



WASHINGTON REPORT

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WR 67-35

SO WHAT'S NEW?

Students of recent American political history will recall that in January 1948 following the amalgamation of a number of small organizations which violently opposed the United States' anti-Communist foreign policy, the Progressive Party was founded and met in convention in Chicago to make plans for a "third party" presidential ticket in the 1948 elections. Since Communists had already infiltrated many of the organizations that formed the Progressive Party, they had no trouble capturing control of the Party itself and of the Progressive candidates, Henry Wallace and Glen Taylor. As the campaign progressed the candidates accommodated themselves to the Communist positions more and more frequently. Despite optimistic predictions for as many as 10 million votes in November, the Progressive Party scarcely made a dent on the political scene, polling only 1,157,172 votes out of nearly 49,000,000 cast. Of these, more than half were polled in New York State. Until the end of 1949, Mr. Wallace continued to defend the Progressive Party and his association with it. He spoke to the 1950 Progressive Party Convention, hoping to rid it of its Communist domination but soon afterwards retired from the political arena leaving the Party exclusively to the Communists. By 1952 it had ceased to be a viable political entity, fielding a Presidential ticket of unknown Communist party-liners who received only 140,000 votes.

The Quest for Power

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From August 29 until September 4, 1967, Chicago is once again the involuntary host to a convention from which another third party presidential slate may emerge. The meeting is entitled "The New Politics Convention on 1968 and Beyond." It is the first sizeable organizational get-together of the National Committee for New Politics in its effort to become the political arm of the "New Left" and a "third force" in American politics. A partial list of "invited organizations" includes 127 groups from 27 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico and groups other than those invited have contacted the Convention Committee seeking delegate representation. As was the case in 1948, the prime objective of most of the organizations represented at the Convention is opposition to American foreign policy and now, particularly to American involvement in the war in Vietnam. However, other interests are also represented. In the second issue of *New Politics News*, the group's publication, eighteen Negro militants injected the "black power" theme when they wrote, "The Newark Black Power Conference was a beginning. The Chicago New Politics Convention will be another stride towards forging the national unity necessary to reverse the rising tide of racism and militarism."

Robert M. Cook, writing in the same publication, hit another key issue of the Convention when he said, "Our goal is to transform this society, which can only be done, I believe, by building a national social-political movement."

The Convention Committee has indicated that it will consider the possibility of presenting a slate composed of Dr. Martin Luther King and Dr. Benjamin Spock to run as its candidates for President and Vice President of the United States in the 1968 elections. Other candidates have also been suggested to the Convention, among them: Dick Gregory, Simon Casady, Adam Clayton Powell, Senator Ernest Gruening and Professor John Kenneth Galbraith. As alternate proposals the Convention will also discuss support of candidates for Congressional and local offices or the independent support of so-called "peace" candidates who may be running for office under other auspices. Significantly, however, Dr. King was chosen as the Convention's keynote speaker.

King's announcement on August 17 that his Southern Christian Leadership Conference would "go all out to take a stand in voting for someone who is against the war in Vietnam," coupled with the SCLC's resolution that "American people must repudiate the war in Vietnam" and "vote into oblivion those who cannot detach themselves from militarism," seem to indicate not only that King is willing to accept the role but that he will also throw whatever weight his organization may have behind it.

Copyright The make-up of the Convention staff, the group's National Council and the various organizations to be represented also discloses representation of a full spectrum of the "New Left" and a significant group from the Old Left as well.

Among those serving on the "New Politics" Executive Board or National Council or both are: Stokely Carmichael, fresh from his trip to Havana and Hanoi, now fairly brimming with admiration for all those who hate America and itching for the start of domestic guerrilla warfare; Lee Webb and Paul Booth, both one-time functionaries of Students for a Democratic Society; Don Rothenberg, who in 1951 was identified in sworn testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities as a member of the Communist Party and who, when questioned about it by the Committee in 1954, declined to answer on Fifth Amendment grounds; and Sidney Lens, who (under his real name, Sid Okun) was active for years in the Revolutionary Workers League, a Marxist revolutionary group that looked upon Stalinists as "rightists" and upon Trotskyites as "centerists."

Something Old, Something New

✓ Michael Wood, Chairman of the NCNP Convention Steering Committee has been in Chicago for several months, making Convention arrangements, assembling a staff and performing various tasks connected with such an undertaking. Wood is a young, bearded former staff member of the National Student Association who, while on the NSA staff, disclosed to Ramparts, a leftist oriented magazine, the subsidization of some of NSA's activities by the Central Intelligence Agency. Since the ✓ CIA is an intelligence agency functioning for the Government of the United States, it was Ramparts' contention that it was subverting the student group. The purpose of their campaign was to discredit the Government agency.

