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'CONDEMN THESE METHODS OF SMEAR & SLANDER'

AN INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT ON THE WRP AND THE OCI

THE WORKERS' Revolutionary Party and its paper the "Newsline" have devoted much of their recent efforts to an infamous slander campaign against Joseph Hansen and George Novack, two long-standing American socialist activists, and leaders of the Socialist Workers' Party. It is infamous because, as in any police state, the very fact of the accusation becomes the main — and only — "evidence". Raillies have been called on the 36th anniversary of Trotsky's death to be told that Hansen is an 'agent of the GPU', an accomplice, either by criminal neglect or by deliberation, in the Stalinist murder of Trotsky.

This shameful effort is a deliberate technique, borrowed from Stalinism, to create an atmosphere of witchhunt and bigotry among WRP members, directed both at other tendencies in the working class movement and against any dissent inside the WRP. The WRP leadership find this necessary to whip their flagging ranks into line, and to cover up for their ever more gross opportunism, vividly expressed in their uncritical support for Libya's military dictator, Gaddafi.



The trigger for this campaign seems to have come from the Wohlforth episode. Tim Wohlforth was for over ten years the central leader of the Workers' League, the US section of the WRP's "International Committee of the Fourth International" (not to be confused with the international faction founded by J P Cannon in 1953, which in 1963 fused with the "International Secretariat of the FI", led by Pablo and Mandel, to form the present USFI).

Two years ago G Healy, central leader of the WRP, instructed Wohlforth, on no adequate grounds, to subject his companion Nancy Fields to investigation as a possible CIA agent. Wohlforth hesitated: and was expelled from the Workers' League, though even the "ICFI" 'Inquiry' ev-



Joseph Hansen [top] and George Novack

The organisations signing the statement call on other working-class and revolutionary organisations to add their signatures — and it is to be hoped that the IMG, British section of the USFI, will be among them.



THE UNDERSIGNED working class organisations hereby condemn the slander campaign against Joseph Hansen and George Novack waged by the WRP and those who follow them on this point on the international level.

We characterise this campaign as a poisonous, disruptive, and anti-working class campaign.

Some of our organisations have important political disagreements with Hansen, Novack, and the Socialist Workers' Party — but we fight for our politics with the proletarian methods of principled debate, not the Stalinist methods of smear and slander. The WRP's charges against Hansen and Novack amount to nothing more than the fact that they refused to launch a general witchhunt against the danger of possible Stalinist agents. If that fact convicts Hansen and Novack, then it should also convict James P Cannon and Leon Trotsky himself — who always refused to establish a regime of permanent witchhunt.

Similarly, the undersigned organisations condemn the campaign waged by the OCI, which — without the slightest proof — accuses Michel Varga of being an agent of both the CIA and GPU, and their recourse to physical attacks against militants of the LOR, as well as against other revolutionary militants who tried to intervene in these incidents. We are dealing here too with Stalinist methods that must be banned from the Trotskyist movement, as well as from the working class movement as

Wohlforth wrote an account of these nightmarish events which was published in "Intercontinental Press", a journal on which Hansen and Novack are editors. Healy's response — alleging that Hansen and Novack, with whom he worked closely for over a decade, have been accomplices of the Stalinist secret police for 40 years — has confirmed what Wohlforth's story indicated, that Healy has no sane view of reality.

Workers' Action fully endorses the statement we reproduce below, signed by several revolutionary socialist organisations of different countries. The statement condemns the gangster methods not only of the WRP but also of the French OCI, which was until 1971 the sister organisation of the WRP (then SLL).



Michel Varga is currently leader of the LOR ("Revolutionary Workers' League") of France. He participated in the Hungarian rising in 1956, having, it seems, some illusions in bourgeois democracy at the time. Subsequently he was for 15 years a leader of the OCI.

After expelling Varga and his group, the OCI has denounced him as an agent both of the CIA and of the GPU. While Varga's record is by no means as impeccable as Hansen's, the OCI's denunciations cannot be called other than irresponsible. Certainly there is no adequate evidence. And if the OCI were right on any point, the first question would be why the OCI leadership, with full knowledge, allowed Varga to lead their work in relation to Eastern Europe for so long.

Moreover, the OCI have followed a systematic policy of physical attacks on the militants of the LOR and on militants of other organisations (LCR, LO, Combat Communiste) who have intervened to defend the LOR members.

The OCI's methods are no less poisonous than the WRP's. However, a representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at the international conference, called by LO and other tendencies, which adopted the statement, declined to support the condemnation of the OCI. This position can only be explained as an offshoot of the diplomatic manoeuvrings which the USFI minority ('Leninist-Trotskyist Faction') has been carrying on with the OCI.

In these two cases, those really guilty of foul dealings are the leaders of the WRP and the OCI, who try to solve political problems through vile slander campaigns.

International-Communist League [Britain]; *Lutte Ouvriere* [France]; *Combat Ouvrier* [Antilles]; *Union Africaine des Travailleurs Communistes Internationalistes*; *Spark* [USA]; *Internationale Kommunistische Liga* [Austria]; *Lega Comunista* [Italy]; *Spartacusbund* [Germany].

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