

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

Volume XX, Number 10

December 1984

\$1.50

Contents

- The Civil War in Afghanistan**
by Pedro Camejo, member of IEC, and Doug Lorimer and Jim Percy,
Socialist Workers Party, Australia 3
- The International Camejo-Percy Current**
by Larry Seigle, Socialist Workers Party, United States 9
- Amendments to "The Cuban Revolution and Its Extension"**
submitted by National Committee, Socialist Workers Party, Australia 20

The Civil War in Afghanistan

By Pedro Camejo, Doug Lorimer, and Jim Percy

1. The April Revolution

The overthrow of the regime of Mohammed Daud on April 27, 1978, was a product of a period of intensifying struggles by the Afghan workers and peasants, and opened the possibility of major advances by the Afghan revolution.

A rise in the class struggle in Afghanistan had begun in the late 1960s, spurred by student demonstrations against US aggression in Vietnam and by a series of strikes affecting a significant part of the country's small working class. Social tensions were further intensified by the famine of 1970-72, in which as many as 500,000 people died.

In an effort to hold back the spreading radicalisation, Mohammed Daud seized power in a coup in July 1973. Daud abolished the monarchy and announced a radical-sounding program, including nationalisation of the banks and a land reform.

But the changes announced by Daud proved to be largely cosmetic, or — as in the case of the land reform — to be mere words that were never implemented.

US imperialism, aided by the Shah of Iran, had considerable success in moving the Daud regime toward a closer reliance on imperialism. The Shah proved SAVAK agents to help purge the Afghan armed forces and government of suspected leftists, and offered US\$2 billion in credits for the construction of Afghanistan's first railway. Under US pressure, Daud closed the Pakistani border in the Baluchi regions, in order to prevent Baluchi guerrillas crossing it in their struggle against the Pakistani regime. Daud's growing alignment with imperialism was mirrored by a decline of Soviet influence, one indication of this being the reduction of the number of Soviet military advisers in the country, from 1000 in 1972 to 200 in 1976.

Daud's rightward course was necessarily accompanied by an increasing use of repression against actual or potential opposition forces. On April 17, 1978, Mir Akbar Khyber, a leader of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, was murdered in Kabul. This action touched off a series of anti-US and anti-government demonstrations, including a funeral procession of 15,000 that denounced the role of the CIA and SAVAK in Khyber's assassination.

Daud responded to this upsurge with further repression, arresting most of the top leaders of the PDPA on April 26. The next morning, army and air force units

led by members of the PDPA launched an armed insurrection that toppled the Daud regime. At about the same time, PDPA members and supporters in other areas of the country seized control of military garrisons and arrested top officers.

The April 27 insurrection produced a major shift in the relationship of class forces within Afghanistan, removing a major obstacle to the struggles of workers and peasants. The new government, seeking to enlarge its social base, announced and began to implement a series of wide-ranging reforms, thus further encouraging such struggles.

2. The PDPA government's reforms

On May 9, 1978, Noor Mohammed Taraki, the president and prime minister of the new government, delivered the PDPA regime's first major policy speech. He outlined a 30-point program of democratic reforms. Unlike the experience with Daud's announced reforms, the PDPA set about attempting to implement its program.

Some 13,000 prisoners were freed from Daud's jails; the police files on thousands of other people were burned in public. Daud's Republican Guard was dissolved, and all but one general was dismissed from the armed forces.

A few days after the insurrection, all land and property of the royal family was confiscated, and many of its members lost their citizenship. Within several months, some 300 to 400 big landowners, many of them part of the old aristocracy, were deprived of their lands.

Price controls were imposed on basic necessities in the market of Kabul; the cost of bread was cut in half. Free emergency medical care was introduced in some areas.

Working hours were reduced, and some low-paid categories of workers received wage rises. Within days of taking power, the PDPA government legalised trade unions for the first time in the country's history. The first union was set up at a textile mill in Kabul in mid-May.

The PDPA government also introduced reforms to begin overcoming the oppression of minority nationalities. Primary education was altered to include instruction in the various local languages. Radio and television programs were broadcast and new-

papers published for the first time in the minority languages.

Women too benefited from democratic reforms. Arranged marriages were abolished, and the traditional bride price was reduced to a token \$7. The Khalqi Organisation for Afghan Women was established as a vehicle for organising and mobilising women.

Women also benefited from the education campaign. The government recruited more than 5000 unemployed university graduates to teach in a literacy campaign designed to reduce the country's mammoth illiteracy rate of 90-95 per cent. In just over a year, 600 new schools had been built, many of them in rural areas and in smaller towns and villages. By the end of 1979 up to 500,000 adult men and women were attending basic literacy classes. Higher education was also expanded; in November 1979 there were 22,000 students in universities and higher educational institutions, compared to just 8000 in 1975-76.

