

Revolutionary Communist Youth NEWSLETTER

10 ✂

Number 15

December 1972-January 1973

RCY National Conference— *Revolutionary Regroupment Continues*

On 23-24 November 1972 the Revolutionary Communist Youth held its Second National Conference in New York City, which was attended by 170 students and working-class youth. The high point of the conference was the consummation of the fusion that had been in process between the RCY and the Buffalo Marxist Collective since August. After two full days of political discussion and debate, BMC and RCY caucuses met separately and each voted unanimously to fuse—a decision then unanimously ratified by the Conference delegates.

The RCY's fusion with the BMC comes a little more than a year after the Communist Working Collective-Spartacist League fusion (see *Workers Action* No. 10 and *Workers Vanguard* No. 1). It is a part of a continuing process of the SL/RCY attracting to itself numerous ex-members and sympathizers of the Progressive Labor Party and SDS and winning sections of several Maoist, New Left and feminist groupings (e.g., East Oakland Women, left split from Oakland Women's Liberation; a Marxist-Leninist and a Maoist women's collective in New Orleans; and the Cleveland Marxist Caucus, a fraternal group with the BMC). The BMC-RCY fusion again strikingly confirms the correctness of the SL/RCY Leninist regroupment tactic.

The fusion demonstrates the continued accessibility of many Maoist collectives to confrontation by Trotskyism, as well as the motion of certain

New Left and feminist sectors which can be polarized toward a communist working-class perspective. The key factor in the BMC's qualitative break with its past and the transformation of its subjective revolutionary impulses into a firm and conscious revolutionary commitment was the RCY's intervention at a critical point in the motion of the group.

From Maoism and the New Left to Trotskyism

The BMC's history began with a split from PL's periphery in the summer of 1971. The original core of the BMC objected to PL's philistinism on Marxist education, its reactionary line on women and the family, and its trade union economism and vastly distorted conception of internationalism (PL advises the Vietnamese to standfast against revisionism by not accepting Russian weapons!). The differences became irreconcilable when PL published *Road to Revolution III (RRIII)*. The future BMCers attacked *RRIII* from both the left and the right. While correctly arguing that *RRIII*'s line on the peasantry questioned the basic Marxist conception of the proletariat's vanguard role, the dissidents initially concluded that PL's error was produced by its deviation from orthodox Maoism. Forming the BMC after their break with PL, they entered into a loosely organized group around Bill Epton and the October



Session of Conference

RCY photo

RCY Victory in Bay Area

CCSF Administration Backs Down

Revolutionary Communist Youth has won recognized campus status at the City College of San Francisco. This is an important victory, for which the RCY has been fighting the anti-communist college administration since early September. It is also a valuable precedent for all left tendencies in the state of California. Had the RCY been intimidated by the administration's constant petty harassment, or had it not understood the necessity of a united-front defense, a negative precedent would have been set. Such a precedent could have established the legal groundwork for a witchhunt of the entire left on community colleges throughout California.

Even after the Student Council had approved campus recognition for the RCY, Dean Flanagan and President Harry Buttimer refused recognition and attempted to intimidate the RCY by quoting a series of legal statutes which were not relevant to the case.

The RCY established informational picket lines and rallies to publicize and build support for the case. When, in addition to the picket lines, the American Civil Liberties Union threatened

legal action, the administration backed down. The retreat from their position (which had been called "frankly ridiculous" by the ACLU) should not be interpreted as the "benevolent grace" of a "libertarian" administration. Rather, it represented the only course by which Buttimer and Co. could save their necks from the expensive publicity of an unpopular and untenable legal suit.

Marxists have always understood that bourgeois democracy is a fraud. It is democracy for the ruling class which owns and controls the means of production. For the working class, it means the "freedom" to sell one's labor in order to barely survive. Such "freedom" to choose between exploitation and starvation is no freedom at all.

The RCY correctly understood that the attack was the beginning of a blatant attempt to smash the left on campus. When the capitalists and their agents—in this case the CCSF administration—begin to sense the growing strength of the working-class movement, they are quick to jettison the fraud of bourgeois democracy in their

continued on page 3

League. And at one of their regional meetings they first contacted the founders of the Cleveland Marxist Caucus.

The BMC then merged with the People's News Service, a split from the anarcho-Maoist Niagara Liberation Front. The PNS had made a turn to the working class, but its program continued the Maoist tradition of passive appreciation for "liberation struggles" and the call for "support" to "third-world" people, working people, women and for struggles against political repression. At this time the BMC recruited additional members including the leadership of a local "Maoist-Reichian" group which had collapsed after a frantic summer attempting to intervene in a CWA strike.

Marx, Not Marcus

As the BMC continued its study of Marxism it became increasingly open to Trotskyism. The first BMC member who declared himself a Trotskyist arranged a debate between the National Caucus of Labor Committees and the SL. Describing the debate, the BMC stated:

"What was impressive about the SL presentation for many members was the analysis of the crisis of leadership, and the orientation to struggle for revolutionary leadership in the mass organizations of the class. Strange as it now sounds those were new ideas to us and while it was difficult for leftward-moving Maoists to keep up with a debate between Trotskyists and LC's 'competent economics,' the debate helped us to clarify our opposition to the LC first on the visceral level of rejecting their bloodless and academic sense of revolutionary struggle, and at last to reject them on the basis of their reformist and social-democratic program."

