

WE MUST SWEEP THIS SYSTEM OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH

WORKERS LEAGUE MAY DAY MANIFESTO

(issued by Political Committee, Workers League)

The international workers' holiday of May Day developed out of the struggle for the eight hour day by the workers of Chicago in 1886, 81 years ago. Out of this struggle came the infamous Haymarket frameup of eight workingclass leaders. Although these leaders were framed up and four of them were executed on trumped up charges, the struggle they began continued.

In contrast to the myth of the anti-communist propagandists, May Day's origins are right here in the United States. It was and is a vital part of the struggles of American workers. The Second In-

ternational, founded in 1889, helped to make the holiday international, though its origin was in Chicago in 1886.

The class struggle is truly international. Just as the American workers of the last century continued their struggle in spite of the betrayers of that day, the international and revolutionary character of May Day has been maintained up to the present in spite of the treachery of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals. As long as workers struggle for their rights and in their own interests, May Day is with us. The developing crisis of imperialism is going to deepen the significance of May Day.

The class struggle is a fact of existence the world over, and capitalist crisis is also an objective fact. This crisis is deepening and forcing the workingclass into sharper struggle as it puts its old leaderships to the test of events.

The balance of payments crisis plaguing capitalist Britain and the United States as well, the turn towards wage freezing, compulsory arbitration, and increasing state intervention into the trade unions, and the tendency towards political strikes are all important aspects of this deepening

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Vol. 3, No. 18 - 60

May 8, 1967

Ten Cents

UAW Convention Report

Militants Demand 35 Hour Week, 30 Years and Out

by Dan Fried

DETROIT--April 21. "for the union makes us stro-o-o-ong", sounded the closing line and notes of "Solidarity Forever" as the more than 3,000 delegates to the United Automobile Workers of America (UAW) Special Convention concluded two and one half days of discussion and listening to UAW President Walter Reuther. For the publicists of the mass media and the press in general, the final day's discussion--on the relation of the UAW to the AFL-CIO--was

undoubtedly the highlight of the convention. But for most of the delegates, and those UAW members who sat in the visitors gallery, as well as for this reporter, the really important discussion took place the two previous days when the collective bargaining program and demands for the September negotiations with the Auto producers.

Throughout the discussion of the contract, two basically opposed positions or approaches toward collective bargaining could be discerned

even though there were in-between shadings of opinion, uncertainties and inconsistencies on the part of many delegates. The two positions were most clearly expressed, on the one hand by Reuther (who acted as if the Convention was simply a dialogue between "Walter" and--everyone

else), and on the other hand by those delegates who spoke most clearly and unequivocally for the "Shorter Work Week" and "Early Retirement" --specifically for the resolutions for a 35 hour week at 40 hours pay and for retirement after 20 years service, regardless of age with full

\$400 pension.

flexibility

Reuther opposed adoption of these demands, on the grounds that the "flexibility" required in the negotiations with the companies would be destroyed if such specific demands "are

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500,000 March Against the War; LBJ Answers by Bombing Hanoi

by Lee Byron

On April 15, 350,000 Americans marched through New York's streets to make known their opposition to the war in Vietnam. From Sheep Meadow in Central Park--turned into a staging area for the occasion -- down Madison Avenue and across 42nd St. to the United Nations Plaza: that was the official route. Sheep Meadow began to fill at nine o'clock in the morning. Political groups; student groups; labor union groups; assorted citizen groups; pacifist groups; groups of people belonging to no group at all. And at four o'clock in the afternoon the marchers were still filing out of Central Park. A lot of people. And--except for a fascist group running around with a Bomb Hanoi sign -- all of them were "against the war." That was in New York; there were other marches that day, the biggest in San Francisco. Across the country there were some 500,000 Americans marching on April 15 to op-

pose the Vietnam war. 500,000 Americans is a lot of people--as many as there are troops in Vietnam.

It has been a long time since anyone in this country could doubt that many, many Americans are "against" the war. The April 15 march would surely have removed the last

doubt--if that were the question. It isn't.

question

What is the question?

On April 16, Secretary of State Rusk told a TV reporter that he was afraid the demonstration might prolong the war rather than shorten it.

