

CAMPUS SPARTACIST

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Spartacist Speaks to UT Audience

Unity in the face of the class enemy and democracy within the working class movement were the main themes of a speech entitled "Defense and the Class War" given by Jim Robertson, national chairman of the Spartacist League. Speaking to the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus of SDS (RMC) in a public forum on January 30 at the University of Texas, Robertson pointed out that when the bourgeoisie attacks the Left or the workers' organizations, we must carry out a massive, united, unconditional defense of those involved. Those who are openly anti-capitalist, have a revolutionary tradition or who clearly fight in the workers interests are all worthy of defense. Robertson cited the case of Angela Davis, a teacher at UCLA, who was fired because of her Communist Party (CP) membership. Leading members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) have come out against defending Davis saying she is a sell-out revisionist and a member of a party that has betrayed the working class. By doing this, Robertson noted, they set a dangerous precedent, because this policy creates a stance where defense is based on whether or not one agrees with you politically, and not on the basis of class forces. The CP has a long history as an anti-capitalist revolutionary party and it has not repudiated this position. The CP is a working class tendency, even though it has degenerated into a really rotten, opportunist group. PL, when it refuses to defend CP witch-hunt victims, runs the same danger that the CP itself did when it applauded the prosecution of Trotskyists under the Smith Act, then saw its own leaders sent to jail under the same witch-hunt law. The CP was the main target of McCarthyism and is still the major victim of anti-subversive legislation and witch-hunts. Because of this, Angela Davis must be unconditionally defended even though we do not agree with her politics and consider them rotten and sell-out. In his essay American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism, James Cannon said:

"A clear understanding and recognition of the class nature of the Communist Party as a workers' organization-- as a tendency in the labor movement-- determines the tactical approach of the revolutionary workers to the problem. Stalinism cannot be disposed of by reliance on police measures of the bourgeois state-- the very idea is ludicrous-- nor by anathema and excommunication from the labor movement, when the power to enforce it is lacking. Nothing will do but an uncompromising principled fight, combined with a tactical approach which will enable the revolutionary party to win the workers away from its perfidious influence."

Even the rotten pro-capitalist SP would merit defense, in part because it is still vaguely a working class tendency, and in part as a defense of concrete democratic rights (despite the party or group involved), as these rights are extremely valuable to socialist and workers' groups, in their struggle against capitalism.

Defense in the working class movement also extends to union leaders. Robertson cited the example of Jimmy Hoffa. Hoffa was not jailed because he was a rotten, corrupt bureaucrat who held his union in an iron grip. He was jailed for being a tough union leader who had caused, and would continue to cause trouble for the bourgeoisie, because of the Teamsters' power. His corruption was an excuse to get him because the bourgeoisie do not really care how corrupt or honest anyone is, they only care about what trouble you can cause them and how they can prevent it. The workers would imprison Hoffa in a workers' state, and they alone should deal with him now. Hoffa's imprisonment was a direct attack on the power of a workers' organization and he should be defended.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Robertson covered democracy and free speech within the Left and working class movements. He showed that gangsterism and physical intimidation of opponents has absolutely no place in these movements and must be opposed. The party that becomes the vanguard of the working class must do so through its program and its political ideas and not by physically removing its Leftist opponents. Gangsterism is still a major problem (i.e. the Panthers' physical expulsion of Spartacist, Workers League and PL from the "United Front Against Fascism" Conference, PL's attack on a Spartacist member while she was distributing leaflets at one of their forums in New York City, the Tate case in England). Gang-

sterism smothers the free exchange of political ideas and intensifies the isolation of the Left.

Concluding, Robertson said that to help build the Left movement, people should join the RMC and fight to build SDS as an open, non-exclusionist broad-based youth group with a socialist orientation. Organizations like this are important in the struggle, because they are a place where people of widely varying politics can come together and fight out politically their programs without fear of intimidation. Only by principled struggle inside the Left can a revolutionary party be built which can lead the working class to state power.

JOIN RMC

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Why the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus:

Because of the ground swell of support for revolutionary Marxist positions culminating in a consistent left wing force in the Boston SDS at the December National Council meeting in New Haven. The RMC is in contention with the confused vacillations of the Progressive Labor-backed Campus Worker-Student Alliance caucus and the RMC opposes the anti-communist right wing "SDS" Labor Committee. We must make real the pro-working class orientation and non-exclusionism that all Boston SDS members nominally support.

The time to form the RMC is more than ripe. All across the country there is motion in this direction. At Stony Brook, New York, the Independent Caucus has been formed largely in opposition to the inanities of the CWSA and to push for real support to the crucial GE strike. In Memphis, Tennessee, where the very solid MDS chapter went to the aid of local GE strikers, the MDS also reprints works of Leon Trotsky to help in achieving Marxist clarity in struggle.

To join the RMC you should be in agreement with its initial declaration at New Haven that "a major activity for SDS be involvement in off-campus social struggles, particularly labor struggles." RMC membership, including a sub to the RMC Newsletter, costs only a dollar a year and a paid-up current membership in Boston SDS.

Enclosed is a dollar, I want to join the RMC _____. I want more information _____. Name _____, School or chapter _____, Street _____, City, State, Zip _____.

Return to RMC Newsletter, c/o Helen Cantrell, 161 E. 99 St., apt. 2B, New York, New York, 10029

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