—A *Brief Political History of the BMC*

The BMC began to consolidate around Trotsky's analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet state and his analysis of the Third International after Lenin. Supporting the Transitional Program, it decisively broke with its Maoist past. Continuing its study, the BMC

felt the need to examine the existing American left. Rejecting the reformist, multi-vanguardist Socialist Workers Party immediately, it began a comparative study of the International Socialist, the Workers League and the SL:

"This turn in the organization was an especially critical one for it was our turn to the recognition of organizational continuity in history. We had finally understood *What Is To Be Done?* It was a turn away from Maoism and the New Left which had promised that we could transcend the left 'with all its sectarian squabbling and go directly to the masses.'... We had discovered the importance of historical continuity."

—A *Brief Political History of the BMC*

BMC Rejects IS and WL

After examining the IS, the BMC concluded that the group was an unserious swamp which tailed backward consciousness in the working class, responded opportunistically to every political fad and was organizationally counterposed to the Leninist conception of democratic centralism. For a time, the WL's revolutionary rhetoric plus its pretensions towards a mass press and mass work exerted a strong attraction for the BMC. But talks with the WL, carried on in the same period as the initial contact with the RCY, convinced the BMC of the correctness of the RCY's characterization of the WL as "political bandits." In particular, the BMC rejected the WL's reactionary line on women and the black struggle, its phony internationalism, its adaptation to the backward social consciousness of the class coupled with opportunistic toadying to the labor bureaucracy, and the lies and illusions about the WL "mass" work in the class. It rejected the "mass" press of the WL and came to understand the Leninist character of the SL's *Workers Vanguard* which seeks the penetration of the working class through the most advanced layers rather than tailing after the class at its present level of consciousness.

After preliminary discussions, the

continued on page 2

Letters

France
3 October 1972

Spartacist League
U.S.A.

Dear Comrades,

I am a member of the French CGT (FSM) and, as a union militant who fights for the independence of the unions and as a socialist who fights for socialist democracy as well in my union as in the rest of the world, I support the campaign initiated and led in France by the OCI [Organisation Communiste Internationaliste] for the defense of the communists imprisoned by the Stalinists of Eastern Europe.

I already urged all the American comrades I know to help us in this fight, but I must say that I am rather disappointed by the article you published in the *RCY Newsletter* about "Yugoslavia" [*RCY Newsletter* No. 14, October-November 1972].

So, "it is unfortunate that many Eastern European militants received their first impression of Trotskyism from the U.Sec. revisionists and from the OCI and its Eastern European supporter, Balazs Nagy. The centrists of the OCI and the Pabloite U.Sec. must be defeated politically on an international scale as part of the struggle for the rebirth of the F.I."

Although I am not a member of the OCI, although I perfectly agree with you on the point about the Pabloites (who don't even defend their own militants caught by the Stalinists), I don't agree about the OCI.

Who but them went on fighting for the workers' rights and the socialist democracy in Eastern Europe since 1953? Who but them tried to unite western and eastern proletariats since 1953? Who led the campaign in France and in the world against the slaughter of the Hungarian Soviets, and then, against the "consolidation" in Prague, the "psychiatric" asylums in the USSR and so on? Who but the OCI did act for the liberation of the imprisoned communists in Eastern Europe? It is quite understandable that the communists of those countries join or sympathize with an organization which did fight in a communist way.

You don't seem to appreciate that! But what did you do to save Pachma or to defend Grigorenko, Yaklimovitch or Grinzbourg and what do you do to save Yakir, Huebl, Sabata or Nicolic?

It is easy (even if everybody doesn't do it) to shout "Political revolution! Political revolution!" But what does that mean for the U.S. workers or for the Eastern European workers if you don't show them precisely and in practice what it really means in the U.S.A. or in Eastern Europe, if you don't show what is real communism by fighting for the socialist democracy and the public liberties for workers in the eastern countries?

It's perfectly your right to think that the OCI is centrist (or that some OCI militants only are centrists). It's also perfectly your right to write it and it's your duty to prove it if you can. But it is my right to ask you: "What did you do or what do you intend to do to save the imprisoned communists of Eastern Europe?"

As a member of the French "Comité pour la Libération immédiate des emprisonnés politiques dans les pays de l'Europe de l'Est," I urge the Spartacist League either to join us (write to Alain Challier, 48 rue Louise Michel, 92-Levallois-Perret, France) to act against Stalinism—by fighting for an international worker inquiry commission about the trials and the conditions of imprisonment of the communists of Eastern Europe, or at least, to make other propositions of action if ours don't satisfy you.

Whatever may be our differences,

we MUST UNITE AGAINST STALINISM AND SAVE OUR COMRADES! It is the only way to defend Lenin's socialism and to realize the world workers' revolution.

Communist greetings
J.-P.M.