Why? Because he is afraid North Vietnamese may not understand that, in our country, 500,000 people expressing a view opposed to that of their government have no effect at all. Ho Chi Minh may be so unsophisticated as to believe that if the American people don't want a war, their

government will try to put an end to it. This, Mr. Rusk says, is not true--and so the March may only serve to raise false hope in Vietnam and strengthen their will to resist.

So that is one question: Why is Mr. Rusk able to insult the will of the American people so openly? Why do they have so little effect on the decisions of their Government?

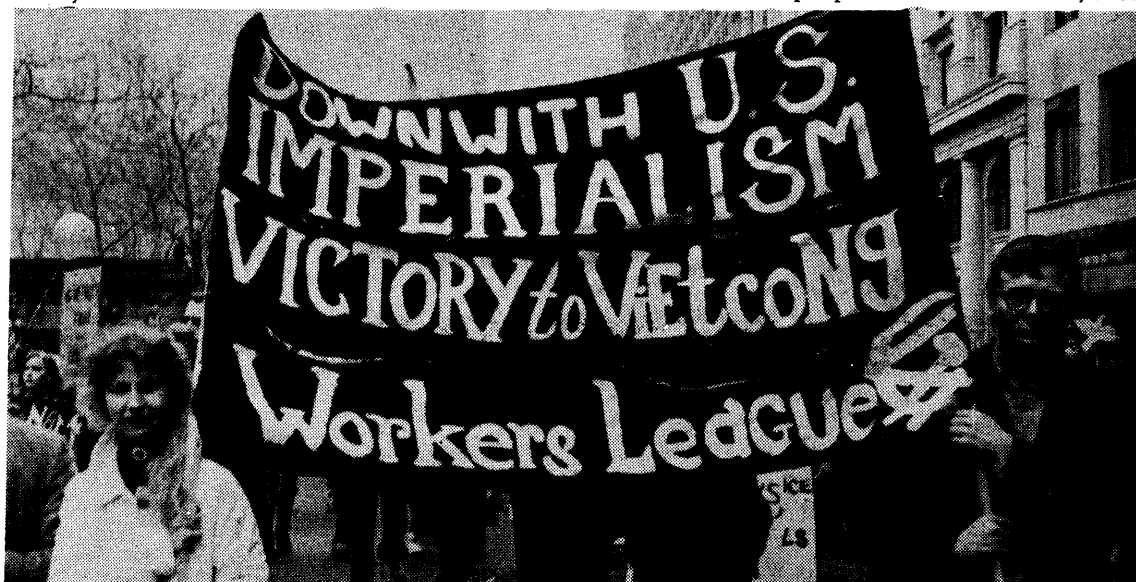
Because the American Government does not belong to the American people. It belongs to the capitalists and to their bureaucracy. The war in Vietnam is being fought for them, not for the American people--so what does it matter how we feel about it?

Yet 500,000 people are one hell of a lot of people--even if they were all of the people who don't like the war, which they are not. If 500,000 men are enough to carry on a war in Vietnam, why are they no more than a voice in the wind here? Whether the government wants to listen or not?

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AUTO WORKER MILITANTS DEMONSTRATE IN FRONT OF 1967 UAW CONVENTION.



PART OF WORKERS LEAGUE CONTINGENT MARCHING DOWN 42 ST. IN NYC.

MAY DAY MANIFESTO

REVENGE!

Workingmen, to Arms!!!

Your masters sent out their bloodhounds -- the police -- they killed six of your brothers at McCormicks this afternoon. They killed the poor wretches, because they, like you, had the courage to disobey the supreme will of your bosses. They killed them, because they dared ask for the shortening of the hours of toil. They killed them to show you, 'F--- American Citizens!' that you must be satisfied and contented with whatever your bosses condescend to allow you, or you will get killed!

You have for years endured the most abject humiliations; you have for years suffered unmeasurable iniquities; you have worked yourself to death; you have endured the pangs of want and hunger; your children you have sacrificed to the factory-lords -- in short: You have been miserable and obedient slave all these years! Why? To satisfy the insatiable greed, to fill the coffers of your lousy thieving master! When you ask them now to lessen your burden, he sends his bloodhounds out to shoot you, kill you!

