

The Debate in People's World

For the past number of weeks a running controversy has taken place in the pages of the People's World, a West Coast weekly reflecting the views of the Communist Party. The discussion was touched off when the paper, in a reversal of previous practice, accepted a paid advertisement from the Socialist Workers Party in San Francisco announcing a campaign rally for Frank Barbaria and Joan Jordan, its candidates for supervisor in the November election.

With the advertisement, the PW published a statement of policy declaring that its publication did not imply endorsement of the SWP or its candidates. The statement charged the SWP with "hostility to the lands of socialism" and "tactics . . . which do injury and sow discord in the labor movement and other people's organizations."

However, in subsequent issues, the PW did provide objective news coverage of the SWP campaign and of the sup-

port extended it by Vincent Hallinan, Warren K. Billings and others.

Meanwhile pro and con letters on the issue of independent political action and on the character and role of the SWP began to appear in the PW, culminating in a full page of such letters in its issue of Nov. 9. Much of the controversy centered around an Oct. 19 letter by Archie Brown which endorsed the PW's attack on the SWP and elaborated its charges. The replies that his letter provoked indicate the growing revision among Communist party members and supporters against the practice of trying to refute the political arguments of the SWP with Stalinist-type slanders and distortions. The following are excerpts from some of the letters which were published. The captions have been added.

FROM ARCHIE BROWN

"I want to agree most emphatically with your statement of policy . . . I even have my

doubts as to whether or not you should have printed the ad at all. However, my real reason for writing this letter is to expose some of the things that are happening in and around the Trotsky election campaign in San Francisco. They have put out some fine-sounding election material which as usual is a cover-up for their disruption and determination to destroy the Communist Party and other people's organizations. Vincent Hallinan and Warren K. Billings are fine people . . . but I question their judgment in endorsing the Trotskyite candidates . . . Just how do you elect workers in these United States . . . ? By endorsing known disrupters of workers' organizations here and inveterate enemies of the lands of socialism? Is this somebody's idea of unity?"

"There would have been a chance to elect someone from labor's ranks . . . However, this calls for a COALITION POLICY, which is furthest from the thoughts of the Trotskyites . . .

they offer some kind of a 'labor' party instead . . . Some people say that the Communists should have run a candidate in the local elections . . . I know personally that one of the determining factors as to why no worker ran with Communist support is that he or she would simply lose their job and stand the danger of being hounded by various governmental agencies. It is interesting to note the Trotskyites do not seem to have this problem, even though they claim to be ten times more r-r-revolutionary than the Communists."

A REPLY BY PLAYWRIGHT GEORGE HITCHCOCK

" . . . Like Vincent Hallinan and Warren Billings, I have endorsed the candidacy of Frank Barbaria and Joan Jordan although I am in no way affiliated with the SWP and have profound differences with them on many questions, including their estimate of Soviet affairs. However, like many other socialists of my acquaintance, I question neither their sincerity or courage in running for office on a socialist platform. Their platform is excellent, they are both working people and should, I think, be supported by all socialist-minded voters . . .

"Finally, Archie Brown even questions your wisdom in printing a paid advertisement by the SWP . . . This is a vital question. And if people like Mr. Brown are successful in pressuring their paper into suppressing socialist viewpoints with which they don't agree, I foresee a very dim future for it."

DOES HITCHCOCK READ MILITANT, ASK "G. & F. H."

"In the name of socialist unity George Hitchcock . . . has held up to scorn a Communist and 'unreconstructed old-timer' for presuming to question the sincerity of the Socialist Workers Party. One can not help but admire his courage in attacking a Communist, but is tempted to question his ability to read, despite his renown as a scholar . . . or perhaps he doesn't read The Militant? Reading this official organ of the SWP, one is repeatedly exposed to hostility and denunciation of the Soviet Union and in fact everything and everyone to the left of the rather squat position this group has assumed for many years . . . Hitchcock is liable to promote something more than socialist unity if he continues to harp on the uncompromising rigidity of Communists as opposed to the sweet reasonableness of those whose devotion to socialism falters only as it approaches realization."

ADAM LAPIN THINKS SWP GOT BARGAIN ON AD

"That one-inch ad for a Socialist Workers party campaign rally . . . a few weeks ago has been parlayed into a good many inches of copy. The PW found it necessary to accompany the ad with an editorial statement denouncing the SWP. Then Archie Brown wrote a longish letter wondering if the ad should have been printed in the

first place . . . The SWP sure got its money's worth from a one-inch ad. I think Brown's letter was intemperate and vituperative. It was hardly calculated to convince any but the already convinced . . . I have no axe to grind for the SWP; it is too deeply mired in the Russian politics of several decades ago to offer a constructive socialist program for the U.S. today. But I do have an axe to grind for the PW. And I feel the PW is alienating many potential friends by its attitude toward the SWP . . .