The neocolonial structure of the Afghan economy made the PDPA's land reform the centrepiece of its economic program.

Some 60 per cent of peasants were tenants or sharecroppers on land rented from the big landowners, to whom they had to pay up to four-fifths of their crops and provide labor services. Constant indebtedness made many of these peasants into virtual serfs. The new government's Decree Number 6, adopted a few months after it came to power, cancelled all debts of poor and landless peasants to the landlords. This measure, directly benefiting 3 million peasant families, wiped out debts totaling \$750 million.

Decree Number 8, which went into effect on January 1, 1979, placed a ceiling of 15 acres on all individual landholdings. Expropriated estates were handed over to the peasants, under the slogan, "Land belongs to those who work on it." By the end of June a total of 1.4 million acres had been distributed free to 248,000 peasant families.

3. Imperialism and Afghanistan

While never formally reduced to the status of a colony, Afghanistan had been a victim of imperialism since the early nineteenth century. British imperialism sought to control Afghanistan in order to safeguard the northern borders of its Indian empire and to pressure Tsarist Russia. To this end, it waged three major wars against Afghanistan. Following the 1917 Russian Revolution, this policy became part of imperialist efforts to intervene against and then contain and encircle the Soviet Union.

After World War II, the United States attempted unsuccessfully, through a combination of threats and "aid," to integrate Afghanistan into the anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact. These threats included support for the Pakistani regime's policies against the Pushtun minority in Pakistan and a partial economic blockade of Afghanistan in 1960-63 exercised through the closing of the Pakistani border, which was broken only through a Soviet and Indian airlift.

During Daud's regime, imperialism discovered another reason for interest in Afghanistan — potential

profits in the form of valuable raw materials. An unpublicised two-volume World Bank report on Afghanistan's economy outlined the possibilities for exploiting natural gas, oil, hydroelectric power, coal, copper, iron ore, and other minerals. Pointing to a "potential for considerable future development," the report stated: "The stage has now been reached where extensive studies must be mounted so that decisions can be taken on the selection of projects and their phasing." The report indicated that the Daud government was willing to allow foreign investment in this area, including in petroleum exploration, which had previously been confined almost entirely to northern Afghanistan under Soviet assistance. "In addition to the Russians," the report stated, "there has been some foreign interest which would be considerably stimulated if the government were to introduce legislation offering adequate guarantees and incentives to foreign oil companies to undertake the risks of exploration. A UN expert is currently advising on a draft ordinance, adoption of which should be a matter of priority." (Quoted in the **Far Eastern Economic Review**, January 23, 1981) The World Bank report was dated March 1978. Unfortunately for the imperialists' plans to help themselves to "guarantees and incentives," Daud was overthrown only a month later.

More than a century of imperialist domination created in Afghanistan some of the most backward economic and social conditions in the entire world. Only 15 per cent of potential agricultural land was irrigated. Illiteracy was 90 per cent for men and 95 per cent for women. More than 30 per cent of the agrarian population, who make up 70 per cent of the total population, owned no land, and another 40 per cent of small holders lived barely at subsistence level. In a country of 18 million people, only four cities had more than 100,000 inhabitants. There was little industry. The rate of unemployment was more than 20 per cent, and one million people had been forced to leave Afghanistan to look for work in surrounding countries. Some 14 per cent of the population was nomadic. Half of all children died before the age of five, and the average life expectancy was less than 40 years. Only one in eight children receiving education was female. And of those women who had had some education, only five per cent had employment. Reactionary survivals such as the bride price and compulsory wearing of the veil continued to exist. Minority nationalities were oppressed by the dominant Pushtuns.

4. The imperialist destabilisation campaign

From the outset, imperialism reacted with hostility to the April insurrection and the unfolding social revolution in Afghanistan. In June 1978, a meeting of 270 high military and civilian officials was held at the NATO Atlantic Command to plan countermeasures. Although the PDPA government appealed for financial and economic aid from Washington and other imperialist powers, it received very little. The US government suspended all new economic aid and reduced from US\$20 million to US\$13 million the aid

that had previously been pledged for 1978. It later cut off all assistance and used its domination of international financial institutions to block loans to Afghanistan.

A propaganda campaign was launched to portray the Afghan regime as exceedingly repressive and unpopular. At the same time, the facts about the progressive measures undertaken by it were hidden.

Following the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, US imperialism stepped up its aid to the Afghan rightists, as part of its efforts to contain the rising revolutionary tide in the region. Dozens of guerrilla camps were established along the Pakistani border, including some in former Pakistani army bases.