If you are men, if you are the sons of your grand aires, who have shed their blood to free you, then you will rise! Your might, Hercules, and destroy the hideous monster that seeks to destroy you. To arms we call you, to arms!

Your Brothers,

Rache! Rache!

Arbeiter, zu den Waffen!

Wirklichen Hoff, keine Wankung werden die Arbeiter... (German text describing the struggle of workers against their bosses and the need for revolution.)

Gute Brüder.

LEAFLET ISSUED AT MAY DAY'S BIRTH IN U.S.

VIETNAM MARCH

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Because those 500,000 people (The Peace Movement) who are "against" the war are not doing anything to change the system that requires the war. They don't like the idea of children burned to cinders by napalm -- but they don't care whether or not those children grow up in a rotten, exploited country, suppressed by their own bosses and sold out to foreign imperialists. Which is something the Vietnamese care about -- is what they are fighting about.

They don't like the idea of Johnson sending B-52's to bomb civilians in North Vietnam in order to force the Vietnamese to accept the theft and rape itself -- not if it can be accomplished by gentlemanly negotiations.

They don't like the way the bosses are carrying out their war in Vietnam, but they don't see the need to challenge the bosses right to Vietnam.

class

They don't see that the US is carrying out a war of suppression against a worker's and peasant's revolution in Vietnam.

No more than they want to

recognize the class struggle here at home. Much less, that the class struggle in Viet Nam and the class struggle in the United States are part of one international class struggle.

This is really not surprising, if we consider the nature of the Peace Movement leadership: that leadership whose responsibility is to make the issues clear, to educate the American people as to what must be done to end the war they can't help witnessing with horror. Take a look at them. Take a look at the slogans they raised at Sheep Meadow, at the speakers.

END THE WAR -- the slogan of the Communist Party and the Socialist Worker's Party, who say they are against the war because it is immoral -- who are paving the way in this country for support of Bobby Kennedy and the Democratic Party. And whose war it is, if not the Kennedy's and the Democratic Party's?

WITHDRAW THE TROOPS -- Fine. But where is the recognition that the troops will not be withdrawn until they are made to withdraw? A pacifist slogan; a slogan that eases the conscience but covers up the reality of war.

PEACE WITH BEATLES-POWER. Uh huh.

STOP KILLING OUR BROTHERS. But where is the statement that they are our brothers because they, too, are part of the international working class -- and that they are being killed for just that reason -- and that as we kill them we hasten our own death?

Dr. King speaks against the immorality of war. He doesn't say that the capitalist system is immoral and that the Vietnamese have the right, the duty, to resist it with their guns. No more than he defended the right of the Negro in Watts to resist, but, rather, called for the police to put them down.

Stokely Carmichael spoke,

(Continued from Page 1)

crisis. It is affecting and intensifying struggles all over the world, in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, China and the Soviet orbit and the advanced capitalist countries as well. No events in these countries, from the revolution in Vietnam to the struggles of the Red Guards in China to the strikes and political struggles in Greece, Spain, Aden, Britain and the U.S., can be viewed apart from this crisis.

This worldwide crisis is the reason for the Greek capitalists' decision to dispense with bourgeois democratic forms, the British imperialists' brutal suppression of the people of South Yemen, and above all the imperialists' desperate genocidal war against the Vietnamese people.

In the United States greater efforts are made to hide class antagonisms and the capitalists have certainly been partially successful in confusing and bribing the workers with the aid of religion, anti-communist propaganda and with temporary reforms and improvements in the standard of living.

american workers

Many who like to call themselves Marxists but who in reality have not even begun to go beyond the old bourgeois methods of thought mistake their impressions of the last 10 or 20 years for objective reality in all its richness and complexity. The American workers are even now beginning to surprise some of these "practical politicians". In spite of the fact that the U.S. is the wealthiest and most advanced capitalist nation, the class struggle not only continues but is intensifying and must move from the economic to the political plane. Because the U.S. is the leader of world imperialism it also must bear its burdens, and this has a great deal to do with the problems currently plaguing the capitalists.

