAC. After all, how can you have a real popular front without real workers to betray?

Throw Out the Bourgeoisie!

As communists, the Revolutionary Communist Youth irreconcilably opposes the popular-front character of NPAC and places no confidence in its ability to serve any class interests other than the imperialist bourgeoisie. We programmatically demand the unconditional exclusion of all capitalist politicians as the condition for raising any demands on NPAC. We denounce as an open betrayal of the working class any entry into NPAC or schemes to drag workers into the muck of pop frontism.

A real working-class movement against the war and wage controls and for a labor party can only be built when the labor movement both breaks with the class enemy represented by the Democratic Party and seeks to expose class traitors like Reuther who embody the link between the labor movement and the capitalist parties. No IS or MAC propaganda even suggests the crucial task: to oust the labor bureaucrats from the unions. IS' attitude toward the bureaucrats is completely consistent with the social-democratic politics of other "progressive popular movements": to be the loyal left opposition pressure group.

For example, IS labeled the extremely token opposition of the bureaucrats to wage controls as "defiant" and "courageous" and their failure to follow through as due to "misunderstandings." Much to the benefit of the bourgeoisie, Meany

YOUTH, CLASS AND PARTY



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