The US Drug Enforcement Agency — which, despite its name, is primarily involved in counter-revolutionary politics — was particularly active in the area. Active in Kabul itself was the Asia Foundation, which in the past has had close ties to the Central Intelligence Agency, and is funded to a large extent by the US government; its representative in Afghanistan admitted in mid-1979 that the foundation collaborated closely with such US government bodies as the International Communication Agency and the Agency for International Development.

The aim of these activities was clearly enough explained in a March 2, 1979, *Wall Street Journal* article: "A large-scale opposition in Afghanistan provides the anti-Soviet forces in the region and the world with an opportunity to increase significantly the price of expansionism for the Soviets and reduce the likelihood of the consolidation of a Cuban-style regime in a crucial part of the world."

5. The Afghan counterrevolution

The PDPA government insisted that its program was limited to the carrying through of a national-democratic revolution — that is, to the elimination of the feudal survivals produced by the country's neocolonial situation, and the development of the economy on a capitalist basis. But repeated experience has confirmed that a national-democratic revolution can succeed only if it grows over uninterruptedly into socialist revolution. Moreover, even many purely bourgeois-democratic measures, such as land reform, were a direct threat to the material interests of significant parts of the Afghan ruling class.

Imperialism thus found ready to hand significant social forces within Afghanistan that were naturally opposed to the new regime. Assured of imperialist backing, domestic reaction did not need to await the actual carrying through of the PDPA's program. The mere announcement of the program — and even the fear of measures that might be announced at some later point — was sufficient to galvanise this reaction into activity. Thus a report from Kabul in the November 8, 1978 *Los Angeles Times*, stated that there was "panic in the old bourgeois circles in Kabul . . .

. . . merchants are moving their stock out of the country, fearing the government will step into commerce," even though only two weeks earlier Taraki

had publicly pledged to "help to develop the private sector and assist the activities of patriotic merchants and national capitalists."

Opium growers and merchants have been among the prime motor forces of the counterrevolution. The right-wing rebels have always been strongest in the country's eastern provinces not only because these border on their sanctuaries in Pakistan, but also because they are the centre of the opium trade. As the Canadian magazine *McLean's*, pointed out in its April 30, 1979, issue: "Feudal landlords whose holdings are threatened with confiscation by the Afghan government are bringing the produce from their poppy crops into Pakistan, and use the proceeds to buy rifles, explosives, and other weapons. Pakistani arms merchants report . . . that their new customers come in daily and that business is booming."

The character of the civil war that developed in Afghanistan is indicated by a brief description of the background and policies of the major guerrilla groups.

The Hezb-i Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was set up in 1973 with the direct assistance of the CIA (because of the US government's fears that Daud's demagogic program was meant seriously) and Pakistan, whose regime feared that Daud would revive the border dispute over the Pushtunistan regions. Hekmatyar himself had earlier gained notoriety while a student at the University of Kabul for his opposition to female education, and had been arrested for assassinating a progressive student. The program of the group includes: the complete reversal of the land reform; compulsory wearing of the veil by women and strict separation of education and work by sex; massive military armament, with education including military training for "holy war"; and the imposition of a single national language, with Arabic promoted as a second language.

A number of other organisations, most of them influenced by the ultrareactionary Muslim Brotherhood, are grouped in the so-called Islamic Alliance for the Liberation of Afghanistan. These include the Maaz-i-Milli Islami, the Jamiat Islami, and the Jabha-i-Nejat-i-Milli Afghanistan.

The Maaz-i-Milli Islami is led by Sayed Ahmad Gallani, a large landowner and businessman. It explicitly favors restoration of the monarchy, to which Gallani is related by marriage.

The Jamiat Islami is led by Burhanuddin Rabani, who began his "rebel" activities along with Hekmatyar in Pakistan in 1973.

The third of the above-named groups is led by Sebgatullah Mujaddidi, another dispossessed landlord. He comes from a family that gained notoriety in the 1920s for opposing the reforms of King Amanullah as "communist."

Under the cover of Islam, forces such as these launched a class war intended to reverse all the gains that had been won by the workers and peasants of Afghanistan. Their preferred methods were those of brutal terrorism — the assassination of teachers, land-reform administrators, PDPA members, and anyone else supporting the reform measures.

6. The nature and methods of the PDPA regime

In the civil war launched by Afghan reaction with the backing of US imperialism, the workers and peasants faced a major obstacle — the lack of a clear-sighted revolutionary leadership. From its foundation, the PDPA was bureaucratic in its outlook and practice. While its program called for a national-democratic revolution in Afghanistan, it did not consistently seek to mobilise the only class forces — the workers and peasants — that could carry such a revolution to completion.