* * *

New York
9 October 1972

J.-P.M.
France

Dear Comrade M.,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter of 3 October. We in the Spartacist League were also disturbed by the formulation of our youth comrades in the article on Yugoslavia in the last issue of the *RCY Newsletter*, which seemed to place on the same plane the pervasive revisionism of the United Secretariat and what we consider the centrist weaknesses of the OCI whose extent and outcome is by no means yet clear to us. In the September *Workers Vanguard* there appears the article by us which attempts a balanced interim appraisal of positions of the OCI which concern us.

You speak of the defense work undertaken by the OCI and others on behalf of persecuted militants in Eastern Europe. Certainly this activity, carefully separated from the imperialists' attempts to exploit the continuing crimes of Stalinism, must be pursued. But in your letter you twice refer to the persecuted elements simply as "communists" and also refer to them as "our comrades." Certainly from our knowledge of the views of many of the victims they cannot be accurately described as "our communist comrades." This consideration in no way should be taken to imply that we should not be resolute in speaking and acting in defense of the rights of these victims of political persecution, no one of those whom you list being "agents of the West" as the Stalinists claim sometimes.

We will write to the "Committee for the Immediate Liberation of the Political Prisoners in the Eastern European Countries" to which you referred us, asking for information on its guiding principles and its activities, with the desire on our part to assist concretely and materially in the kind of work which you describe this organization as undertaking.

Fraternally,

James Robertson
National Chairman
Spartacist League/U.S.

* * *

France
16 October 1972

James Robertson
U.S.A.

Dear Comrade,

I'd like to thank you for your quick answer to my letter. Of course, we have differences in the appreciation of some facts about the militants imprisoned in Eastern Europe. Being a politically unorganized individual, it is difficult for me to speak about that with your organization: I think it is the OCI's problem and not mine.

However, I think that your decision to contact the "Committee for the Immediate Liberation of the Political Prisoners in the Eastern European Countries" is positive. I hope that the Spartacist League will create such a committee in the U.S.A.: the American workers must know that real communism has nothing [in] common with Stalinist concentration camps and the Eastern European workers need the help of their American comrades.

Once again, thank you for your positive answer.

Communist greetings,
J.-P.M.

Continued from Page 1

... Regroupment

BMC and the RCY signed an agreement to enter into fusion negotiations, which ended successfully at the RCY's National Conference:

"For the BMC with its roots in the anti-authoritarian and anti-historical New Left, the fusion process was a matter of learning to live in revolutionary traditions. The fusion process for the BMC became a study of the living Trotskyist movement, of its splits and fusions, entries and exits, its heroism and disorientation. But at last the BMC was not only studying the living movement, we were part of it; and the hardest and best-learned lessons came from our day-to-day political functioning as Leninists... We are confident that the fusion of the two organizations marks our initial steps taken together toward international proletarian revolution."

—A Brief Political History of the BMC

Building a Communist Youth Movement

During the two-day Conference that preceded the fusion vote, the perspective for building the RCY into a strong communist youth movement was explored in lively discussions. Along with the transformation of the SL into the nucleus of the vanguard party, the RCY must also continue to grow, understanding the historic importance of youth groups as representing a considerable investment in the party's future. Central to the discussion was the Leninist conception of youth groups as training grounds for professional revolutionaries and the role of sound Marxist education which imbues the youth with the principles of workers democracy and communist morality, and a broad, scientific world view.

The need to break from routinist tendencies and function in the spirit of

RCY Newsletter

Editorial Board: Paul Friar (managing editor), Libby Schaefer, Richard Cramer, Reuben Samuels, Stephanie Kamkov.

Production manager: Pat Michaels.

The *RCY Newsletter* is published by the Revolutionary Communist Youth, youth section of the Spartacist League. We seek to build a revolutionary socialist youth organization which can intervene in all social struggles armed with a working-class program, based on the politics of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

Subscriptions, \$.50 for 6 issues. Write RCY, Box 454, Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003.

communist activism was a constant theme at the Convention. The successful agitational campaign carried on by the Bay Area RCY in defense of the RCY's right to exist at San Francisco City College was held up as a model and a guide for future RCY campaigns (see story on page 1). Against narrow workerist notions of some left sects, the RCY referred to Lenin and his advocacy of the need to engage in agitation and propaganda in the student movement. The delegates also considered the need for young workers to take part in the RCY as well as the role of RCY members who take on factory jobs. Spirited discussions of the guiding strategy and particular tactics in RCY activities enabled the young Trotskyists to understand the importance of their own investigation into the pressing questions of Marxist theory and their active implementation in political struggle among students and young workers.

In a discussion on press policy, a perspective was outlined for expanding the *RCY Newsletter* into an eight-page monthly paper during the next year.

Throughout the Conference the RCY affirmed its determination to play a crucial role in the continuing transformation of the Spartacist League into the nucleus of the revolutionary communist party in this country, U.S. section of a reborn Fourth International. ■

SWP/YSA Educational Conference:

Reform, No

The Socialist Workers Party/Young Socialist Alliance demonstrated once again its total abandonment of Trotskyism in favor of outright reformism in a Southern California Regional Educational Conference at UCLA on Nov. 10-12. The Spartacist League and Revolutionary Communist Youth intervened with about 30 people, which represented over one-third of the total attendance—an indication both of the growth of SL/RCY in the recent period and the collapse of the SWP's "mass" pop fronts like NPAC.