Recent contract settlements in some areas such as trucking do not at all signify that the crisis is easing, and developments in the near future will demonstrate this. Struggles are shaping up in auto and elsewhere. The war in Vietnam is becoming more and more unpopular; apathy among the masses is beginning to run into restlessness and hostility. Anti-war sentiment will have to be linked and fused to the class struggle itself. The war will have to be "brought home" -- and American workers will have to learn to fight the bosses on the political level, just as their Vietnamese brothers do. A first vital step on the road of political struggle is the building of a labor party in the U.S. to represent the interests of the workers.

We must expose the aims of the capitalists relentlessly, in relation to Vietnam as well as the home front. They demonstrate their fear and hatred of the American workers by sending Hoffa to jail. This is just the beginning of what they have in store for us. There is only one solution. We must sweep this system off the face of the earth.

In the very nature of U.S. society, out of its objective contradictions and movement, will come the forces to bring May Day in its full meaning back to where it all began. The international character of May Day will be proven forever when we build a revolutionary party capable of providing political leadership to the workers in struggle. This is the only significance of May Day for us today. It is much more than a sentimental remembrance. On the contrary, it is the building of the revolutionary party today. Without the struggle to build this party, May Day is meaningless. Only the International Committee for the Fourth International, with which the Workers League is in solidarity, continues the struggle to build the world revolutionary party.

but don't do anything to challenge the system that feeds on war and international exploitation?

workers league

There were some at the April 15 march who said these things. The Workers' League marched with banners that proclaimed the class nature of the Vietnamese struggle. They broke with thousands of others from the established, "safe" route of march down Madison Avenue and, chanting "Victory to the Vietcong" they marched straight through Times Square and down 42nd St., ignoring traffic lights, holding aloft banners and signs that called for support of the American workers' struggle, for the defeat of US forces in Vietnam, and for the creation of a Labor Party here at home.

People who saw them pass were surprised. Some booed. Some applauded. Many fell into the march behind the Workers' League and joined in the cry for Vietnam victory.

Which makes a liar of those "responsible" leaders of the SWP and the CP who say that these truths are too "extreme" for the American worker to accept.

The truth is, the SWP-CP are more interested in sharing power with the rotten establishment that controls this country than they are in bringing the truth to the American workers -- who are, after all, the majority of the American people.

international

The Workers' League is committed to the international working class and to its revolution. They are committed to the class struggle both here and in all the world; wherever workers unite to throw off their chains they are owed the support of the Workers' League and the American working class. The Workers' League is committed to building the revolution and to exposing those who would sell it out.

Help us to build the Revolution.



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Behind the Splits in Spartacist and the Socialist Workers Party

Just Who Supports Vietcong?

by Tim Wohlforth

At the April 15th Peace March in New York City the Spartacist contingent marched under only one banner "Withdraw U.S. Troops from Vietnam Now." Thus one year after its break from the International Committee of the Fourth International and its American supporters, the Workers League, the Spartacist ends up in the SWP camp on the critical issue of Vietnam.

Like the SWP, the Spartacist refused to pose the real issue of the Vietnam war: who should win the war? It has abandoned the revolutionary slogan, "Victory for the Vietcong" for a catch-all slogan which avoids taking sides on the revolution now going on in that country.

In order to cover up its retreat into the political camp of the SWP, Spartacist distributed a leaflet at the March containing out and out lies and slanders about the position of the Workers League and its predecessor organization American Committee for the Fourth International (A.C.F.I.). It seems we "cover up ACFI's own dirt in several important areas." The logic seems to be if only Spartacist can uncover past "dirt" about us then no one will notice the current dirty politics of the Spartacist. We are accused of falsely claiming to have fought since the beginning for the victory of the National Liberation Front.

The truth however bears out our statement. The very first issue of the Bulletin of International Socialism, published of September 14th, 1964 expressed our position that the Vietnamese Revolution must be fought through to victory and not be sold out through negotiations. This same position was developed in the Feb. 22, 1965, March 8, 1965 April 19, 1965, May 3, 1965, May 17, 1965, June 14, 1965, and the July-August, 1965 issues. For instance the April 19, 1965 issue, which was sold at a Washington peace demonstration, was entitled "Hands Off the Vietnam Revolution!" The subtitle was even more explicit "Peace at Any Price, No! Victory for the Vietcong!"