Wood opened an office at 27 East Monroe Street in Chicago, the same building that houses the Communist Party of Illinois and the Midwest offices of *The Worker*, the CP newspaper. He hired, as editor of the *New Politics News*, one David S. Canter of Chicago. Canter is the son of an old time Communist Party functionary, Harry J. Canter and spent part of his youth in the

Soviet Union. He was active for several years in Young Communist League affairs and, with Leroy Wolins, formed Translation World Publishers, a short-lived venture in publishing pro-Soviet propaganda books. Wolins, incidentally is also a long-time activist in Communist causes and his latest organization, Veterans for Peace in Vietnam (see WR 66-12) will be represented at the NCNP Convention.

Since coming to Chicago, Wood has also consulted with James West, spokesman for the Communist Party of Illinois and with Louis Diskin, proprietor of the CP's publications outlet, *The Modern Bookstore*. West has expressed great interest in the Convention and he and Wood are on a first name basis with one another.

On August 28, the *New York Daily News* released a news story reporting a Communist Party plan to infiltrate and capture the New Politics Convention. According to the *Daily News* story, CP organizers have been circulating word of mouth instructions to their membership to attend the Convention and get into influential positions within its workings. At the close of a CP National Committee meeting in New York in June, 1967, Arnold Johnson, the Party's public relations director is said to have written to all CP districts urging their "immediate attention" to the New Politics Convention.

Johnson's instructions did not go unheeded. Among the early Convention registrants were Dorothy Ray Healey, functionary of the Communist Party in Southern California and delegates of the Twin Ports (Superior-Duluth) Club of the Communist Party. The "Peace and Freedom" movement in New York City has also indicated that it will attend the Convention. This is the group that ran as its candidate for Congress in 1966, Dr. Herbert Aptheker, chief theoretician of the Communist Party, U.S.A.

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Strange Bedfellows

The National Committee for New Politics, if it hopes to achieve any size or success among the "New Left" or the Old, can't be too discriminating about who or what group it accepts into its midst. It has asked SDS and the Communist oriented W. E. B. DuBois Clubs to attend the meeting as "observers" but many individual members of these groups will be seated as delegates representing various local anti-Vietnam groups. The same can be said for Carl Braden's Southern Conference Educational Fund. Braden, identified as a CP member in sworn testimony before the HCUA in 1956, served a one year prison term for refusing to answer the Committee's questions.

Bulk copies of the *New Politics News* are being sent to such diverse recipients as Communist functionaries Ben Dobbs of Los Angeles, Betty Smith of Minneapolis and Phil Bart of Cleveland as well as to non-Communist groups such as the American Friends Service Committee in Washington, D. C., The Black Hawk County Legal Aid Society in Waterloo, Iowa and the Inter-Church Board for Metropolitan Affairs in Columbus, Ohio.

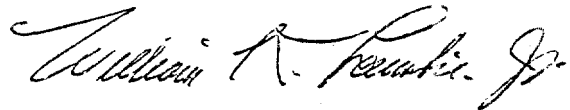
In the same manner, while many of the individuals and groups registered for the Convention are well known members of the far left, the registration list also includes many who may be among the innocents who are intended to be drawn into movements such as the "New Politics" group. Walter Allen, a steelworker of Harvey, Illinois, Grace Sayers, a school teacher of Southfield, Michigan, Jesse Burkhead, a school teacher of DeWitt, New York, Fr. Henry Atkins, an Episcopal priest of Indianapolis, Indiana and Henry Mar, an architect of Sacramento, California may all have fallen into a trap set for them many years ago. They may believe, as the New Politics Convention wishes

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them to, that the United States is an aggressor in Vietnam, that the Viet Cong are really only nationalists fighting for their freedom and that Ho Chi Minh is a fighter for his country's independence who may be a Marxist but would be friendly if we would only let him.

If they do, they should recall the words of Henry Wallace, while campaigning for the Progressive Party in October 1948. Wallace was talking of the Chinese Communists but how familiar the words sound today. He attacked Chiang Kai-shek as a dictator and accused Mr. Truman of giving him arms to shoot down innocent students and make war on a large part of the Chinese population. He said, "There are no Russian planes dropping Russian bombs on the villages of China," and, when asked if we should not oppose Communism in Asia, Mr. Wallace said, "There are conflicting reports on how Communistic the so-called Chinese Communists are. Although some of them probably believe in a dilute form of Marxism, most of them undoubtedly want to achieve some freedom from the tyranny of the warlords and the greed of the landlords."

So, in Chicago on Labor Day weekend, some of the bearded faces are new, some of the groups of idealists and dreamers are new and the Convention insists that the politics are "New" but some of the faces are old and it is painfully obvious that the Party line has not changed a bit.



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AMERICAN SECURITY COUNCIL

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Executive Offices and Research Center: 123 North Wacker Drive, Chicago Illinois 60606

Washington Bureau: 1101 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036