Parliamentary "Socialists"

Nowhere of course in the Conference was a speaker scheduled to discuss the situation of the labor movement. Instead emphasis was on the petty-bourgeois feminist and black nationalist movements which the SWP has been tailing for years. In the discussion of "Women's Liberation and the Struggle for Socialism," all three scheduled speakers presented only a program of "struggle" for parliamentary reforms! Jane Harris of the YSA began with an argument for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), asserting that passage of the ERA would mean "profound revolutionary change." Thus the YSA attempts to call the struggle for bourgeois democratic rights a "revolutionary" struggle. But for Marxists, the struggle for such rights is legitimate only insofar as it advances the possibilities of raising a *working-class* program. To struggle solely for bourgeois democratic rights is to surrender communist politics in favor of liberalism, which is precisely the YSA's course. Even in reformist terms, the passage of ERA

would benefit only bourgeois women, while working-class women would lose protective labor legislation, unless the ERA was explicitly amended to extend protective legislation to all workers.

The second speaker, Jessica Starr, argued for abortion law reform, noting that the challenging of abortion laws "means challenging the foundations of capitalist society." While hypocritically asserting that "as socialists we stand for free abortion on demand," she concluded that this demand was not correct now because it would drive away women's liberationists. Finally Mathilde Zimmerman, past National Coordinator of WONAAC and San Diego SWP Organizer, argued for community-controlled, 24-hour child care and condemned Nixon for his recent veto of a Child Care Act. While noting this would only be a reform of capitalism, she concluded that "to fight to change conditions of your lives is to join the struggle."

In the discussion, after repeated attempts by the YSA to ignore the large SL/RCY contingent, an RCY spokesman finally was given the floor. She noted that the YSA program was "outright reformism" and pointed to the YSA hypocrisy of suppressing vital transitional demands like "Free Abortion on Demand" in order to get close to liberal politicians like Bella Abzug. She noted that Mathilde Zimmerman even helped write Abzug's Congressional bill to repeal anti-abortion laws, a bill which would do nothing to undermine the built-in class bias of capitalism which makes even legal abortions unavailable to poor working-class women.

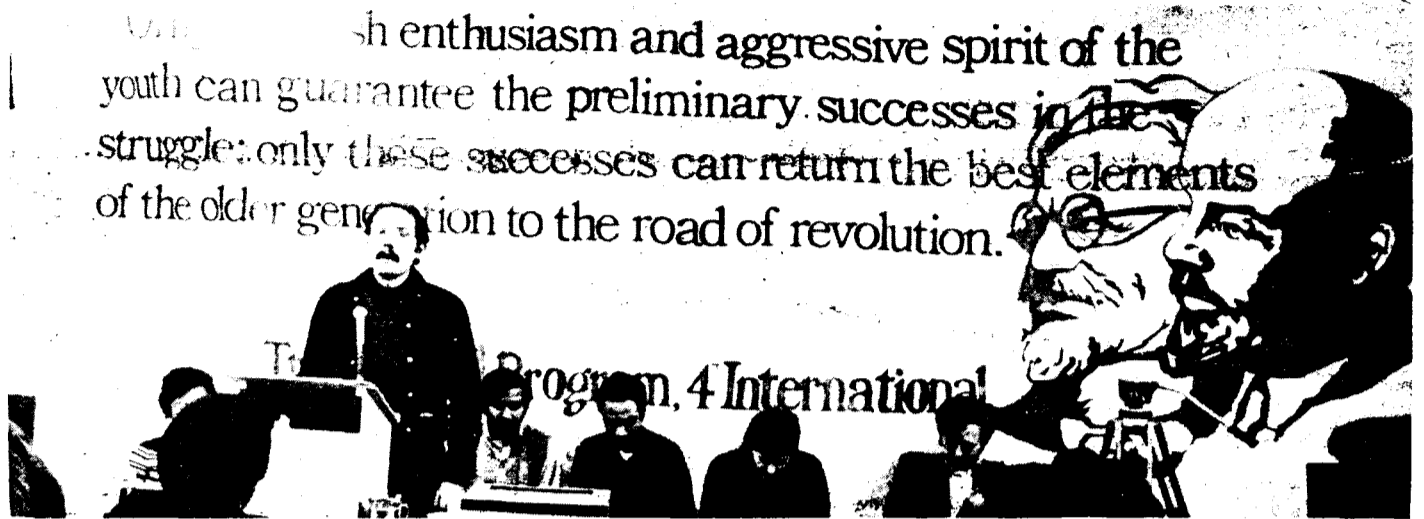
WL/YS Labor Party-Youth Conferences:

EMPTY FRAUD

In Chicago on 21-22 October 1972, the Workers League and the Young Socialists held a "National Conference for a Labor Party Now!" and a "National Preliminary Conference for the Construction of a Revolutionary Youth Movement." The twisting of reality which marked even the conference titles was to continue throughout the weekend.