Spartacist takes particular exception to the July-August, 1965 issue of the Bulletin which bore the headline "Bring the Boys Home!" It seems that this article "reeks with pacifist and social patriotic formulations." For all this "reeking" the only statements in the article the Spartacist could find to back up this assertion was a statement that the war should be stopped in order to "launch a real war on poverty here" and the demand "Not one more American life in defense of reaction abroad." We still stand by these statements and use these formulations. We feel a central task of working class revolutionaries is to relate the Vietnam war to the struggles of the American working class at home. Our position is that of Lenin's: the real war workers must conduct is not against colonial peoples abroad but against their own ruling class. Workers should raise the demand that no more Americans die to defend U.S. imperialism and that the billions spent in Vietnam should be used to better the lot of workers here and elsewhere.

Spartacist goes on to state an absolute lie: "Nowhere (their emphasis) in that Bulletin or Supplement does the ACFI express any sense of partisanship with the forces fighting against the U.S. in Vietnam." But the last section of the article bears the subtitle "Victory to the Viet Cong." Is this "pacifism"? Is this "social patriotism"? What is this if it is not "partisanship"?

two incidences

This leaves Spartacist only two incidences to base their case on. First was our participation on the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee after the Spartacist had withdrawn from that committee and our failure to march under our own banners at the first demonstration called by that committee. It was our position, that because of the weakness of our forces at the time, it was more meaningful for us to participate in that parade as a part of the Tompkins Square Neighbors for Peace Action contingent. We were participating in that peace group fighting precisely for the revolutionary line expressed through our Bulletin.

Nevertheless, as the Spartacist knows full well, after the event in the course of unity negotiations with the Spartacist, we made it clear that this was a tactical error on our part and that Spartacist was correct to break with this committee when it did and to march in that parade under its own banners in defiance of the rules of that committee. As far as the other accusation that a representative of our organization signed a statement entitled "Where is the Voice of the President for Peace on Christmas" we will be happy to clear this up also.



NO VICTORY FOR VIETCONG FOR THEM.

Such a statement does not represent the policies of our organization and it was issued without representatives of our organization being permitted to see the final text of the statement. Such a statement is so obviously in contradiction to the whole line of our organization since September of 1964 that if Spartacist had anything but factional purposes in mind they could have checked with us and we would have cleared up this matter instantly.

No honest revolutionary can avoid asking the question how is it that Spartacist takes such pains to try to prove that our organization has failed in the past to call for the Victory of the Vietcong when they do not themselves raise this slogan today? What is the logic of this position? It is the distorted logic of a sick petty bourgeois group which accuses others of the crimes they themselves commit today.

year of degeneration

In the one year since its split from the International Committee, the Spartacist has moved recklessly and with all speed into the camp of the revisionists. First it leaked to the SWP its documents attacking the International Committee. Then the SWP published the Spartacist material as a pamphlet entitled "Healy Reconstructs the Fourth International." Spartacist then emerged as the major distributor in the United States of this hostile revisionist attack on the IC.

The next step was the Tate Affair. The revisionists of the SWP and their international allies falsely accused the General Secretary of the Socialist Labour League of instigating the beating up of Ernest Tate. Robertson runs to the defense of the revisionists and joins forces with them in this slander in an article entitled "Oust Healy!" The circle is complete. The Spartacist has moved from an unprincipled organizational bloc with the revisionists against the IC to a common political stand on the Vietnam war with the SWP.

Having broken from principled politics, lacking any perspective whatsoever for the building of a party in the United States, living only on uncontrolled hatred of principled revolutionaries, the Spartacist has been thrown into a deep internal crisis. This was first expressed in the expulsion from Spartacist of Shane Mage, the leading theoretician of their group and a member of its leading bodies from the days of its existence as a faction inside the SWP. Mage soon took up the cause of psychedelics and the defense of LSD. Soon another small group split away with the same psychedelic line.

This is no matter to be lightly dismissed. When a leader of an organization leaves the organization to take up with the mysticism and religious sickness which has become such a demoralizing influence among petty bourgeois youth it tells you something of the demoralization of the organization from which he emerged.

