

SPARTACIST

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

MARCH 1965

FREE

Report to Our Readers:

SPARTACIST EDITOR SUBPOENAED

BY "HARLEM RIOT" GRAND JURY

On February 8, the editor of the SPARTACIST, James Robertson, was subpoenaed to appear before the New York State Grand Jury which is seeking a communist conspiracy behind last summer's so-called Harlem Riots. A New York City red squad cop served the subpoena while Robertson was in a picket line protesting this witch-hunting Grand Jury. Comrade Robertson was "commanded to appear before the Grand Jury" on Monday, February 15, but the Jury was unable to get a quorum so he was called back for Wednesday, two days later.

The involvement of the Spartacist group was the first widening of the inquiry beyond the Progressive Labor Movement. We stated in our New York Spartacist Committee leaflet calling for a protest demonstration against the Grand Jury the apparent motives of the authorities in picking out the Spartacist group for legal entanglement along with the PLM:

"The SPARTACIST editor has been dragged into the witch hunt because of our detailed exposure of the police over the riots last summer; our determined defense of Bill Epton and Progressive Labor against legal intimidation and persecution; and our initiation last summer of the militant Harlem Solidarity Committee which rallied working class support in New

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SUPPORT THE APRIL 17 MARCH ON WASHINGTON

TO END THE WAR IN VIET NAM!

York's garment center for the people of Harlem during the police riots."

Projected Policy As a Witness

The Spartacist group is fortunate in having as its attorneys Conrad Lynn and his partner, Gene Ann Condon, with whom an effective and principled set of guide lines was worked out for the Grand Jury appearance.

As a general consideration, one must expect that testimony will find its way into the hands of the FBI and other police agencies, there to be used for the harassment of people, loss of jobs, etc. In addition, in a case where "conspiracy to advocate" indictments are being sought, the mere mention in the most innocent circumstances of another individual places that person in grave jeopardy.

At the same time the Spartacist group has no reason or desire to conceal either its political views or its actions. Quite the contrary; should its officers be sent to jail for refusal to testify, we want it crystal clear that such punishment is exclusively for refusal to drag in the names of innocent people or to render false testimony.

Using the policy arrived at as a guide, Robertson made several valuable points in the course of his appearance before the Grand Jury:

- (1) Robertson has never heard Bill Epton advocate acts of violence and terrorism; moreover, since Comrade Epton is a declared Marxist such advocacy would be in fundamental contradiction to his beliefs.
- (2) This likewise applies concerning the two other officers of PL, Milton Rosen and Fred Jerome.
- (3) By contrasting the reality of the Harlem Solidarity Committee with the lurid testimony of Red Squad cop Fritz O. Behr before the State Supreme Court last summer, Behr's credibility as a witness is undermined.
- (4) The New York City cops, not communists, provoked the riots last summer.

Still Threatened

While Robertson was prepared to himself surrender his right to silence under the Fifth Amendment by answering any legitimate question, his rights were taken away by his being granted "immunity from prosecution" for his non-existent part in starting the Harlem Riots. During the hearing Assistant DA Joseph Phillips, who runs the interrogations before this Grand Jury, chose not to ask Robertson any irrelevant or improper question for which refusal to answer must be made. However, it is by no means certain that the authorities are through with the Spartacist group. In the current atmosphere, intensified by an alleged Statue of Liberty bomb plot and the very real assassination of Malcolm X, Robertson or others may again be called before this Jury or legally harassed in other ways.

It Is Necessary To Fight!

The defense of Bill Epton, charged with criminal anarchy, and of the others jailed for contempt, indicted or threatened is an unavoidable responsibility for all those who call themselves radicals or militants or simple civil libertarians.

The Epton case contains many crucial opportunities, any one of which alone would be important:

- to throw back in the face of the "liberal" Wagner machine its attempt to make the PLM and others the "Harlem Riot" scapegoats;
- to place the blame for the "riots" where it belongs--on a provocative police force goading the poverty-stricken and oppressed;
- to affirm the right of the Negro people in the Northern ghettos to organize with leaders of their own choosing;
- to stop the use of the Grand Jury as a pure and simple witch hunting device--one which has already jailed CCNY coeds and others having no relationship to Harlem and which threatens many more;
- to smash the "criminal anarchism" law as the threat to civil liberties it is.

For more information about what you can do to help the Epton case and to contribute financially, write the defense organization, Committee to Defend Resistance to Ghetto Life, CERGL for short, at: Room 617, 1 Union Square, New York, N.Y. 10003.