Meeting in a darkened auditorium with the key speakers spot-lighted, WL head Tim Wohlforth presented "The Case for a Labor Party" to a passive audience of about 300. He outlined the key task of the WL/YS as "the construction of the Labor Party"—which, as his speech made clear, means to the WL/YS: tailing after the labor bureaucrats, constant line changes, and attacking anyone who dared inquire about such questions as the special oppression of blacks and women. Lest anyone misunderstand this, two members of the audience who asked questions about these matters were sharply denounced—a woman for "hostility to the working class," a black for "divisive nationalism." Wohlforth's speech, which leaned heavily on the creation of the Republican Party and the Civil War, was designed to avoid examination of crucial political problems. A discussion period was scheduled to follow the speech, but no one came forward until Wohlforth, in a screaming rage, ordered WL/YS members to "discuss."

Lucy St. John, editor of the WL's *Bulletin*, spoke next on the plans to transform the weekly paper into a daily (described as a sort of *New York Daily News* of the left), to lead the working class through the stormy attacks soon to come. While hysterically predicting that the ruling class is about to throw off the shackles of bourgeois democracy and smash the trade unions, the WL complacently expects that the daily *Bulletin* will come rolling off a new



3 January 1972 Bulletin announces founding conference of Young Socialists. Ten months later, Young Socialists hold pre-conference.

\$88,000 press miraculously untouched by the capitalist storm troopers!

Wohlforth Learns from the Bureaucracy

The difficulty with an organization based on cynical deception is that reality is always impinging. In an attempt to keep truth out, the WL leadership must attempt to seal off the members and to plug all holes where a stray piece of truth might slip through. At the publicly-advertised "open" Conference, as usual, Wohlforth insisted that all "hostile" political tendencies must be excluded. Thus, as part of the "class-wide attempt to build a Labor Party," all identified members or friends of the SL/RCY and International Socialists were "escorted" to the door by WL goons. To better enable the WL to present its politics as "Trotskyism," and to suppress or flagrantly rewrite its own wretched history, the WL/YS must protect its followers from any contact with left-wing political opponents (characterized as "middle-class

rat groups"). This characteristic WL policy is a betrayal of a key Trotskyist element—workers democracy: political struggle, not exclusion and violence, among working-class organizations.

The key to the real politics of the WL/YS is the attempt to make a bloc with the labor bureaucracy. Toward this end, the WL lauds statements by various labor fakers refusing to back McGovern and even threatening to form a "labor party," glossing over the fact that the purpose of such rhetoric is to strengthen the old-line wing of the Democratic Party, the Humphreys and Jacksons, in order to re-cement the traditional ties between the labor bureaucrats and the Democrats. It is for this reason that the WL ridicules and pushes aside the questions of racial and sexual oppression (as it once proclaimed the irrelevance of opposition to U.S. imperialism in Vietnam in its short-lived front group "Trade Unionists for a Labor Party"). The WL

wants a "labor party" with a program acceptable to the war-hawk, anti-communist administration has done everything possible to harass and intimidate the only genuinely revolutionary tendency on this campus. But we weren't going to be intimidated. We published leaflet after leaflet exposing the falsity of bourgeois democracy that cannot even honor the authority of their own Student Government who ruled in a 9-to-2 decision that RCY should be legal. The administration was right to be afraid. The RCY, youth section of the Spartacist League, will now be able to concentrate our efforts to fight for our program of revolutionary socialism, based on the politics of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky." ■

Wohlforth today can falsify his past and seal off his membership. But the time is rapidly coming when the history of the class struggle will be written in the blood of both capitalists and workers. Such history cannot so easily be suppressed. The WL which is today buffeted about by every little breeze will be unable to survive the weather ahead when the class struggle increases the storm a hundredfold.

The WL, if it continues its present course, may very well end up with the bureaucracy on one side of the barricades. But it will be the wrong side. ■

Revolution

Instead of struggling for a communist women's movement through a program tied into the overall working-class struggle for revolution, the YSA seeks to tie women to the bourgeois feminist movement of Abzug, Steinem, et al.

Norman Thomas Lives— In the SWP

The SWP's desire to become an American party of social-democratic reformism became apparent in the Saturday evening session, "What if Socialists Won the Elections?" by Dan Styron, LA Organizer for the SWP. Styron argued that if "socialists" were elected, "capitalism couldn't function." While attempting orthodoxy by noting that elections don't decide fundamental questions, he then went on to state that one of the first acts of the "socialist" government on coming to power would be to demobilize the army! This social-democratic conception denies the feminist analysis of the capitalist state as an unreformable instrument of coercion which must be smashed before the working class can come to power. The communist-led working class comes to power only when the capitalist army has been disintegrated and its working-class elements won over. The idea of an elected "socialist" President dissolving the army is an indication of the SWP's orientation toward reformist electoral politics.