In the period immediately following the April insurrection, the PDPA government purged the upper layers of the state apparatus of persons loyal to imperialism and the old regime. But it did not disband the old state institutions and replace them with organisations based on the workers and peasants. Even though purged, the old state apparatus remained as an instrument for sabotaging the development of the Afghan revolution.

This problem was particularly acute in regard to the repressive forces. As the reactionaries stepped up their armed attacks on the new government, the army sometimes responded with excesses that tarnished the image of the revolution and made it more difficult to fight the counterrevolution politically. Sections of the army were consciously disloyal to the PDPA regime, as evidenced by frequent desertions of larger or smaller units to the side of the guerrillas.

The tendency of the PDPA to rely on the old state apparatus rather than on the masses was strengthened by the course of events leading to the April insurrection. The Daud regime was overthrown after only ten days of relatively modest demonstrations, numbering in the tens of thousands at most, and confined almost entirely to Kabul. The insurrection itself was carried out by a section of the military under PDPA leadership, with the support, but not active involvement, of the masses.

The new government encouraged and led a certain amount of mass organisation and mobilisation in order to carry through its reforms and win mass support. But these activities never developed into an independent social movement powerful enough to replace the existing state institutions. Trade unions and women's and youth organisations grew only moderately. Armed militia units set up to fight the counterrevolution played only a secondary role, subordinate to that of the army.

This lack of strong mass organisations and the reliance on the old state apparatus undermined some of the progressive effects of the government's reforms. Thus the literacy campaign was sometimes combined with efforts to force the immediate introduction of coeducation, instead of relying on a process of patient explanation and education to overcome prejudices against women's emancipation. When the regime cancelled the debts of poor peasants in 1978, it failed to provide adequate alternative sources of finance for the peasantry. Similarly, in carrying out the land reform, insufficient attention was

paid to organising the provision of assistance to the new peasant proprietors, who had previously relied on the landlords for seed, fertiliser, farm implements, and access to water.

The PDPA also took a sectarian stance toward the struggle of the masses in neighboring Iran. This stance indirectly aided the imperialist enemy and served to create unnecessary frictions with Afghan toilers under the influence of Islam.

All these problems were multiplied by bitter factional disputes within the PDPA. Although some observers have claimed that the Parcham faction was more closely aligned with Moscow than was the rival Khalq, the opposing factions never put forward clearly defined alternative programs.

Within a few months of the April 1978 insurrection, a number of central Parcham leaders had been arrested and others exiled on charges of having plotted the overthrow of the Taraki government. During the following year, differences developed within the dominant Khalq faction itself, leading to the murder of Taraki in September 1979 and his replacement by Hafizullah Amin.

The extent of the factional infighting and of the repression carried out by the PDPA have been greatly exaggerated by imperialist news media. For example, a number of Parcham leaders who had been reported executed were released from prison when Babrak Karmal became president, and the number of political prisoners that had been held by Amin turned out to be about one-sixth of the number that had been cited in the Western press. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the factionalism and bureaucratism of the PDPA greatly hampered the fight against the imperialist-backed guerrillas.

7. Afghanistan and the USSR

The aim of the Soviet bureaucracy has never been to assist a socialist revolution in Afghanistan. Rather, it has sought to create a neutral capitalist regime in that country that would not become a military base for imperialism aimed against the USSR. With this goal in mind, starting in the 1950s the Kremlin signed major trade and military agreements with Afghanistan, but raised no protests concerning the reactionary internal policies of the various Afghan regimes or the social conditions of the masses. Moscow urged the PDPA to seek accommodation with "peace-loving" bourgeois forces. To this end, the Parcham faction of the PDPA held ministerial posts in Daud's government until forced out as Daud moved toward closer relations with imperialism.

There is no evidence that the Soviet bureaucracy instigated the April 1978 insurrection, or even knew of it in advance. But it took advantage of this development to re-establish the close ties that the Daud regime had undermined. The Kremlin responded to appeals for aid from the PDPA government by signing dozens of economic agreements and by sending military ad-

visers and equipment. Military assistance was increased as the counterrevolution got under way and began to gather strength.

The importance to the Soviet rulers of a friendly or neutral Afghanistan grew rapidly with the development of the Iranian revolution and the threat of a US military intervention against it. That the Kremlin took such threats seriously was indicated in November 1978, when *Pravda* featured a statement on the question by Leonid Brezhnev. President Brezhnev warned: "The Soviet Union, which has traditionally maintained good neighborly relations with Iran, absolutely declares that it opposes any intervention from the outside in the internal affairs of Iran under any pretext."

Brezhnev's statement concluded: "It should be clear that any intervention, and still more so any military intervention in the affairs of Iran — a country that borders directly on the USSR — would be regarded as affecting the interests of the security of the USSR."