More recently the entire Baltimore branch of Spartacist, led by Bob Sherwood and A. Robert Kaufman, has broken way to form a new organization called the Workers Party of Maryland.

the causes

This disintegration of Spartacist must be understood politically by the Baltimore comrades who have split and by the comrades remaining inside Spartacist. The first task these comrades face is to come to terms with the causes of the political and organizational degeneration of the Spartacist group. Unless they do this they will be unable to

make any meaningful contribution to the construction of a revolutionary party in the United States and internationally.

These causes have their roots right in the April Congress of the International Committee of the Fourth International one year ago. At this congress Robertson and Spartacist revealed their true character. They were unable to subordinate themselves politically to the building of a world party of the working class. They had no perspective whatsoever for building a party in the United States--only bits and pieces of empirically arrived at formula which were imbued with a deep pessimism about the American working class.

It is this anti-internationalism, this empiricism which has led Spartacist to its present state organizationally and politically. But we must go deeper than this. The Spartacist acted as it did last April because it had never completed its break politically with the revisionist SWP. The Spartacist never understood what caused the degeneration of the SWP itself--this very same empiricism and anti-internationalism. Having not understood the causes of revisionism it could not help but repeat in its own fashion the very same methods of the revisionists--methods which now lead it closer and closer to the SWP politically.

lessons for swp

Involved here is not only a lesson for the Spartacist and those who have recently broken organizationally with Spartacist. There is also a lesson for the rank and file SWP members and the groups which recently have broken from the SWP. Since the expulsion of our group from the SWP two and a half years ago three more groups have either left or been expelled from the SWP--the Philips group primarily in Detroit, the Kirk group in Seattle, and the Boulton group in Milwaukee. While each of these groups have different political positions they all share one thing in common--so far they have failed to come to grips with the causes of the degeneration of the SWP, the degeneration which led to their own organizational break with the SWP. Like the Sherwood-Kaufman group they seem to simply turn their backs on the party from which they have emerged and devote themselves to a pragmatic "regrouping" of people in their local area.

None of these groups can make a serious contribution to the building of a revolutionary party in the United States unless they complete their break with the revisionists by seeking the roots of revisionism in the very history of the SWP. Our organization has made a beginning in this through a series of articles published in the Fourth International entitled "The Struggle for Marxism in the United States." We would be more than happy to discuss this assessment with these comrades and together with them strive to deepen our understanding of the origins of revisionism in the Fourth International. There is no more positive thing that could be done for the building of the party in the United States and throughout the world.

swp's crisis

This task takes on a special urgency because of the growing crisis within the SWP itself. The pronounced rightward movement of this party over the past six months particularly cannot fail but provoke a deep crisis in that organization. The recent split of the Boulton group in Milwaukee is just a small sign of things to come.

If those who have already left the SWP are to have anything to say to rank and file SWP members who are affected by this crisis they must first understand what has propelled the SWP on its rightward course. There is no shortcut to the building of the party. This necessary stage must be gone through. Those who turn their backs on revisionism only continue to carry out revisionist politics in other ways. Only by understanding revisionism can it first be destroyed in ourselves and then as an organization.

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Two-gun Ronnie Reagan Attacks Welfare

by Earl Owens



SAN FRANCISCO: Two-gun Ronnie Reagan and his hordes of little old ladies are out to get Welfare recipients in California. Governor Ronnie, as a first step, appointed John Montgomery -- a cattleman with no experience whatsoever in Welfare -- as head of the State Department of Social Welfare.

Step 2: In the state Legislature a bill (Senate Bill No. 485) has been proposed which prohibits aid to illegitimate children, with the exception of the first child. Needless to say, these legislators are opposed to legalized abortion but think nothing of depriving a child of food and clothing once he is born. Immorality, as a result of this bill, will no doubt stop immediately.

Step 3: Dentists in California are receiving notice in the mails that until July 1st only emergency dental work for wel-

fare recipients will be authorized. The excuse: no money.

