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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
FACT SHEET

A STORY IS USUALLY BEST TOLD BY USING THE WORDS OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED. IN THIS CASE, THE STORY CONCERNS THE AIMS, GOALS, TACTICS AND STRATEGY OF THE S.W.P., WHICH WAS GENERALLY DESCRIBED IN AN EARLIER FACT SHEET.

I. SWP GOALS:

J. Cannon trial

" I WOULD SAY THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL AIM OF THE PARTY(SWP) THEN AND NOW IS TO POPULARIZE THE DOCTRINES OF MARXIAN SOCIALISM AND TO AID AND LEAD IN THE WORK OF TRANSFORMING THE SOCIETY FROM A CAPITALIST TO A COMMUNIST BASIS." (1,12)

" THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC MEASURES TO BE TAKEN BY THE WORKERS STATE IS THE EXPROPRIATION AND SOCIALIZATION, WITHOUT COMPENSATION, OF ALL MONOPOLIES IN INDUSTRY AND LAND, OR MINES, FACTORIES AND SHIPPING, ALL PUBLIC UTILITIES, RAILROADS, AND AIRLINE SYSTEMS, AND OTHER ORGANIZED MEANS OF COMMUNICATION, ALL BANKS, CREDIT AGENCIES, AND GOLD STORES, AND ALL OTHER SUPPLIES AND SERVICES THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNEMTN FINDS IT NECESSARY TO TAKE OVER IN ORDER TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY." (1, 75)

II. WHY IS THE SWP INTERESTED IN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT?

" NO MATTER WHAT NEGROES SAY. . .U.S. CAPITALISM IS NOT AND HAS NEVER BEEN ANY FRIEND OF NEGROES, AND NEGROES ARE NO NATURAL FRIENDS OF U.S. CAPITALISM. WHITE CAPITALISM IS SIMPLY REJECTED ALONG WITH THE REST OF WHITE SOCIETY." (3,9)

" NEGROES AE ALREADY A VANGAURD. THEY ARE MORE RADICALIZED THAN WHITE WORKERS. THEY ARE MORE READY TO FIGHT AND SACRIFICE AND DIE. . ." (4,41)

". . . THE NEGRO PEOPLE, ALTHOUGH A MINORITY, CAN, WITH CONSISTENTLY REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP, LEAD THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS IN THE REVOLUTION THAT WILL ABOLISH CAPITALISM." (4,39)

III. WHAT ARE THE SWP GOALS FOR THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT?

" WE ARE CONVINVED THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WILL ELIMINATE THE BASIC CAUSES OF RACIAL ANTAGONISM. . ." (5,107)

". . .REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS CONCLUDE THAT RACIAL OPPRESSION CAN BE ABOLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES ONLY IF THE PRESENT CAPITALIST PROFITX SYSTEM IS ELIMINATED. . ." (5, 108)

"THE SWP CONTENDS THAT RACISM. . .CAN ONLY BE ABOLISHED IN THIS COUNTRY BY INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION AIMED AT TAKING CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE CAPITALISTS AND THEIR PARTIES." (5, 110)

" . . . THE WHOLE STRUCTURE(OF SOCIETY) MUST BE UPROOTED AND TRANSFORMED; A CHANGE OF PERSONELL IN THE POWER STRUCTURE WILL NOT BASICALLY REMEDY THE SITUATION. . ." (2,63)

IV. WHAT CHANGES DOES THE SWP WANT TO MAKE IN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT?

"...NEW METHODS OF STRUGGLE, SUCH AS...WHOLESALE SABOTAGE OF THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE. . ." (2,63)

"...CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH THE WORLD COLONIAL, ANTI-IMPERIALIST, ANTI-CAPITALIST REVOLUTION." (2,63)

"...ALLIANCE WITH RADICAL GROUPS OR PARTIES, AND PERHAPS EVENTUAL MERGER WITH THEM." (2,63)

ALL OF THESE WILL OCCUR AS THE STRUGGLE "...BECOMES REVOLUTIONARY."(2,63)

V. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE SWP AND ITS MEMBERS IN THE MOVEMENT?

". . . CEMENT A FIRM WORKING UNITY BETWEEN THE VANGAURD OF THE NEGRO STRUGGLE AND THE SOCIALIST VANGUARD OF THE WORKING CLASS REPRESENTED BY THE SWP. THIS IS THE PRIMARY TASK OF THE SWP IN THE PRESENT PERIOD OF THE FREEDOM NOW MOVEMENT."(5,112)

" THE ROLE OF THE SWP IS TO ASSEMBLE AND EQUIP THE FORCES THAT WILL LEAD TO THE COMING AMERICAN REVOLUTION TO ABOLISH CAPITALISM AND RACISM. THIS FUNCTION IS INDISPENSIBLE..." (5,112)

VI HOW WILL THIS BE DONE?