The overthrow of the Shah's regime and the deepening of the Iranian revolution throughout 1979 further increased the stakes for the Soviet government as well as for imperialism. As the imperialist-backed guerrillas stepped up their offensive within Afghanistan, Washington openly weighed the possibility of military intervention in Iran in an effort to shift the relationship of forces in the South-West Asian region in its favor. Following the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran, these preparations went into high gear. A massive US fleet, including the carriers *Kitty Hawk* and *Midway*, was assembled in the Arabian Sea, while even such a "liberal" newspaper as the *New York Times* asked in an editorial, "Why not send the troops and get it over with? It may come to that if the hostages are harmed."

The Kremlin's decision to intervene militarily in Afghanistan was thus a defensive response to a counterrevolutionary offensive of US imperialism and its allies in South-West Asia. The Soviet government sought to counter a perceived strategic threat to the Soviet state. Furthermore, the defeat of the Soviet-backed PDPA government could have had political consequences both inside the Soviet Union and in the pro-Soviet current internationally, weakening the authority of the Soviet leaders and the credibility of their strategy of seeking detente with imperialism.

It would therefore be incorrect to regard the Soviet intervention as representing a fundamental shift in the direction of seeking to "export revolution," or even of breaking with the detente strategy.

Revolutionary Marxists have arrived at different conclusions on the question of whether the Soviet intervention should have been critically supported or opposed. But differing assessments of the effects of the intervention in December 1979 should not prevent Marxists adopting a common stance on the continuing civil war in Afghanistan.

The defeat of the PDPA and Soviet forces would be an undoubted gain for imperialism and a setback for the workers and peasants in Afghanistan and on a world scale. The PDPA regime offers more favorable conditions for the workers and peasants to develop

their struggles and to construct the revolutionary leadership they require than would a government of the pro-imperialist guerrilla movement, which could be established and maintained only through the most brutal repression of the toilers. Revolutionary Marxists therefore favor the military victory of the PDPA and Soviet forces; this conforms to the traditional Marxist stance of defending bourgeois governments that have taken even limited anti-imperialist measures, against attempts by more pro-imperialist forces to overthrow them.

Moreover, a victory of the counterrevolutionary guerrillas would be a blow to the security of the Soviet workers state. It would increase the dependence of neocolonial governments in the region on US imperialism. It would create in Afghanistan a government firmly within the imperialist camp, making the country a base from which to exert pressure upon the Iranian revolution and upon the Soviet Union.

8. The Soviet intervention and the question of national self-determination

The war being waged by the Afghan guerrillas against Soviet forces is in no sense of the term a national liberation struggle.

Marxists support the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, as they support other democratic rights, as a part of the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. This support is not conditional upon the struggle of the oppressed nation having a proletarian leadership, because the struggle for national liberation is objectively opposed to the interests of imperialism, which is the source of national oppression throughout the world. But Marxist support for national struggles is conditional upon the struggle possessing a dynamic that really leads in the direction of national liberation. And this dynamic is not determined solely by the relationship between nationalities; as a part of the class struggle, it is also determined by the interaction of class forces.

The Afghan guerrillas are allied to and dependent upon imperialism. The war they are waging is waged in the interests of imperialism. Far from liberating Afghanistan, a guerrilla victory would result in the country's direct subordination to imperialist control. Moreover, a government of the guerrilla organisations would take back the gains won by Afghanistan's minority nationalities since April 1978, just as it would destroy the economic and social reforms won by the workers and peasants.

9. The class character of the civil war in Afghanistan

The intervention of Soviet troops has not changed the class character of the civil war in Afghanistan. This class character is not determined by the social composition of the contending armies — in any civil war, the armies of both sides are composed primarily of workers and peasants. The class line-up is fundamentally a matter of the class interests represented by each side.

Objectively, and in most cases subjectively, the guerrilla organisations are fighting to roll back the gains of the Afghan revolution, and for a regime that would bring about Afghanistan total subordination to imperialism. On the other side, the forces defending the PDPA government against counterrevolutionary attack are fighting objectively for the preservation of the gains of the revolution, and, even more importantly, for preserving the ability of the Afghan workers and peasants to win new conquests.

This view of the class character of the Afghan civil war provides the necessary framework for judging the claims sometimes advanced that there is a "progressive" wing of the guerrilla movement. All evidence indicates that the guerrilla movement is dominated by the "Islamic" organisations controlled by the most reactionary forces of Afghan society and whose programs are best characterised as semi-feudal. Collaboration with such reactionary forces in their attempt to overthrow the PDPA government cannot possibly have an objectively progressive content. What is decisive here is the line-up of class forces, not the subjective intentions of particular groups, or, even less, the labels which those groups may give themselves.

