Cms-0436.002.017.011

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WHAT IS THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY?

BASICALLY, A GROUP OF FOLLOWERS OF LEON TROTSKY, ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917. THEY WERE EXPELLED FROM THE AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY(CPUSA) IN 1928, AND AFTER ABOUT TEN YEARS UNDER VARIOUS NAMES BECAME THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY.

THE BASIC POINT OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SWP AND THE CPUSA WAS OVER THE NATURE OF THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. THE FOLLOWERS OF TROTSKY, WHILE SUPPORTING THE REVOLUTIONARY REGIME IN SOVIET RUSSIA, ARGUED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO FORM A COORDINATED INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. THE SOVIETS UNDER STALIN, WORRIED ABOUT PROBLEMS AT HOME, TENDED TO BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT RUSSIAN COMMUNISM THAN IMMEDIATE WORLD REVOLUTION.

WHY IS IT INTERESTED IN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT?

THE SWP, LIKE ALL REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES, IS VERY SMALL IN NUMBER. LIKE ALL REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES, ONE OF ITS MAIN TACTICAL AIMS IS TO FIND AND ALLY WITH THOSE GROUPS IN ANY COUNTRY WHICH SEEM MOST LIKELY TO HELP IN OVERTHROWING CAPITALISM. TROTSKY HIMSELF IN THE 1930'S ALREADY WAS SAYING THAT NEGROES IN AMERICA WERE THE MOST LIKELY GROUP OF ALLIES FOR THE SWP. THEIR REASONING IS THAT SINCE THE NEGRO IN AMERICA IS OPPRESSED, HE WILL BE WILLING TO "FIGHT AND DIE" FOR THE REVOLUTION.

WHAT IS THE IDEA OF REVOLUTION?

TO THE SWP, AS TO MOST FAR LEFT RADICALS, AMERICAN RACISM IS A PURE PRODUCT OF CAPITALISM. THE CHIEF GOAL OF THE SWP IS A REVOLUTION WHICH WILL DESTROY CAPITALISM COMPLETELY, AND AS A SORT OF BY-PRODUCT, WILL IN THEORY DESTROY RACISM ALSO. IN COMMUNIST THEORY, THE REVOLUTION IS A PRODUCT OF CLASS STRUGGLE AND WARFARE. IT TAKES PLACE WHEN THE MOST OPPRESSED AND DEPRIVED RISE UP AND DESTROY THEIR OPPRESSORS. FOR THE SWP, THE PRESENT FREEDOM MOVEMENT IS NOT A STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, FOR DECENT EDUCATION, JOBS, AND HOUSING. THEY SEE IT AS A CLASS STRUGGLE. THEIR INTEREST IN THE NEGRO IS SIMPLY BECAUSE HE IS POOR. IN THE 30'S, THEIR INTEREST WAS IN THE UNEMPLOYED AND POOR WORKERS.

IN COMMUNIST THEORY THE REVOLUTION IS VIOLENT, AND REQUIRES THE ELIMINATION

OF ALL OPPOSITION, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT" BY THE REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS.

WHO WILL LEAD THE REVOLUTION?

ON ONE HAND THE SWP ARGUES THAT THE AMERICAN NEGRO MUST BE THE LEADER OF THE FIGHT FOR REVOLUTION HERE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IT ARGUES THAT THE AMERICAN NEGRO DOES NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND ~~THE~~ HIS FREEDOM MOVEMENT. THEY ARGUE THAT HE MISTAKENLY THINKS IT IS A MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, A MOVEMENT FOR HIS RIGHTFUL SHARE OF AMERICA. THEY SAY THE NEGRO IS POLITICALLY NAIVE AND UNEDUCATED. HE MUST BE LED, AND MADE TO SEE THAT THE CLASS STRUGGLE IS THE REAL STRUGGLE. HIS GOALS MUST BE CHANGED FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO ANTI-CAPITALIST REVOLUTION. THUS THE REAL LEADER OF THE REVOLUTION IS THE SWP. THE NEGROES ARE JUST THE FRONT-LINE TROOPS.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN SWP TACTICS AT THE PRESENT TIME?

IN THE 1963 SWP PARTY PLATFORM, AND IN ARTICLES, A FEW THINGS ARE SPELLED OUT:

1. PUBLICIZE AND EDUCATE BLACK AMERICANS IN SWP IDEAS. TRY TO PERSUADE THEM THAT THE CLASS STRUGGLE, NOT CIVIL RIGHTS, IS THE MAIN ISSUE.

2. DISCREDIT THE PRESENT NEGRO LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS LIKE CORE. MOST CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS DO NOT ACCEPT THE THEORY OF CLASS STRUGGLE AND VIOLENT REVOLUTION. THEY MUST BE ELIMINATED, AND REPLACED WITH PEOPLE FRIENDLY TO THE SWP.

3. PROMOTE THE EXTREMIST GROUPS IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE. THE SWP PROMOTES BLACK NATIONALISM, AND OTHER GROUPS WHICH CALL FOR VERY RADICAL TACTICS AND OVERTHROW OF CAPITALISM.

SOURCES:

VARIOUS ARTICLES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW, THE SWP JOURNAL, AND IN THE MILITANT, THEIR NEWSPAPER.

HISTORY OF AMERICAN TROTSKYISM, BY JAMES CANNON, SWP CHAIRMAN. PIONEER PUBLISHERS.

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