

SPARTACIST-WEST

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King's Betrayal and the ISC

The Detroit ghetto uprising completely dispelled the myth that the reforms which the establishment is willing to concede are in any way sufficient to meet the needs of the Black masses, or of poor whites. Detroit was supposed to have been a "model city" of the anti-poverty program, but it was certainly no "model" for the poor and oppressed who dwell there.

Detroit also dispelled another myth; that the Draperite Independent Socialist Club is somehow qualified to offer advice on revolutionary alternatives. Before the Detroit events, they were supporting the Reverend Martin Luther King for a presidential campaign which would "raise consciousness", after Detroit, they were calling King a traitor to his people. They have yet to explain adequately this sudden reversal of position. King has long been a betrayer of the Black masses, in the interests of middle-class tokenism, pacifism and non-violence. This zig-zag of the ISC reveals only their own nervous reaction to the rapidly deepening class divisions in society, for which they were grievously unprepared.

A recent ISC statement, titled "Defend the Ghetto Uprisings", says, "Most of the old civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, have chosen the path of accommodation to liberalism. This has led them to betray the Black ghetto and to support, in the name of non-violence, the use of federal troops against their own people." This is highly misleading, however, since King made no new choice when he supported the sending of troops into Detroit. He supported the "law and order" of the cops in the Watts rebellion of 1965 as well. If the man who represented this program was a supportable candidate before, why not now? He hasn't changed.

"But we only supported him to the extent that he broke with the system, i. e., only if he ran independently of the Democratic Party," protest the ISCers. King's total

role is much more significant than (what would be for him) a purely tactical break with the Democrats. The significance which his campaign would hold for his black supporters would be not so much his party affiliation, although this would be important, but his program of pacifism and tokenism, in which the masses would have to come to believe. The ISC makes this mistake throughout their politics. They claim that to be a success, any middle-class radical movement which breaks from the Democratic Party (such as the CNP, Peace-and-Freedom, or King-Spock) must continue to move left, become increasingly democratically controlled, involve the support of the workers, and tend toward real working-class politics. Rather, it is like this: these

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FOUR NEW ORLEANS SPARTACISTS JAILED

Three Spartacist League supporters and a friend were arrested recently in New Orleans on phoney vagrancy charges. The four (three Black, one white) had just returned from the Hiroshima Day protest in Atlanta, and were detained when a supply of Spartacist literature was found in their car.

This incident is the latest in a series of harrassments by authorities that have followed the recent publication of a report of the Louisiana State Committee on Un-American Activities, devoted largely to the Spartacist League, based on information obtained by several police agents and informers. Several members of the New Orleans Spartacist League, one of the few revolutionary groups in the South, have lost their jobs as a result.

Funds for the legal defense of the New Orleans Four are urgently needed; contributions may be sent to the Spartacist League, P. O. Box 8121, Gentilly Station, New Orleans, La. 70122.

movements, like a King-Spock campaign, in order to be a success, would have to convince the masses that their program for change is viable. To the extent that they are able to do this, they are a detriment to the raising of consciousness. It is not party, but program which is the key here.

RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS

Some members of the ISC claim that it is not a question of King changing his position so much as it is a change in consciousness in the ghetto; a change in the level of struggle which necessitates new demands. There is indeed an "amorphous revolutionary consciousness," as they put it, in the ghetto that was not there before. The ISC supporters claim that with the advent of this new consciousness, the King-Spock tactic, with its essentially reformist character, is no longer desirable. It was legitimate before, however, as a transitional demand designed to raise consciousness. The question then becomes, what led to the raising of consciousness that did occur; what was necessary to bring the Black masses to revolutionary conclusions? The "Defend the Ghetto Uprisings" statement deals with this question. Talking about the old civil rights movement, it says, "But if the white liberal 'allies' of the Black struggle were unwilling or unable to challenge the dominant American institutions responsible for poverty, slums, and discrimination, these liberals were willing to make demands on the civil rights movement. They demanded that the civil rights movement subordinate its own struggle to the needs of the liberal establishment. . . . During the (1964) presidential campaign, liberals put pressure on the civil rights movement to declare a moratorium on demonstrations so as not to antagonize possible racist support for the Johnson consensus." Is it necessary to ask where King stood on these events? Is it any wonder that Black militants have come to call him, and other middle-class "Negro leaders" like him, "bootlickers?"