Step 4: If the child makes it into adolescence he can become a "Devil Pup." A Reaganite group, the Guardsmen, sell Christmas trees and lottery tickets to finance this program, which sends poor children to camp, where, it seems clear, they are expected to grow up into Devil Dogs, since the camp is located at Camp Pendleton, the west-coast Marine Boot Camp. The brochure states: "In addition to physical fitness, respect for our country and its flag is fostered. This important citizenship training also includes respect for proper authority, cleanliness and neatness. The camp director is a high school principal who is also a Major in the Marine Corps Reserve." Referrals are made by your friendly social worker.

Step 5: City employees in San Fran-

cisco, and particularly social workers, have just discovered they may not get the pay raise that they expected in July. The pay raise takes place every July almost automatically. A group of realtors called "The Home Owners Alliance" has begun circulating petitions which would put the wage raise on the November ballot. Two-thirds of the voters would be required to approve the wage increase, which is not very likely.

The Home Owners Alliance is paying 25¢ per signature to petitioners, and intends to get 40,000 signatures. City employees including some of the most backward, are now talking of strike action. City employees are now circulating a counter-petition which would reduce real estate commissions from 6% to 3%. Meanwhile, the Peace Movement has organized its semi-annual March and Be-In, unrelated to any immediate or real struggle.

UAW CONVENTION

(Continued from Page 1) nailed". "We can't spell out our exact demands" because this "ties our hands", limits our "tactical flexibility" without which "we come out on the short end", and without which we could not have made "all the gains of past contracts". These were the words of Reuther whose major collective bargaining goal was the Guaranteed Annual Income Plan--a typical Reutherite scheme, devoid of content and eminently "flexible" in conception.

Reuther's "trump card" in favor of "flexibility" was his assertion that in 1964, he had persuaded a group of delegates to put aside their demand for \$300 monthly pension. As a result, he claimed, the UAW was able to negotiate \$400 from the companies. Later, Reuther was challenged on his facts when Warren Davis of Local 1250, (Cleveland, Ford) asserted that the group Reuther referred to in 1964 did in fact raise the demand for \$400 at 60 (years of age) or 85 points (of service).

Every labor faker whose speciality is "sharp negotiating" knows that "flexibility" is a two way street--"you give a little, you get a little", as the homily goes. Reuther talks about gains, but the question is what he gave in 1964 and what he is going to give in 1967. We would like to ask Mr. Reuther how it is possible for him to speak with such complacency about the "past contract gains" obtained by "flexibility" when at this special convention, production worker delegates could speak of the "oppressive" working conditions which create safety hazards under which "we have been pushed to the limit" and a delegate from Dodge Local 3 could make reference to the saying in the UAW that "We had sweatshops in '57, Slave Shops in '67."

The best answers to Reuther's approach were given by some of the delegates themselves. "I'm confused by the 'flexibility approach,' said Leon Baker, an assembly man at the GM, BOP(Buick-Olds-Pontiac) plant in South Gate, Calif. (Local 216). "Flexibility is a tool of management that I'm scared of", said Baker.

Perhaps the most forceful remarks (delegates were lim-

ited to remarks of 3 minutes each while Reuther who chaired all sessions spoke as often as he pleased and considerably over 3 minutes on a few occasions--democracy!) were made by delegate Louis Ciccone (also of Local 216) who said that the membership in the shops has no interest in "flexibility" but wants to know "what we are going to strike about." They want "definite goals" and "a fighting program." "The problem for the secondary leadership," he continued, "is to mobilize the workers for a strike." For this they require NOT abstract empty demands for "improved pensions", NOT the vagueness of the "Guaranteed Annual Income" as formulated by Reuther. We already have 75% (unemployment benefits) under SUB--now we need the shorter work week. "A 30 hour week at 40 hours pay--that's what they will strike about", roared Ciccone. Building up to a finale, Ciccone declared, "They used the Korean War as an excuse to hold off on the shorter work week--I hope they don't try to use this lousy Vietnam war to hold us off. We are declaring war on management and we are going to win, united." A burst of applause greeted Ciccone's militancy. Reuther made no comment.