"Archie Brown is not likely to wean Hallinan, Billings or anyone away from the Socialist Workers Party with such a poor, puling letter . . . Knowing the role of the Trotskyites in Spain and elsewhere as well as Archie, I do not trust them. But attacking them, Archie faces away from the real enemy . . . Probably one reason Warren K. Billings is supporting the SWP is that he sees the SWP doing something to win a new trial for Morton Sobell . . . Perhaps he wonders what Archie and his union have done for Sobell in the last year or so. But people say, that the Sobell case is not 'broad' enough . . ."

WANTS CP TO RUN ITS OWN CANDIDATES

" . . . Brown states there is 'great merit' in the idea of Communist candidates in local elections and then proceeds to say that one of the problems preventing this is job security. In my mind, job security is a secondary question and should be regarded as such. What appears to me to be the first step is the decision amongst the Communist Party membership to run candidates. In the past such decision was decided in the Party's county state committees . . . and never discussed widely among the rank and file. I personally have been in favor of CP candidates but in my eight years of experience in the party a full discussion among the membership has not taken place . . ."

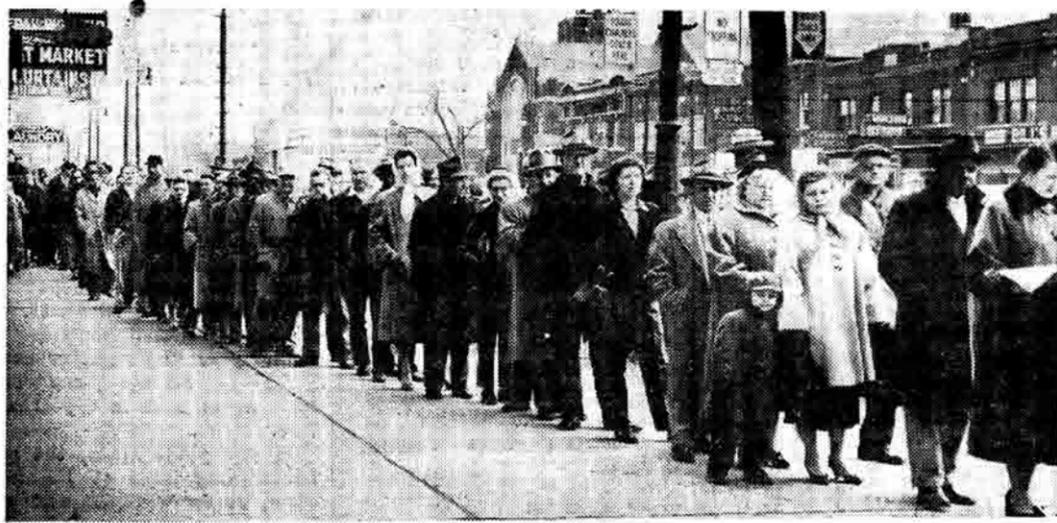
SWP CAMPAIGN MGR ASHER HARA WRITES

" . . . I would like to thank the People's World for accepting our campaign rally ads . . . That some would protest the PW's recognition of the changing times is to be expected. But is it too much to expect that such a protest—at a minimum—should be based on fact, not fiction? For example, Brown slurs the SWP candidates by saying that it is a strange thing that they can run for public office 'but do not lose their jobs.' . . . The facts: Barbaria was screened from his job as a seaman. He has been blacklisted from every shop in San Francisco in his trade and is at the present time compelled to work outside the city . . .

"Brother Brown and I are both longshoremen. We have far more job security than Barbaria or Jordan. As a matter of fact, Brother Brown still has the same job he had when he ran for governor. He could run for supervisor . . . Brown admits that the Barbaria-Jordan campaign has put out some 'fine-sounding' election material but goes on to say this is 'a cover-up for their disruption.' . . . Does this make sense? That fine sounding election material and support of fine people . . . can disrupt the Communist Party, workers' organizations and 'the lands of socialism.'"

"Brother Brown's only factual evidence to prove his charges is the following: that the SWP supports the idea of a Labor party. True—but is this disruption? The candidates state openly in their fine sounding election material that the workers and the minority peoples need their own political party; that support of Republicans and Democrats is a blind alley. As Vincent Hallinan once put it: for workers to enter the Democratic party with the idea of controlling it is like 'attempting to direct a whale from inside its stomach.' Would you consider Vincent Hallinan a disrupter, Brother Brown?"