Before the discussion period an RCY spokesman stood up and protested the blatant disregard of the SL/RCY in the previous discussion period. Despite being immediately surrounded by SWP goons, he finished his protest

and sat down. But again in cowardly fashion the chairman refused to recognize SL/RCY hands despite the fact that they made up over one-third of the audience. Finally at the end one RCY spokesman was recognized and he ripped into the SWP's history of betrayals and class collaboration via NPAC pop-front and peace crawls and the total abandonment of a working-class perspective. This brought a standing ovation from the large SL/RCY contingent. Styron's weak answer included the boast of running the "biggest socialist election campaign since Debs" and the snide comment, "if we're so bad, then why are you here?" We are here, "comrade" Styron, to finish off the remnants of the SWP/YSA so no one will be fooled by the fake "Trotskyist" label you still carry. ■

Documents of the Buffalo Marxist Collective

50¢

Includes:

- A Brief Political History of the BMC
- BMC Programmatic Documents
- Why We Didn't Join the WL/YS

Write:

RCY, Box 454, Cooper Sta.,
New York, N.Y. 10003

Continued from Page 1

RCY Victory

attempt to destroy the working-class groups. The RCY realized that it was to be the first, rather than the only, group at CCSF to be attacked. Consequently, the defense effort would be one for the entire left. The RCY proposed the formation of a united front for defense to all working-class groups and all others still willing to pay at least lip service to democracy at CCSF.

Of all the left groups on campus, only the Young Socialist Alliance managed even token support to the RCY defense campaign. Progressive Labor-led SDS (busily tail-ending "lesser evil" bourgeois politics) was "unable" to assist the RCY defense effort. Ironically, SDS itself has until recently been excluded from both the Berkeley and UCLA campuses (see "SFCC Administration Bans Reds: RCY Leads Fight Against Cold-Warriors," *Workers Vanguard* No. 13, November 1972, for further details).

The sudden reversal by the campus administration ended the stepped-up campaign of the Ad Hoc Committee to Defend the RCY. The Committee had scheduled a week of activities to build support for the case, which included a campus-wide defense meeting, an informational picket line and a public meeting with the press at Buttimer's office demanding clarification on the RCY's status. But the strengthened campaign was to have been the culmination of previous weeks of picket lines, rallies and leafletting in support of the case. As CCSF

RCY President Sue Miles declared:

"We have won a victory at the CCSF campus. This blatantly anti-communist administration has done everything possible to harass and intimidate the only genuinely revolutionary tendency on this campus. But we weren't going to be intimidated. We published leaflet after leaflet exposing the falsity of bourgeois democracy that cannot even honor the authority of their own Student Government who ruled in a 9-to-2 decision that RCY should be legal. The administration was right to be afraid. The RCY, youth section of the Spartacist League, will now be able to concentrate our efforts to fight for our program of revolutionary socialism, based on the politics of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky." ■

subscribe

RCY Newsletter
\$.50/YEAR

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable/mail to:
RCY, Box 454, Cooper Station,
New York, N.Y. 10003

NCLC Flops in South

New Solidarity (23-27 October 1972), newspaper of the National Caucus of Labor Committees, reports correctly that the Southern left failed to adopt the NCLC's "right-to-organize" strategy. A look at the Conference will demonstrate why. *New Solidarity* distorts the position of the Spartacist League/Revolutionary Communist Youth at the Southern Conference, falsely labelling as "Shachtmanite" the SL/RCY's Leninist realization of the crucial need for communist work in the trade unions, the only existing mass organizations of the working class.

The SL/RCY was given a preview of what to expect at the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) Southern Conference when we contacted an NCLC'er about details of the Conference. We were told that Northerners would not be allowed to speak at the Southern Conference (!) because it was "task-oriented" for people working in the South. While the SL/RCY had planned to send a contingent of comrades involved in southern work, plus a few Yankees, we were astonished at this blatant demonstration of anti-Marxist, parochial, southern exceptionalism, motivated by a fear of political debate with "hard" leftist tendencies, in particular the revolutionary Leninists of the SL/RCY. The South, an integral part of American capitalism, cannot be dealt with as an isolated unit; the "task" of southern communists is the construction of a unified revolutionary leadership of the U.S. working class.

The NCLC could not somehow bring itself to enforce its Yankee gag rule; all we heard about Yankees at the Conference was one muttered comment by Jim Rumley about the "northern" Spartacist League and Rumley's southern credentials. The Conference itself, held near York, South Carolina, on October 7-8, was a complete farce: a shambles of failed blocs, rotten maneuverings, ending in total disintegration.

The first session began with a panel debate among the NCLC, the New American Movement (NAM) and the SL/RCY on socialist strategy, focusing on the South. Rumley presented the usual NCLC "strike support committees" strategy proposal, which appeared this time under the guise of a "right-to-organize movement" in the South. Despite its name, the "right-to-organize movement" abandons the crucial struggle to extend massive union organization to the South, which depresses both wages and working-class struggle in the rest of the country by being a low-wage refuge for runaway shops. Such a struggle, aimed at combatting runaways, the open shop and racial discrimination, would bring the

specially oppressed black workers of the South into prominence in the leadership not only of their southern white brothers but of the working class as a whole.