"THE SWP SEEKS TO EQUIP BOTH REVOLUTIONARY WHITES AND NEGROES WITH THE BEST SET OF SCIENTIFIC TOOLS YET DEVISED TO CHANGE SOCIETY - MARXISM."(5,112)

" TO PROVIDE, THROUGH THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, PERMANENT HELP, GUIDANCE AND EXPANSION OF OUR WORK IN THE NEGRO STRUGGLE."(5,113)

SWP MEMBERS MUST PARTICIPATE IN CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS, BECAUSE "...IN BRANCHES WHERE WE(SWP) HAVE FEW OR NO NEGRO MEMBERS, THIS IS ONE WAY OF RECRUITING NEGRO MEMBERS. . ."(TO THE SWP) (5,113)

"...OUR NEGRO MEMBERS WILL...WORK TO UNITE THE NEGRO COMMUNITY AROUND A FREEDOM NOW PROGRAM." HOW? " IN THE NEGRO COMMUNITY THEY POPULARIZE THE IDEAS AND PROPOSALS OF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALSM. WITH THE HELP OF MARXIST METHODS THEY...HELP FORM THE IDEOLOGY OF THEIR RACE. IN THE SWP THEY STRIVE TO EQUIP THEMSELVES FOR THE ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP IN THE MASS MOVEMENTS." (5,113)

VII. WHAT GROUPS DOES THE SWP PARTICULARLY SUPPORT?

" THE MOST RADICAL TENDANCIES WITH A POLITICAL OR SOCIAL ORIENTATION HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY...ROBERT WILLIAMS. . . MADE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SELF DEFENSE."

"THE INTENSIFICATION OF (RACIAL) SEPARATISM AMONG NEGROES IN THE NORTH EXPRESSES A REJECTION OF AMERICAN CLASS SOCIETY. . ." (5, 105)

"THE MUSLIMS... ARE THE MOST DYNAMIC TENDANCY IN THE NORTHERN NEGRO COMMUNITY TODAY."(5, 105)

"REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALSTS WELCOME THE GROWTH OF NEGRO NATIONALISM, AND GIVE ITS PARTICIPANTS WHOLEHEARTED COLLABORATION. . . FOR US, NEGRO NATIONALISM AND REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM ARE NOT ONLY COMPATIBLE BUT COMPLEMENTARY FORCES, THAT SHOULD BE WELDED CLOSER TOGETHER." (5,106)

VIII. WHAT DOES THE SWP WANT TO DO WITH NATIONALISTS?

". THE NATIONALSISTS STILL LACK A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM, AND MANY NATIONALISTS HAVE CONFUSED ~~IDEA~~ CONCEPTIONS.~~X~~ REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS MUST BE FIRM AND PATIENT IN DEMONSTRATING THAT MARXISM...IS VALID FOR THE NEGRO STRUGGLE." "NATIONALISM IS ITSELF AN EMPTY VESSEL THAT CAN BE FILLED WITH VASTLY DIFFERENT CONTENTS. . .NEGRO MARXISTS HAVE TO IMBUE THE NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS AND STRUGGLES OF THEIR PEOPLE WITH A REVOLUTIONARY, SCIENTIFIC, AND ANTI-CAPITALIST CONTENT AND DIRECTION."(5, 106)

IX. WHY DOES THE SWP SUPPORT THE NATIONALISTS?

"NEGRO NATIONALISM IS PROGRESSIVE BECAUSE IT CONTRIBUTES TO THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT NEGRO MOVEMENT. . . AN INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT (IS) AN INDISPENSIBLE CONDITION FOR AN EVENTUAL REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE OF THE WORKING CLASS AND NEGRO PEOPLE."(5, 106)

THE SWP REGARDS CORE AS AN ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE OR MIDDLE CLASS GROUP, ~~XXXXXXXX~~ (5, 104-5), WHILE ON THE OTHER HAND "OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD SEPARATISTS, INCLUDING THE MUSLIMS, IS A FRIENDLY ONE." (5, 105)

FINALLY, THE WHOLE POSITION OF THE SWP CAN BE SUMMED UP IN THEIR CONTINUAL ARGUMENT THAT THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE HAS TO MOVE FROM REVOLT TO REVOLUTION, THAT IT "..WILL HAVE TO ADOPT A REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE WITH REGARD TO ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES."(2,44)

SOURCES:

1. record of James Cannon trial, published by SWP.
2. THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE, FROM REVOLT TO REVOLUTION, by Bernard Mandel. Int. Socialist Review, Spring, 1964.
3. WHITE RADICALS AND BLACK NATIONALISTS, by Robert Vernon, ISR, Winter, 1964.
4. HOW A MINORITY CAN CHANGE SOCIEITY, By George Brietman, ISR, Spring, 1964.
5. STETMENT ON FREEDOM STRUGGLE ADOPTED BY 1963 SWP CONVENTION, ISR FALL 1963.