Unemployment Lines Are Growing



Unemployment compensation lines, like the above during the auto cutbacks in Detroit last year, are now becoming more frequent throughout the U.S. as the current recession begins to be felt. During the last week of November 225,000 workers were registered for jobless benefits in New York — a 50% increase over the same period last year.

A Mild Recession

By Bob Whitehead

It's 6 A.M.

The place: New York City. A young couple awaken to the pealing of a Big Ben. The young man jumps out of bed and hustles into his clothing, rubbing his skin to bring warmth. "You can sleep awhile longer," he tells the girl. She wastes no time acquiescing. After a cup of tea he heads to the front door. "Good luck, honey," she calls.

Walking quickly west towards West Broadway on Fourth Street, the young man stops on the corner to scan the front pages of the Times he can't afford to buy. "It's almost Christmas," he thinks, "and I can't spend a nickel on the damn Times. Santa Claus will be able to play the title role in the 'Thin Man,' this year."

As he proceeds west he takes a card from his pocket and reads an address. The line on the card he likes best is: "Temporary work. Pay by the day." The name of an acquaintance is scrawled across the top. The friend had told him he had weight. The boss would be sure to put him to work once he saw the name of the guy who'd sent him down there.

The front has the name of the establishment. The windows say shape-up at 6:30, but there are men in there already at twenty after. The room is hot and stuffy with a heater hanging from the ceiling going full blast. The store is only 15 by 15 but there are more than thirty men huddling together and more filing in by the minute.

Two men, sitting on one of the five wooden benches, have made friends:

"I've been coming down here

for over a week now," says the first, "and that boss ain't sent me out on a job yet."

The young man walks to a counter where a well-dressed executive-looking chap is writing on a pad. He shows him the card. "Have a seat," says the boss, going back to his work.

"Well," says the second man, "I hear things are just about the same all over. Friend of mine lives in Montclair. Just bought his house, and things looked OK, so he bought a brand new Mercury, too. Now he's hung because there ain't a damn thing he can do with any of that stuff. Dealer wouldn't give him any money to sell the car back and he can't borrow anything on his house."

The young man is certain there must be something wrong with the man at the desk. He doesn't understand that he has a card from a friend—a guy with connections. But this time the man is a little more explicit in his directions to sit. He says everybody around here waits alike. "Nobody's special when I have the only work around town."

The first man is talking again. "When I lost my last job, my old lady said she wasn't going to let me sit around that house, so I went down to Warren Street. Always supposed to be work down there. They sent me over to one of those factories on the Lower East Side. I asked the guy what he was paying, and he said 90 cents an hour. I couldn't believe my ears. I said, 'You can't do that; the law says you have to pay a dollar.' He said: 'I got other problems without you telling me what the law is.' I ain't been to Warren Street since."

Soon it was too full for everyone to sit or stand within. The latecomers had to stand on the sidewalk. The young man had a seat which he wangled pretty close to the boss' desk, so he could get called if the guy had something to send someone out on. But there were a few whom the man seemed to know, and he would call them over, give them a slip of paper with an address, have them sign a sheet and then they got a dollar bill. The process was repeated twenty times by 10 A.M., but still nothing for the young man and the place seemed as full as it had been at 6:30.

The two men who had been talking each had 20 cents. They pooled to get two containers of coffee, and one cruller which they split. "I can't figure it," said the first. "What do you have to do to get that guy to send you on something?"

"I think," said the second, "that it's just a matter of him seeing you enough times." He noticed the young man for the first time. "Never saw you here before, son," he said in a friendly mid-western voice. "What line of work do you usually do?" The young man was deep in his own thoughts, realizing that he'd lost a whole morning from his uptown hunting. He looked up slowly and said, "Newspaper." The order men exchanged glances. "That makes you out to be a long way from home, don't it?" asked the first man. "You got college?" The young man nodded yes.

"Pfeffer, Jones, McCoy, Stubbs, Parker, Lipshultz, Tanner and Bohme, come and get this slip. That's all I have. You guys can stay and keep warm if you want to, but that's it for today. Try the department stores for stock jobs if you like." The boss turned and went into his office and the men dispersed. The young man took his last quarter and went into a lunch-

Washington, Oregon Hit by Layoffs

SEATTLE, Dec. 1 — Unemployment in the Northwest has been rapidly rising since August 1956. The state of Washington has the highest number of jobless since 1949, while unemploy-