There should be no doubt in our minds that what raising of consciousness has gone on in the Black movement in the past few years has been accomplished only by struggling against and overcoming the influence of King and his cronies at every step of the way. And yet only a few months ago, before the Detroit uprising, the ISC was claiming that a presidential campaign headed by King—on an "independent" ticket, of course—would raise consciousness! A new party, a new name, a new organization;

these things would make up for King's pacifism, compromises and frequent betrayals of his people. Such dishonest thinking is impermissible from revolutionaries.

The ISC is revolutionary in words, but not in deeds; it is a centrist grouping which opportunistically clings to the left-liberal manifestations of the middle-class rather than orienting toward the one class which can revolutionize modern society, the working class. The ISC's political method consists of trying to find the least objectionable middle-class radical to support, rather than building towards a really revolutionary movement. If the good Rev. King becomes too hot to handle, there will always be a substitute.

That the ISC pays its allegiance to some class other than the working class can be seen clearly in their behavior in the Bay Area chapter of Trade Union SANE. This chapter has a leadership dominated by the CP, union bureaucrats, and the like. The comrades of the ISC, including their ideological spokesman Hal Draper and trade union official Anne Draper, have consistently supported the leadership positions. They voted for a resolution which put the committee on record in favor of the U Thant proposals for a cease fire and a negotiated settlement.

DRAPER BLOCS WITH STALINISTS

It is curious to note the closeness with which the ISC is able to work with Stalinists in Trade Union SANE. The ISC cannot scream loud enough about opposing any capitulation to the rotten Stalinist leadership in Vietnam. Their repulsion from the leadership there takes them so far as to deny any support to the revolutionary struggle going on there; instead they call for a "third force," such as the Buddhists. While their fear of rubbing shoulders with Stalinists is strong enough to lead them to take a neutral position in a revolutionary war, it is not strong enough to lead them to take action against their foremost spokesman who in TUSANE is comfortably tucked in with Stalinists advocating another Geneva-type sell-out to U.S. imperialism!

Many ISC people will claim that this upsets them and that the ISC, which sees no need for democratic centralism, is not to blame for this. This is foolish nonsense; as long as the ISC fails to call its leaders to order, it must take full responsibility for their rotten policies and actions. This is what democratic centralism is for; without it, who's to say where the organization

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stands? If the membership of a union fails to call their leadership into line, then no matter how much they may dislike it, they are stuck with the results. Hokus-pokus aside, the same holds for the ISC.

The ISC is a petty-bourgeois radical tendency and has an intricate rationalization for its middle class orientation. They claim that since the middle classes are not a decisive force in modern society (the only two decisive forces being the bourgeoisie and the working class), they must tend towards either the right or the left, that is, either toward the bourgeoisie or the working class. This is why, they explain, there is such a wide spectrum of middle class political tendencies. The Birchers and the CNP both have their origins in the petty-bourgeoisie. Since there can be no strong, independent middle class political force then, and since the middle classes must, in the last analysis, take sides either with the bourgeoisie or the working class, it is to the advantage of socialists to push left-liberal tendencies further left. By working within these left tendencies, such as the CNP, we can hasten the day that they arrive at a working class position, claims the ISC. What they forget is that the middle classes cannot break out of their middle class framework independently. Until such time as the working class arrives on the scene as an

independent political force, the middle class tendencies will constantly seek to create the impossible, that is, to create a new alternative within a middle class framework. As long as petty bourgeois thinking and reformism dominate the political actions of the working class, any support given to new middle class formations can only do more harm than good. If the workers see that the only alternative to the Democratic Party fakers is some other faker like King, why should they bother? There's nothing in it for them; no CNP politician is seriously concerned about the workers' interests.

That the ISC can start from a correct premise about the middle class not being a decisive force in society and wind up supporting precisely those tendencies which cannot solve the problems of modern society indicates that they are not really serious about building a real, working class alternative (let alone about social-
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STILL MORE ARRESTS IN LATIN AMERICA

Official government attacks on left-wingers in various Latin American countries have been increasing in number and intensity. The latest is the arrest, torture and holding without bail of 13 people in Mexico City, including Daniel Camejo, brother of YSA-SWP spokesman Pete Camejo. Meanwhile Regis Debray, whose article on guerilla movements and revolution appeared in a recent issue of Monthly Review, has been held incommunicado by Bolivian authorities since last April.

