

WHERE IS THE YSA GOING?

There is a tendency among members of political organizations to develop a loyalty to their group and its leadership which transcends political program. It is this tendency which allows reformist leaderships to remain standing at the head of the workingclass betrayal after betrayal. This attitude of "my organization, right or wrong," has been disastrous for the workingclass and can prove just as damaging for Marxists, whose avowed loyalty is to program, not individuals or organizations per se.

Members of the SWP and YSA should now, in the wake (and "wake" is just the right word) of the Washington conference, begin to consider whether or not their leadership is pursuing the correct course. At a minimum, they should study Steve Fox's document, "A Report on the Anti-War Convention" and the article "The Real Facts About the SWP's Role in Washington" in the Dec. 27 issue of the "Bulletin of International Socialism." (Both available free from Spartacist.)

There are members of the YSA who are doubtful about the wisdom of the course pursued by their leadership in Washington; there are those who are beginning to be alarmed over the course of the Cuban Revolution; there are those who oppose the "troops to the South" slogan of the SWP, and who were disgusted by such incidents as Farrell Dobbs' telegram of sympathy to the widow of the head of world imperialism. For these comrades, who do not have substantial programmatic agreement with any other organization, there are three courses open.

-They can continue to suppress their doubts, and follow the tempting path of consoling themselves with the thought that "Well, we may make a few mistakes but there isn't any

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DEFEND BILL EPTON!



BILL EPTON

better organization around, and anyway we've got several hundred members." (With just such a response did the average militant CP member confront the criticisms of the early Trotskyists.)

-They can give up in disgust, and walk out, as some have done. This way lies political death.

-Or they can seek to clarify the questions raised by the practice of their leadership--this means discussing with fellow YSAers the questions of Cuba, troops to the South, the line in anti-war work, etc., and seeking to explain the basis of the incorrect policies pursued by the SWP-YSA leaders: Said leaders will not be happy at this course of action, but it would ill-become revolutionary Marxists, who expect to face the fury of the capitalist state, to fear political struggle with their own leadership. To paraphrase Trotsky: he who is afraid to raise his hand to vote against a bad resolution will also fear to raise his hand against the bourgeoisie.

When the cops attacked Harlem in the summer of 1964, Bill Epton did not tell his people to go home. If he had, he might now have a job in the War on Poverty (perhaps as James Farmer's assistant?) Instead, he stood up and told it the way it was -- so now they're trying to send him to prison for 12 years.

Any group which is serious about leading a working class revolution in this country knows that many of its members will certainly serve time in prison, or worse. The greater the threat we appear to be, the more ferocious and unrestrained will be the attack of the ruling class. And yet the bourgeoisie does not undertake repressions lightly, still less so the more flagrantly they violate their own legal code. (This maxim is less true as one descends the ladder from the national to the local level, as Bay Area residents should know full well.) It is not that our rulers are fanatical civil libertarians, but rather that they would prefer to maintain the facade of "democracy," "orderly procedure," etc., which masks their class dictatorship. It's good business.

This is to say, they would rather use fraud than force. They would rather simply finagle Bill Epton off the ballot, as they did. But if they have to, they will put him in prison, as they are doing. Faced with such an attack, our response must be to do exactly what the ruling class does not want us to do: expose the basis of their attack, rip away the hypocritical veil of "impartial laws" which form an elaborate screen around this decaying social system. We can exploit the contradictions existing

(Over)

within the system: the slum-lord-politician in New York City will have his court convict Epton. With enough national and international publicity, the banker-politicians in Washington may decide to have their court (the Supreme Court) reverse the decision. ("See how liberal we are, Mr. Nkrumah?")

And the Epton case is such a clear and obvious example of frame-up (in liberal New York at that) that every radical should leap at the opportunity to do Epton Defense work. The usual resolutions of support are not enough; we must take concrete action to carry the truth about Epton onto the campuses and into the ghettos.

Address contributions and inquiries to Committee to Defend Resistance to Ghetto Life P.O. Box 4403, San Francisco, Calif. 94101.

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

SPARTACIST-WEST will be the newsletter of the West Coast Spartacist committees. Our purpose in publishing may be summed up by quoting from the first issue of SPARTACIST:

"We want to influence such radical and leftward moving groups or sections as aspire to Marxist clarity and direction. We frankly state in advance that the purpose of our action is to further a revolutionary regroupment of forces within this country such that a Leninist vanguard party of the working class will emerge. Secondly, we want to win individual supporters for our viewpoint from among radical youth, militants in the civil rights struggle, and seek to create modest nuclei within key sections of the working class. Critical to our success will be the ability of our comrades to both be involved as revolutionists in the social struggles of our times and to

CORNELL STUDENTS UNDER ATTACK FOR SUPPORTING VIETNAM N.L.F.

Four members of the Young Socialist League have been put on disciplinary probation at Cornell, following their refusal to cease distributing leaflets urging that money be sent to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. This action by the University caps a series of trials and administrative harassments aimed at preventing the YSL from urging support to the liberation fighters in Vietnam. A student who is on disciplinary probation may not engage in any extra-curricular activity, such as being the officer of a political club.

The rationale used by the administration was that the YSL's action might be illegal, and that, if Cornell allowed an on-campus club to engage in it, the University itself might be prosecuted by the Justice Department! The patent hypocrisy of this reasoning was apparent even to the moderate student newspaper, which labeled the decision "outrageous."

The incident has stirred up widespread debate on campus,

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undertake effective inquiry into the pressing theoretical and political issues posed for Marxists today."

and is especially significant because Cornell has previously maintained a fairly good record on questions of on-campus political dissent. The YSL has also had to contend with unofficial harassment: two fraternity types who tried to steal a stack of YSL leaflets were compelled to return them after direct action by YSL members.

SPU BACKS CIA

The Student Peace Union, a "third-camp" peace group founded by the YPSL and later abandoned to crackpotish pacifists, has come up with a bold new demand for the anti-war movement. We quote from a recent leaflet issued by that organization, with the aim of advising the State Department on how best to fight communism.

"We must export more capital goods, more medicine, and more technical assistance directly to the people in the underdeveloped emerging nations, thus at the same time helping where help is very badly needed and undercutting the popular discontent on which Communism feeds. We must use all the resources of propaganda and the CIA (that's right, -- the CIA. Ed.) to develop unrest in totalitarian countries to the point of revolution."

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