The underlying concept of the right-to-organize movement is that it is impossible to organize any more unions in the South, but "one's and two's" of advanced workers can be drawn into the "movement" on the basis of the organizing slogan. They would then move in to lead the southern working class to socialism with the southern workers being the vanguard element in the American working class as a whole (Rumley, *The Coming Revolt of Southern Labor*, pp. 14-15). Presented as a particularist southern strategy, the NCLC later admitted that it in fact represented the NCLC's national strategy of consciously abstaining from the fight for communist leadership in the trade unions based on a revolutionary program. Instead they attempt to construct organizing committees parallel to and outside the already existing mass organizations of the class, united around a lowest-common-denominator economist program. The organizing committees would include on an equal basis the employed, unemployed, welfare recipients, students and other members of the "non-ruling-class population," in rejection of the Leninist conception of working-class leadership.

Harry Boyt, from the New Left graveyard New American Movement, which had officially endorsed the Conference, gave lip service to "fighting imperialism, male chauvinism and racism," but failed to present even the outline of a coherent programmatic solution to these ills of capitalism. NAM admitted that work within the unions was valuable, but failed to situate it in terms of priorities, and failed to present any conception for the form and content of that work.

The Spartacist spokesman, Joe Vetter from New Orleans, outlined the SL's view that the crucial question for the working class is the construction of a Leninist vanguard party, not NCLC-type coalitions and "united fronts." This party will be constructed through ideological struggle within the left, through the struggle for communist leadership in the unions, and through the struggle for a labor party based on the Trotskyist Transitional Program, the revolutionary program for our epoch.

In the floor discussion that followed, the NCLC slavishly kowtowed to NAM ("theirs was the only other serious presentation") to which NAM spokesman Boyt responded in a conspicuously nonchalant manner. SL/RCY spokesmen counterposed the struggle to construct the leadership for a successful seizure of state power by the proletariat to the reformist mud of the NCLC and programless sloganeering of NAM.

Enter the Maoists . . .

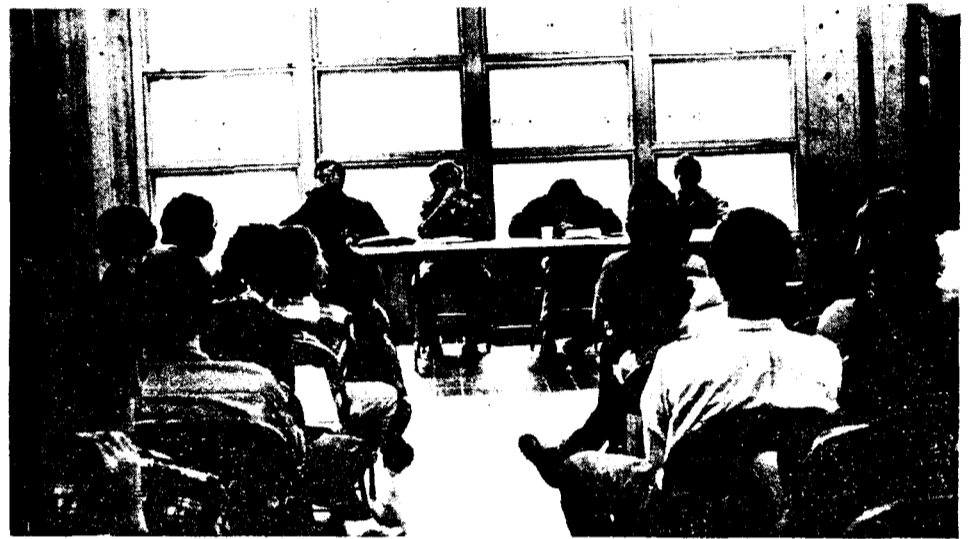
Two Maoist groups, the October League (OL) and the Revolutionary Union (RU) asked to make statements to the group. The RU denounced the Conference as "Trotskyite," referring to the SL and the NCLC as "two pigs in a poke." The OL protested the fact that the NCLC's paper *New Solidarity* had announced that OL members would attend the Conference when they had never indicated any such thing. The NCLC has a tradition of inflating the success of its "united fronts" through dishonestly announcing the support of groups which never agreed to participate in them! The OLe and RUers then left, calling for all "serious and honest revolutionaries" to meet with them at the dinner break. The floor discussion resumed with the NCLC denouncing the Maoists as religious sects. The SL/RCY dealt politically

with the question of Maoism and the contradiction between the subjective revolutionary impulses of many Maoists and their adherence to the class collaborationist methodology and practice of Stalinism.