The interests of the Afghan workers and peasants cannot be advanced by joining with the most reactionary and pro-imperialist forces in a military struggle against the toilers' present leadership and its Soviet allies. The only possible orientation for genuinely progressive forces outside the PDPA would be that of a united front with the PDPA and the Soviet forces in the military struggle against the counter-revolution.

10. For the conditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan

Soviet military assistance can at best only partially compensate for political errors of the PDPA government. Victory for the workers and peasants in the civil war and the further development of the Afghan revolution ultimately depend on the mobilisation of the working masses to defend their own interests. The latter

cannot be replaced by Soviet troops or any other outside force.

For this reason, revolutionary Marxists do not favor the long-term, large-scale presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Our goal is the creation of conditions in which the Afghan workers and peasants are able to defend their lives and class interests without foreign assistance, and in which the Soviet forces can therefore be withdrawn.

Since the very beginning of the intervention, the Soviet government has stated that its troops can be withdrawn once outside support for the Afghan counterrevolutionaries has ceased. The Cuban government, in its diplomatic activities on this issue, has also sought to secure an end to outside backing for the guerrillas as the necessary precondition for withdrawal of Soviet forces.

This stance corresponds to the objective needs of the Afghan workers and peasants, who are under attack from the US imperialism and its allies. Revolutionary Marxists demand an end to all outside material assistance to the Afghan guerrillas and the closing of their bases in Pakistan; we seek to mobilise the international working class and its allies in support of these demands. As part of this effort, revolutionary Marxists should explain the class character of the Afghan civil war; the reactionary, proimperialist nature of the guerrilla movement; the importance to the Afghan workers and peasants of defeating it; and the obstacles created by the policy of relying on the old state apparatus, counterposing to that strategy the need for a workers and farmers' government to carry the national-democratic revolution through to its completion and growing over into a socialist revolution.

Our support for measures to create the conditions in which it will be possible for Soviet troops to be withdrawn must be sharply counterposed to the demand, raised by the imperialists and the Afghan reactionaries, for the **unconditional** withdrawal of Soviet forces. Revolutionary Marxists must firmly oppose this demand, which serves the aims of imperialism and obscures the latter's responsibility for the continuation of the civil war in Afghanistan.

The International Camejo-Percy Current

By Larry Seigle, Socialist Workers Party, United States

(The following report was presented to the SWP National Committee on August 9, 1983. It was not put to a vote. A reply by the Australian SWP has also been approved for publication and will appear in a future *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*.)

At present we are witnessing a political convergence between Pedro Camejo and the leadership of the Australian section of the Fourth International. Comrades in our party were surprised to read last December in *Direct Action*, the newspaper of the Australian Socialist Workers Party, that Camejo was to be a featured speaker at the Australian SWP's forthcoming convention. As it turned out, Camejo's visit was postponed until April this year, when he toured the country for the Australian SWP speaking on, among other things, "The Coming American Revolution." This tour took place almost two years after Camejo walked out of our party.

This report is on the agenda here in response to the request from Jim Percy and Doug Lorimer, two leaders of the Australian SWP, and from Camejo for support to their resolution on the Cuban revolution, which you have all received copies of in advance of this meeting. This resolution is being submitted to the next World Congress of the Fourth International, and these three comrades have asked for additional signers.

To evaluate the proposal that we sign up with this newly formed Camejo-Percy international current, we have to look at this political convergence between Camejo and the Australian SWP leadership a little more broadly.

On both sides it starts from the rejection of the turn to industry and the perspectives that the SWP has adopted and that were adopted by the Fourth International at the 1979 World Congress. What we are seeing is an illustration of how far and how quickly you get off course when you turn your back on this perspective and start searching for another. It's an illustration of what happens to groups and currents like this when they reject the perspective of building proletarian revolutionary parties and start looking for political alternatives and shortcuts.

Where this leads, in the case of Camejo at least, is already clear. It ends with turning one's back on the Fourth International. This is also the danger in the case of the Australian SWP. The danger here is that this current is on its way out of the Fourth International.

This is a convergence of people who came out of the student radical tradition in the period of the 1960s and early 1970s and who, under changed political conditions, are trying to recreate a caricature — not the reality, but a caricature — of where they came from.

We know pretty well what the Camejo party looks like in this country. We already see it taking shape.

Camejo's followers are quitting the party, following in his footsteps. The recent resignation letter from Byron tells you a lot. It is flamboyantly dated "July 19, 1983 — 4th Anniversary of the Nicaraguan Revolution; July — the month of celebrations of the revolutions of the Americas." And what does he do to honor these dates? He quits the party!