Since the composite "Collective Bargaining" resolution produced by the Reutherite controlled resolutions committee outlined only the most general support for "reduction in working hours" and "improved early retirement,"

motions to report out the resolutions for the 35 hour week and for 30 year retirement were made from the floor. Despite Reuther's opposition to these resolutions, they got considerably more than the 400 votes required to have them "reported out", i.e., placed on the convention floor for discussion and a vote. These resolutions were supported not only by elements highly critical of Reuther but also by leaders of the 2200 member Flint Chevrolet local 659 and other Flint GM locals. The resolutions appeared to have a very broad base of support, especially among GM and Ford delegates.

layoffs

Speaking most effectively in support of early retirement and especially the shorter week as antidotes to layoffs and job attrition in the auto industry, delegate Leo Fenster of Cleveland, Ohio Fisher Body Local 45 pointed out that with the current productivity increase, by 1970 the auto industry can be expected to produce 25 cars per auto worker which means "we will have 150,000 workers laid off." The best kept secret in 1967, "he continued, "has been the layoffs in the auto industry. At least 170,000 auto workers (both salaried and hourly) have been laid off. At the beginning of the month, 10,000 salaried workers were laid off by GM in Cleveland". This story got into the press only through efforts of the local union, said Fenster. Because of the short and long term problems of un-

employment, Fenster concluded that the "number one question must be job security which means the shorter work week".

As many delegates pointed out, the shorter week must be accompanied by the demand and enforcement of a ban on compulsory overtime. One delegate called for double time to replace present time and one half rates and triple time to replace present double time rates. Many delegates emphasized the need for a "big money" wage increase without counterposing it to the shorter work week which no delegate considered sufficient in and of itself.

During the convention, hundreds of delegates participated in a demonstration with signs demanding early retirement (30 and out and the 35 hour week and marched with great spirit into the hall.

break

After the floor debate was closed, Reuther, rather than bringing the two special resolutions to an immediate vote, took it upon himself to deliver a 20 minute speech in which, in addition to repeating his earlier arguments about flexibility, demagogically interspersed pseudo-militant words with a plea for "unity". He implied that a vote for the two resolutions would play into the hands of management. "Don't let the corporations see divisions" in our ranks, he pleaded. "I hope we will not make the mistake of tearing apart the union," said Reuther, implicitly accusing the opposition of wrecking the union. For Reuther, "unity" could only be on his terms. He reduced the vote to a vote of confidence in him, implying that those who voted for the resolutions were making a definitive break with him, Walter P. Reuther.

Reuther was partly correct. To vote for a 35 hour week does mean a break with Reuther and preparation for a struggle for leadership. Not prepared to really fight Reuther, a large section of the oppositions evidently capitulated or at best, simply collapsed. No more than 5% of the vote, according to Reuther's ruling) was in favor of the resolutions. Reuther and managed to stave off a near revolt and slap in the face. Following the session, when all the delegates

marched with signs in a procession winding around the convention hall, many of those with the "35 hour week" and "30 and out" signs seemed somewhat sheepish, lacking in their earlier spirit. Something had gone wrong.

fight

Reuther won this round and we can expect he will organize a sell-out this September especially as he will face the pressure from LBJ, threat of a Taft-Hartley injunction, and perhaps even new anti-strike legislation as the government comes to the aid of the auto giants.

Auto workers must face it: the Democratic Party is as much the servant of the auto companies and other large corporations that run this country as are the Republicans. This year we will see increasing intervention by the government against the unions and the Reuthers who continue to insist on labor support for those who fight the unions are traitors to the interests of the rank and file. There is no other way out. Labor is going to have to break from the Democrats and put up its own candidates -- build its own labor party based on the unions.

Negotiations never won anything without a strike or threat of strike. The auto workers, encouraged by gains of other unions in the past year, and bitter at the corporations' flagrant contract violations on production standards, subcontracting, waged differentials with outside skilled tradesmen and a host of their grievances are more than ready to struggle. But, as this convention amply illustrated, you can "pressure" Reuther only up to a point -- after that you have got to break with him.

The auto workers must prepare to "hit the bricks" and to fight both the Big 3 as well as LBJ and everyone else who try to put the lid on their struggle for just demands. The workers who think they need "Walter", his facile tongue and his "shrewdness" in negotiations, delude themselves. The companies welcome reliance on Reuther but fear the unity and strength of the workers united and determined. The auto workers can win in 1967 the same way they won in 1937 in Flint -- through struggle and solidarity.

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