SPARTACIST

17 APRIL 1965

**STATEMENT ON
VIETNAM**

The facts about the war in Vietnam are now generally known. Everyone is aware that the U.S. government is carrying on a war against peasant-supported guerrillas, and is supporting a series of unpopular governments; it is now obvious that the U.S. is losing that war. Three questions remain to be answered: Why was the U.S. in Vietnam in the first place? Why did it attack North Vietnam? What solution to the Vietnamese situation should we support?

Why Is the U.S. in Vietnam?

The foreign policy of the U.S. government, everywhere, at all times and regardless of which party is in power, has been to preserve the interests of American capitalism abroad. With no major financial investments in Indochina, the U.S. was at first reluctant to become involved in the war. It was not until after the Chinese Revolution in 1949 that the United States began substantial support to the French effort. The Chinese Revolution tore out of the world capitalist economy one of the choice arenas for American capital investment. This loss, coupled with the example China gave to all other colonial nations, was a warning to United States ruling circles to take measures to curb the expansion of the colonial revolution. *American intervention in Vietnam was, therefore, part and parcel of the strategy of waging ceaseless war against struggles for economic and political independence by the Asian peoples, most directly influenced by the Chinese Revolution.*

This war is waged in alliance with local landlords and capitalists. Most landlords in Vietnam, as in most colonial countries, are urban or foreign businessmen who have invested capital in land. The peasants cannot take land away from the landlords without overturning the entire capitalist economic structure. Support for agrarian reform in Vietnam directly conflicts with U.S. defense of capitalism and lines the peasants up against foreign imperialists as well as the native capitalist landlords. Therefore the struggle becomes anti-imperialist. The weakness of the capitalist-landlord class has forced it to look for foreign allies in its struggle against the peasants. As the self-appointed policeman for the entire capitalist world, the U.S. has allied itself with these capitalist-landlord elements in order to use South Vietnam as a strategic base in Southeast Asia. Despite their differences, the U.S. government and Vietnamese property owners have in common their defense of capitalism. In accord with the "domino" theory,

the U.S. government maintains that the "fall" of Vietnam would "endanger" other areas—of course, it is quite correct. The "danger" will come when the masses in these other areas realize their strength and overthrow their ruling classes, as they will, inspired by the example of revolutionary victory in Vietnam.

Why Did the U.S. Attack North Vietnam?

The U.S. government falsely claims that it wants to make the Northern government stop intervening in S. Vietnam. But while the Hanoi government, to its credit, has given aid to the National Liberation Front, that aid cannot be held decisive in the struggle. In fact, the truth of the situation is the exact opposite of the U.S. claim: *by threatening to level the cities of North Vietnam, the U.S. government wants to force Hanoi*

SUNDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 1965

**"PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
VIET NAM****HANOI, NORTH VIET NAM:****SPARTACIST IN FULLEST SOLIDARITY WITH THE DEFENSE OF YOUR COUNTRY AGAINST ATTACK BY UNITED STATES IMPERIALISM. HEROIC STRUGGLE OF VIETNAMESE WORKING PEOPLE FURTHERS THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.****SPARTACIST EDITORIAL BOARD"**

to intervene in restraint of the NLF. The basic fact which has now been spelled out in the headlines is that the U.S.'s dirty war in Vietnam is already lost. Unless the NLF can somehow be persuaded not to exploit its advantage the U.S. position will soon collapse.

What Solution Should We Support?

Providing the U.S. can be deterred from expansion of the war into North Vietnam and perhaps attacking China, the real courses of action open to the American government are either a negotiated or unconditional withdrawal.

There are those who urge the U.S. government to negotiate a "neutral" Vietnam, ruled by a "coalition" government. This would mean attempting to get the NLF leadership to sell out the Vietnamese working people by accepting a solution that would leave the property-owning classes undisturbed. But the dynamic of the struggle in Vietnam is the struggle against these classes and

their American allies. Thus a "neutral" solution to the war would be at the expense of the peasantry and against their wishes. Senator Morse has proposed some form of neutralization to be guaranteed by the policing of an international body such as the UN. But the side that the UN takes in these situations is determined by the fact that the UN is still controlled by the United States in the last analysis, as proven by its role in the misnamed "peace keeping" operation in the Congo. *The simple fact is that there is a struggle between contending classes in South Vietnam which is not going to be stopped by such an outside force.* There can be no real neutrality between the gouging landlord and the revolutionary peasant, between the revolutionary worker and the luxury-loving imperialist agent who exploits him. In such situations no international body can be a "peace keeping" force but will inevitably tend to take sides in the internal class conflict. Thus neutralization as a solution to the problem is neither desirable nor—as the example of neighboring Laos proves—possible.