Another letter of resignation, this one from Lorraine, also gives you a picture of the Camejo current. Lorraine claims that "a recent discussion with the visiting FSLN representative convinced me of the urgency of the Central American situation. Evaluating my limited economic and personal resources I have concluded that I prefer to fully devote my energies to defending the Central American revolution and building a United front against U.S. intervention. I also intend to become a shop stew-

ard again in my [nurses'] union." What being a shop steward has to do with "defending the Central American revolutions" Lorraine doesn't say. Nor does she explain why quitting the revolutionary party in the United States aids the cause of Central America. But you get the drift.

We can also get an idea of what this Camejo party will look like from the interviews with Camejo that were published by the Australian comrades and reprinted in *Intercontinental Press*. [See *IP*, July 25, 1983.] That tells us that the Camejo organization here will be the bilateral nuclear freeze — initiative and referendum first — make your own clothes — religion is progressive — jogging is revolutionary — hate the garment turn — hate the turn in general — hate the party and move back to Berkeley — club.

However, while we are familiar with Camejo's political degeneration, many comrades have not had a chance to follow closely the increasingly rapid political and organizational evolution of the Australian SWP. Only some comrades are able to keep up with the publications of the Australian SWP. Because of the distances, we only rarely get to send comrades to Australia, and it is even more rare for Australian comrades to be able to come through here, visiting branches and meeting comrades across the country. Much of what I will report, therefore, is new to most of us.

Evolution of the Australian SWP

Over the years we have had some disagreements with the leadership of the Australian section. We had a disagreement over Afghanistan, where most of us thought they were wrong. The Australian leadership's response was to publish an entire thick book consisting of their polemic with us. It seemed to us that the Australian SWP leadership was more interested in establishing themselves as "independent thinkers" than in objectively looking at the developments and the discussion around Afghanistan. But that was fine. We have a disagreement.

Then, comrades will recall, there was a rather sharp difference of line around the imposition of martial law in Poland at the end of 1981 and the ways in which we responded. The Australian section participated in demonstrations in immediate reaction to the crackdown on Solidarity, some of which seemed very similar to the one that took place in San Francisco, which united a few "progressive" forces with outright reactionaries and openly anti-communist groups such as "Captive Nations" supporters, and others of that kind.

I'll quote from a minority report by Nita Keig presented to the Australian section's National Committee meeting and published in their discussion bulletin [Vol. 10, No. 4, October 1982] to give a description of these actions.

I want to add some more things about our pickets. I don't think they were fundamentally different from the San Francisco picket in which the US SWP branch participated and later made a self-criticism. Were the slogans, the political basis, any more left wing? If anything, San Francisco may have had the edge on us. Was the composition much different? We also solicited and gained the participation of third campist elements such as the International Socialists. According to the report in *Direct Action*, in some cities they even had more speakers than ourselves on the platform. Right-

wingers also showed up in some cities with their placards. In Adelaide we had to fight to keep them off the platform. I've got a photograph here of the Sydney picket. It comes from *Australasian Spartacist* but could as easily have been taken by the bourgeois media. It shows one of our party banners and several of our members standing next to placards which read "Down with Red Fascism in Poland," "Polish children die because of Communist Regime," and "Help Freedom in Poland".

We thought, after reading the *Direct Action* coverage, that the Australian comrades might begin to realize the problems with these types of actions and recognize they'd made an error. This wasn't unusual. Our party had to go through the process of thinking out how to respond to these events, and we had a few false starts ourselves. And, of course, the Australian SWP's line on Polish Solidarity was totally inconsistent with its line on Afghanistan. It was off in the other direction.

But there was no correction on Poland. Instead there was a reaffirmation, a deepening and a justification of that error to the point where, a year later, the section had to initiate more demonstrations of exactly the same character, in order to prove that it had been the right thing to do in the first place.

The first thing that gave some comrades pause for serious thought was the article from Australia in the February 28, 1983, issue of *Intercontinental Press* on the convention of the Australian SWP. It began by reporting, "Since the SWP took the decision several years ago to base itself in the industrial working class, the overwhelming majority of its members *have been* [emphasis added] industrial workers." That interesting choice of verb tense makes you pause for a moment. The article goes on to describe the major change that took place at the convention:

Much discussion at the conference centered on new work for the party that opened up in the trade unions after the party reassessed its view of this work last year.

Whereas in the past the party held the view that revolutionaries should seek to take leadership positions in the trade unions only after a significant rise in the consciousness of workers, in September of last year the party leadership decided that this view had been incorrect and that revolutionaries should participate actively in the trade unions, up to and including struggles for control of the union apparatus itself.

Later in this report we'll come back to what we think this means. Further down in the article we read:

One of the highlights of the conference was to have been three talks by Pedro Camejo, a fraternal member of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. However, Camejo was prevented from attending the conference by the Australian immigration authorities, who delayed granting him a visa until it was too late for him to fulfill his speaking commitments.