. . . Exit NAM

After the dinner break NAM announced that it was walking out of the Conference because the discussion was not "fruitful" and because the NCLC did not address itself to "international questions." One NCLC'er after another got up to tearfully reproach Boyt for his withdrawal and coax him to stay. An ex-CP NCLC'er from Baltimore stooped so low as to appeal to Boyt by saying he was "speaking now as a member of the Third World," and admitted

Maoists and most of the independents, almost no one attended the second-day session of the NCLC Conference except the NCLC and members of the SL/RCY. Beginning the morning debate on the elections, Nina Ogden from the NCLC attacked as abstentionist socialists who do not run electoral campaigns like the NCLC Kaufman campaign in Baltimore. Libby Schaefer began a presentation for the SL/RCY which was to have dealt with the question of the labor party, the role of the trade union bureaucracy and the relation of the left to the McGovern campaign. She started to discuss the Kaufman campaign with the intention of explaining how Kaufman's expulsion from the Spartacist League in 1967 for signing a class-collaborationist leaflet calling for



New Solidarity

Panel on socialist strategy at NCLC Southern Conference. Left to right: Charles Henry (NCLC), Joe Vetter (SL), Harry Boyt (NAM) and Jim Rumley (NCLC).

that "there has been a moratorium on international questions in the Labor Committee." No sooner had Boyt left the room than the NCLC'ers did a breathtakingly swift flipflop and got up to denounce the "circus performance" of NAM, which only hours ago they had proclaimed the "only other serious group" present.

It had become clear that NAM had been in a rotten bloc with the October League and Revolutionary Union for some time before the Conference, for the sole purpose of temporary anti-NCLC maneuvers. Rather than staying to directly confront the NCLC in political debate, they used the Conference to siphon off the independents to their own insulated meeting where they would be safe from criticism.

Maoists Fail to Exclude SL/RCY

When a Spartacist member entered the Maoist/NAM meeting, the OL and RU moved to have her excluded. Two members of a group called the Socialist Union spoke in her defense. The Maoists withdrew the motion, presumably afraid to alienate "center" elements. The interest in her comments about Chinese foreign policy made the Maoists' "Trotskyite"-baiting difficult, forcing rabid anti-Trotskyist OLe and Skillman to say at the end of the meeting, "We don't hate Trots as people, we just hate their ideas." It was decided to continue the Maoist meeting the following day, parallel to the NCLC Conference.

The motion to exclude us was reintroduced the next day, and this time it passed with 7 voting in favor, 5 against and 14 abstentions! Informal discussions after the meeting confirmed (as the number of abstentions indicated) that there remained considerable interest in revolutionary Trotskyism among the Maoists, ex-Maoists and "critical" Maoists present. Plans were made for SL/RCY visits to a couple of southern groups for the purpose of intensive discussions about Trotskyism, Maoism and Stalinism.

As a result of the exodus of NAM, the

"Negotiations Now" in Vietnam was politically consistent with his later path into the NCLC. She got as far as "Kaufman was expelled from the Spartacist League for..." when Steve Pepper of the NCLC, allegedly the chairman of the meeting, ran to the front of the room. He screamed that the SL was only trying to disrupt the Conference and that we had to stick to "relevant" debates on strategy. Schaefer objected strongly to his frenzied harassment and called for a vote on his motion. Not only did Pepper refuse to call for a vote but he refused to specify the meaning of his ruling—i.e., that the chair should have complete power to rule anything he did not like politically out of order.

NCLC Adjourns Conference Early

Finally, Pepper stated that if we could not comply with his procedure, they would have to adjourn the Conference. After some more discussion, NCLC'er Dick Sober moved for an immediate adjournment which all the NCLC'ers voted for. The NCLC then called for all those who wanted to be involved in the "right-to-organize movement" to meet with them in another room, thus making it clear that their prattling about "disruption" and "relevance" was nothing but a cynical ruse to exclude the revolutionary communists from the rest of the Conference. NCLC'ers who were confronted with this later did not deny it.

Members of the SL and RCY abstained on the adjournment motion, recognizing it to be an admission of defeat. Like the Maoists before them, the NCLC was forced to hold its own separate meeting to protect its reformist politics from political attack. The SL's exposure of the NCLC's bankruptcy at the Conference is a step forward for the working-class movement, since the NCLC's New Left pop-front politics are an obstacle to the revolutionary regroupment of pro-working-class forces, which alone can build a real proletarian movement in the South. ■

RCY Local Directory

ATLANTA: RCY, c/o Spartacist, P.O. Box 7686, Atlanta, Ga. 30309.
 BERKELEY: See San Francisco.
 BOSTON: RCY, P.O. Box 137, Somerville, Mass. 02144, or call (617) 547-6670.
 BUFFALO: RCY, c/o People's News Service, Box 6, Norton Union, S.U.N.Y., Buffalo, New York 14214.
 CHICAGO: RCY c/o SL, Box 6471, Main P.O., Chicago, Ill. 60680, or call (312) 643-4394.
 LOS ANGELES: RCY, Box 66403, Mar Vista Station, Los Angeles, Ca. 90066.
 NEW ORLEANS: RCY, c/o SL, Box 51634, Main P.O., New Orleans, La. 70151.
 NEW YORK: RCY, Box 454, Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003, or call (212) 925-2426.
 SAN DIEGO: RCY, P.O. Box 22052, University City Station, San Diego, Ca. 92122.
 SAN FRANCISCO: RCY, c/o RMC, P.O. Box 40574, San Francisco, Ca. 94140.
 WASHINGTON, D.C.—BALTIMORE: 1928 Rosemary Hill Drive, Apt. 2, Silver Springs, Md. 20910, or call (301) 585-7430.