

Watergate: Platform for Political Exposure

Watergate is still the biggest and most foul political scandal in USNA history. All of the court proceedings necessary to complete the case are expected to last throughout Nixon's turn of office - 'til 1976. The government and the press know this, but they are participating in a new cover-up. That is, Nixon asked us to put Watergate behind us and to move on to more important issues. And the press spends many column yards of editorials telling us how tired the public is of reading about Watergate and seeing Watergate on TV. They try to convince us that everyone wants daytime TV to stick to soap operas and not broadcast the political struggle. And even the Senate Watergate Committee is talking about changes in the hearing procedures that can carefully remove Watergate from the public eye.

But, try as they may, the Watergate issue is hardly a thing that can disappear. Roughly three-fourths of the population is very dissatisfied with Nixon and about one out of every four thinks he should resign or be removed from office. But in the face of such public opposition, Nixon now seems to be moving from a defensive position to an offensive position in the work of his administration. This is most clearly shown by his recent appointments of William Colby, Henry Kissinger and James Schlesinger respectively to the offices of head of the CIA, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. Colby, a vicious mass murderer, was head of the pacification program, Operation Phoenix, in South Vietnam and was directly responsible for the deaths of at least 30,000 innocent men, women and children. Kissinger has been the main spokesman for the USNA imperialists in their moves to take advantage of the stalemate between the Soviet Union and China, allowing the USNA to consolidate its position of world hegemony. And finally, Schlesinger is the former head of the CIA. How is it that Nixon is now able to move to the offensive?

The main reason that the administration seems to be able to breeze along unopposed is that the leadership of the opposition is in the hands of the bourgeoisie and this "opposition" has no fundamental differences with Nixon. Sam Ervin is being put before us as the "grass roots" hero, but is this man who has consistently opposed civil rights legislation and who supported USNA aggression in Indochina

speaking for the working class? Of course not!

We must take this leadership away from the bourgeoisie and place it in the hands of the proletariat. The working class is outraged at the bold, contemptuous arrogance of Nixon and his gang, but it has no channel through which to express itself. We must provide this channel and present a clear alternative to the likes of the Sam Ervin's and the Democratic and Republican parties. That alternative is a working class party, a Communist party.

It is through this party that we will be able to raise the consciousness of the working class so that they will be able to see the vital connection the Watergate scandal has to their general conditions. Lenin describes the role of just such political exposures: "We must 'arouse in every section of the population that is at all enlightened a passion for political exposure'." (1)

"Political exposures are as much a declaration of war

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against the government as economic exposures are a declaration of war against the factory owners. The moral significance of this declaration of war will be all the greater, the wider and more powerful the campaign of exposure will be and the more numerous and determined the social class that has declared war in order to begin the war. Hence, political exposures in themselves serve as a powerful instrument for disintegrating the system we oppose, as a means for diverting from the enemy his casual or temporary allies, as a means for spreading hostility and distrust among the permanent partners of the autocracy." (2)

From the outset the Communist League has raised two important points as our program around Watergate: 1) a call for the resignation of the entire Nixon administration, and 2) to build that independent party of the working class.

However, there are those who make a 'left' error and say that it is reformist to call for the resignation of the Nixon gang and at the same time call for a working class party. But, isn't this a refusal to work in mass organizations, a refusal to start from the level of the working class and use the Watergate issue as a vehicle to give political leadership to the working class? Isn't this a refusal to take the steps necessary to build the revolutionary movement at this time, to gain influence among the working class and to gain the political experience necessary to build a party?

Then there are those who make a right error by uniting with the line of the CPUSA and seeing the Watergate issue as a struggle between reaction and democracy, as represented by Nixon and Ervin, and not as a struggle within the ruling class. (See Southeast Asia article.) This deviation allows the proletariat to remain dependent on bourgeois leadership and denies the need for working class leadership and for an independent party of the class. We must see that at various times in our struggle, our interests will coincide with those of other classes, even with sections of the bourgeoisie.

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But that hardly means that our goals are the same. As Marx points out: "In case of an attack on a common adversary no special union is necessary; in the fight with such an enemy the interests of both parties, the middle-class democrats and the working-class party, coincide for the moment, and both parties will carry it on by a temporary understanding. This was so in the past, and will be so in the future." (3)

Both this "left" deviation and right deviation are in essence tailing behind the spontaneous movement, failing to see that, "The more spontaneously the masses rise, the more widespread the movement becomes, so much the more rapidly grows the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organizational work of Social-Democracy." (4)

We must not be misled by news reports that tell us that Watergate is a dead issue. It is our duty as Communists to build a working class party that will expose the vicious nature of capitalism and tie up the economic struggle with the political struggle. The Watergate issue has given us this chance.

1) Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?," Collected Works, Vol. IV, Int. Pub., 1929, p. 166.

2) Ibid., p. 167.

3) Marx, "Address to the Communist League," Selected Works, Vol. I, Int. Pub., 1946, p. 67.

4) Lenin, Op. Cit., p. 134.