To withdraw all U.S. troops and leave Vietnam for the Vietnamese is the only solution which will end the war in Vietnam and bring about a progressive solution to the social problems facing the Vietnamese people. In 1954 the Viet Minh controlled virtually the whole country, having decisively defeated the French. However, at the conference table in Geneva, the Russian and Chinese governments signed an accord giving half of Vietnam back to the imperialists, on the basis of a U.S.-backed promise to hold free elections in 1956. This sell-out must not be allowed to happen again. *Self-determination for the Vietnamese people requires the immediate, complete, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces!* ■

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TO WIN THIS STRIKE . . . !

The capitalist Establishment is subjecting the welfare workers to one of the most intense education processes you can undergo--a hard-fought strike. Learn from it! Use the lessons to win the strike and guide your future actions.

Your Enemies

Most of you probably voted for the hypocritical Wagner Administration. By now it is kicking in an open door to point out that by the test of deeds, not words, the most "Liberal and left-wing" New York City Democratic machine is a crass and corrupt agency of the capitalist class against you.

The metropolitan press has done its duty as expected, from the Daily News' sensationalizing a fake story of strikers breaking a lady scab's leg to the dignified anti-strike line of the N.Y. Times.

Behind the politicians and the kept press stand the courts and the police, whose humane impartiality has to be directly experienced to be fully appreciated (ask around in Harlem). Do not be lulled into any false sense of security about the police. If the occasion arises they will behave savagely. The forces of "law and order" are the repository of the ultimate sanction of force against you: to jail your leaders, break your picket lines, smash your strike.

Your 'Friends'

Those who profess to have at heart the best interests of the welfare staff are a motley collection. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, acting as Wagner's pawn, has managed to come up with an incredible accusation that the strikers, in good part Negro and Jewish, are themselves white racists and anti-semites.

Bayard Rustin and associated respectable radical celebrities like Michael Harrington and Norman Thomas have favored you with support and advice. Beware! The Civil Rights movement is today a shambles, stopped dead in its tracks, through the action of men such as these in confining the Negro struggle within limits acceptable to the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

From the official labor leadership Paul Hall and the N.Y. Central Labor Council invited themselves in to partake of the direction of your strike. Everyone having the slightest familiarity with the life and history of Hall's Seafarers International Union, or who recalls the shabby role of the Labor Council in undermining the last teachers' strike, must treat this support with the greatest reserve and caution.

(over)

You and Your Leadership

The outstanding militancy, unity, and determination shown by the workers on strike is literally your greatest weapon to win from the City substantial gains in working conditions and wages. Your solidarity has managed so far to stave off the use of force against you; it has made nought of slanders by the press and Wagner's hirelings; it compels the City administration to bargain with you. Your strength has so far permitted you to make more use of your "well-wishers" than they of you. It has brought you financial support and picket line participation from other unions and is the key to what you need most from the labor movement--simple respect for your picket lines.

Only when you are actually striking can your strength be felt. That is why every proposal by the Wagner machine centers on your return to work. Once you are back on the job, the employer automatically has the advantage in dealing with you and your demands. To win the strike, your return to work must hinge upon significant, tangible gains and without any kind of victimization of the strikers.

Your own leaders, inexperienced, on entering into this strike, have suddenly found themselves the objects of enormous pressures, many-sided and some even subtle, to push them into unwarranted concessions. Your vigilance and will-to-win reinforce your leadership.

Not for Yourselves Alone!

Victory in this strike equals a powerful union in the Welfare Department; but the gains will not be yours alone. Very directly the welfare clients, all other N.Y. City employees, and welfare workers across the country will benefit. Most broadly, winning this strike will stimulate militant organization generally among government and white-collar workers by showing that laws such as Condon-Wadlin prohibiting strikes "against the government" can be smashed in action.

Labor Party

From your strike experience the need should be obvious for a political party of labor to replace the obscenity of the Democratic Party doing the job of the racist capitalist class while receiving the support of the working people. A mayoralty campaign is coming soon in New York--Let's have a Labor-Negro candidate running against Wagner and the Democratic Party!

Class Struggle and You

The real nature and relationship of social forces so openly revealed by the Welfare strike is only accountable in terms of class struggle. The other side has always known and used this fact of life. Marxism is nothing else than that systematic understanding such that our side will not each time have to learn all over again and never go beyond a few elementary lessons.

Instead, the aim of the Marxists is to apply accumulated experience and wisdom to each fight and relate each to the broadest revolutionary aims and social goals.

N.Y.C. Spartacist Committee
18 January 1965

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