

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Ukrainian Deception Exposed

Last month the national office of the SLP received the first of several e-mails that cast doubt on the legitimacy of the “Socialist Labor Party of Ukraine.” Since then the national office has confirmed to its own satisfaction, and to that of the party’s National Executive Committee, that the so-called SLPU was part of an elaborate hoax. That hoax was perpetrated on several organizations in Western Europe and the United States by the Ukrainian affiliate of a British group that calls itself “Committee for a Workers International.” The CWI, which identifies itself with Trotskyism, reportedly denied any knowledge of the swindle and declared it was as shocked and repulsed by the conduct of its Ukrainian associates as the organizations that were bilked.

Although much of the evidence that has surfaced since July is largely circumstantial and primarily of a literary quality, it is substantial.

It appears that at least nine or 10 groups in the United States and Western Europe were duped by these unprincipled money-grubbers. Money is what they were after, and the SLP did send \$450.00 to help what we believed to be a fledgling SLP of Ukraine buy a used computer. From what we can tell, however, that was a mere pittance compared to what these Ukrainian Trotskyists managed to wring out of certain other organizations.

One of the European groups that fell victim to the Ukrainian schemers was the Socialist Party of Great Britain. A statement issued through the SPGB’s official journal, *Socialist Standard*, summed up the scheme as follows:

“Members of this group would contact groups in the West by e-mail feigning agreement with their political position; if the groups from the West sent a delegation to the Ukraine to check, the Trotskyists concerned would assemble a dozen or so of their supporters, all of whom had been coached in the views of the group concerned. Thus, our delegates who went to Kiev in November 2001 met a group of individuals who expressed socialist views and had no reason to doubt their sincerity. Any money sent went into the coffers

of the Trotskyist group. At least 10 groups seem to have been taken in by this scam including, besides ourselves, the SLP of America, the Socialist Studies group [of SPGB dissidents], and various rival Trotskyist outfits. . . .”

The ploy was reprehensible for many reasons, not the least being that the Ukrainian affiliate of the CWI trafficked on the sympathy that sincere and dedicated Socialists everywhere have for the Ukrainian working class. As Robert Burns of the SLP’s National Executive Committee explained his own feelings in the matter:

“It was very disappointing to hear of the deception of the ‘Ukrainian SLP’”

“When I read of our engagement with a Ukrainian group that seemed to be supportive of the SLP, I was very pleased, especially since the Ukrainian people had suffered so much under Stalinist Communist Party control. Between 4 and 6 million Ukrainians were supposed to have been starved to death in the late 1920s and early 1930s by the Russians. And then thousands of Ukrainians were killed by the Nazis during World War II. So I was greatly encouraged by our engagement and support of the SLPU. . . .”

While the SLP condemns this unconscionable deception by the Ukrainian Trotskyists, and while it will do everything possible to defend itself against similar schemes in the future, it refuses to allow its optimism, its faith in the working class, or its commitment to the principles of socialist internationalism to be dampened by the experience.

[Since this was written, the SPGB has received a message from Ukraine claiming that the “World Socialist Party of Ukraine,” the SPGB equivalent of the “SLPU,” also was deceived by agents provocateur inside its own ranks, and that the WSPU is a legitimate organization sincerely interested in maintaining fraternal ties with the SPGB and its “World Socialist Movement.” The message is posted to the SPGB’s open discussion list on the Internet. It is replete with phrases and statements similar—and in some instances identical—to phrases and statements in e-mail messages the SLP received in the past.

[Readers of *The People* who also receive the *New Unionist* may have noticed such similarities in statements from the “SLPU” and the so-called New Union Party of Ukraine. When we called these similarities to the attention of our supposed friends in Kiev we were told that the leader of the “NUP” was a computer hacker who managed to reroute and doctor messages meant for the SLP before sending them to the NUP in Minnesota. However, our suspicions were aroused when certain minor

variations, such as small differences in the spelling of given names, crept into some of the later messages received. Apparently the deceivers had so many baited lines out in search of pelf that they began to confuse themselves on which group should receive what message and over what signature.

[The latest message to the SPGB weaves a more intricate tale than was foisted on the SLP, but the pattern is the same and some of the language is familiar. That message has caused some SPGB members to suggest a reevaluation of the statement printed in the *Socialist Standard*, but our experience tells us that it is only another ruse. While we believe there are sincere and honest Socialists in Ukraine, and while we still are optimistic enough to hope that they will eventually discover and be attracted to the SLP and its Socialist Industrial Union program, we will take every precaution to ensure that our optimism does not get the better of our judgment the next time they are put to the test.]

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded September 7, 2003