Vigorous protests as well as financial assistance are necessary if this trend is to be halted and reversed.

It must be noted, however, that despite widespread coverage in The Militant, the YSA-SWP has on two occasions failed to support local defense efforts. About a year ago they refused to join other left groups in sponsoring a picket line at the S. F. Mexican Tourist Agency to protest the arrest of Adolfo Gilly and others, because the prepared leaflet referred to the Mexican POR as Trotskyist! (All Posadist parties include the appellation Trotskyist in parentheses as part of their title.) Last spring the YSA, deeply involved in efforts to elect Camejo mayor of Berkeley, was unable to find time to assist a group which sponsored several talks by John Gerassi in an effort to raise funds for defense of Latin American prisoners.

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ism).

Only to the extent that the workers see their own interests as separate and distinct from the middle classes will they enter into the political arena in their own name. With their sophist arguments and pseudo-marxist phrases, the ISC completely forgets that the rootless middle class cannot create a working class alternative; it must be the workers themselves who do that. Furthermore, they must do it in opposition to the middle class alternatives and petty-bourgeois reformist thinking which today dominates the labor movement. The workers have to force the reformists and petty-bourgeois sycophants to choose sides. To the extent that so-called "socialists" like the ISC orient towards middle-class tendencies instead of towards the working class, this day of reckoning is delayed, not hastened.

ISC VS. THE LABOR PARTY

It is indicative of the ISC's method of thought that they are oblivious to the essential difference between a labor party and the kind of political combinations, like the CNP, which are products of the middle class. A labor party may contain middle-class leadership also, of course; agents of the ruling class will constantly seek to impose bourgeois ideology, in the form of reformist programs, on the workers. A labor party, however, is explicitly a party of and for the workers, which is an advance in itself. Middle-class formations like the CNP are distinguished precisely by the fact that they are "classless," that is, they claim to represent the interests of everyone at once and no one set of people in particular. A labor party concept recognizes that there are only two basic classes in society, and it is the party of the working class. The achievement of a labor party would be a great victory in this country because it would tend to put politics on a class basis. In doing this, it would help to clear away the mist with which the aging bourgeoisie seeks to cloud the reality of its rule. A new middle-class, or "classless" tendency (aiming toward a third capitalist party), however, would do exactly the opposite; it would tend to thicken the mist by asserting that some radical restructuring of society can take place without putting politics on a class basis.

A labor party, of course, is not an end in itself. Struggle for working-class politics against petty-bourgeois reformists and bureaucrats would still have to be conducted within it. But this is not the same as say-

ing that it could be instituted tomorrow with no changes made or gains achieved in its establishment. On the contrary, the labor movement today is very heavily burdened with bureaucrats who are closely tied to the Democratic Party and other manifestations of the establishment. To establish a labor party would mean a good deal of boat-rocking. It would mean a large number of the present trade union officials being thrown out of office by an aroused and angered rank and file; it would mean large numbers of workers being awakened as to their class interests and conducting a struggle for them against the bureaucrats. This is what raising consciousness really means, and it would indeed be a big step forward.

There is an unbridgeable gulf between the King-Spock (and other gimmicks of the ISC) and the path of working class politics for the Black masses. The ISC recognizes, at least, that separatist solutions (such as those which consider the Black people to be a colony of the U.S. which must be liberated in a guerrilla-type civil war) are a dead-end road. The Black people are an integral part of the U.S. political economy, though forcibly held as a super-exploited layer at the bottom of it. There is no basis in reality for a separate Black political economy, which is what Black nationalism implies. The strength of the Black masses lies in that they are a large part of the U.S. work force, and are therefore essential to the functioning of the system.

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

Rather than link up with some new left-liberal formation, as advocated by the ISC, the Black militants must take the lead in raising the consciousness of the working class as a whole. They must raise demands and conduct struggle which is directed at the oppressors of the ghetto and, at the same time, emphasizes the common interests which the white working people and other minorities have in fighting the same enemy.

Mass organization of the ghetto and a national Black revolutionary organization are urgent necessities of the day. Even more than this, however, a Leninist vanguard party, capable of intervening and leading struggle where the interests of Black and white coincide, is needed. It is the ISC's lack of a genuine working class orientation that causes them to by-pass this revolutionary conclusion in favor of various petty-bourgeois radicals and trade union bureaucrats.