The conference decided to campaign against this undemocratic exclusion and, if possible, tour Camejo later this year.

A common reaction among many comrades here when they read that was, "Well, we don't know too much about the evolution of the Australian SWP, but we do know a lot about Camejo and his trajectory. There has to be something wrong when you invite Camejo, of all people, to present what's happening in the United States." Again, we'll return to what's behind these differences.

The evolution of the Australian section is a serious question for us to face up to, as well as for the entire leadership of the Fourth International.

A prior experience in the Fourth International

It is similar in some ways to the situation that we faced with the degeneration of Healy's party in Britain in the late 1950s and early 1960s. I stress these dates, because we are not talking about

what the Healyites have become today, an organization that is run by enemies of the workers' movement. That is what most of us in this room have had experience with. But before the Healyites became what they are today, there was a political trajectory with similarities to the course being followed by the leadership of the Australian SWP. It is not the same, but there are similarities that can help us understand what is happening to the Australian SWP leadership.

One of these is the ultrasectarian stance towards the British Labour Party that the Healyites developed, counterposing themselves, not just as a current with a revolutionary alternative line to the class-collaborationist leadership of the Labour Party, but as an organizational alternative.

Another similarity is the adoption of more and more erratic positions. You leap to a position without thinking it through. Then you arch out in another direction. Every position taken gets absolutely frozen and defended — no matter what. They aren't subject to change because, regardless of being right or wrong, they were not objectively motivated. They were not arrived at through an objective consideration of how to advance the movement or the working-class struggle. They were positions derived to serve other ends, factional ends within the Fourth International, and within the party.

The corollary of that is that you can never admit a mistake. You can never admit a mistake and correct it since if you do somebody — on the left in general, in the Fourth International, or inside the party — is going to "take advantage" of it. So you defend every position.

You also get a little whiff from the leadership of the Australian party of what became much more accentuated in Healy's organization later, the organizational "toughness." The Healyites didn't begin with physical violence. They started with tough, political-gangster tactics.

This was combined with increasingly trying to insulate their membership from contact with other sections, other countries, other political currents. If people wanted to travel abroad, cross the Channel, Healy would ask, "Why do you have to do that?" Members were even intimidated from having contact with each other. That kind of development began.

In addition, the leadership became preoccupied with maneuvering in the International, primarily against the leadership of our party. Healy became obsessed with rejecting what he felt had been "living in the shadow of the SWP," and with publicly demonstrating his independence from it. Like everybody who becomes fixated on maneuvering others, you're always projecting that this is what is being done to you. (Camejo's reaction to the publication of the two interviews with him in *IP*, interviews carefully prepared and published in Australia, is another example of this. He asked a comrade, "Why did *IP* run those interviews? You're *maneuvering* me." He has become one of those people who think that by publishing their own carefully chosen words you are trying to frame them up on something.)

In the spring of 1961 Jim Cannon wrote some letters on the political degeneration of the Healy party in Britain. These were printed in the discussion bulletin [See *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 22, No. 17.] Cannon wrote:

In my opinion, Gerry [Healy] is heading toward disaster and taking his whole organization with him. The position they have taken on Cuba is much worse than a political mistake. Their approach to the question is not revolutionary, but scholastic, as is the case also with the position of our own minority. And what is worse, if that is possible, it is not objectively motivated.

Later, he continued,

The trouble with taking a false position on great questions in order to serve some factional local or national momentary interest,

real or imagined, is not only that it eventually weakens the authority of the leaders who play this self-defeating game. Another result is that whole cadres become miseducated and disoriented while the sly factional game is being played and they are unable to turn around when the leaders recognize the consequences of their own folly, if they do.

From reading the *Newsletter* in the recent period, I get the definite impression that the SLL is off on an Oehlerite binge. This can lead to an impatient demand from the ranks for the Trotskyist cadre in Great Britain to cut loose from the Labour Party and its left wing, and to form an independent Trotskyist party and be done with it. I cannot imagine a better way to put the Trotskyist cadres in Great Britain in a corner.

This is exactly the way the Healyites went, and it was later that year at the SWP convention that Cannon explained that we now had to face up to the fact that the leadership of that organization was destroying the British party.

There is a parallel with the situation that is now facing the comrades in the Australian SWP. The current leadership of that party is taking the organization along the road to rapid political destruction as a revolutionary party. It is on a trajectory that will take it out of the Fourth International.

The Camejoites in the United States are on a similar course, headed away from revolutionary working-class politics and away from the Fourth International.

Rejection of turn to industrial unions

I said earlier that the convergence between Camejo and the Australian SWP leadership begins with a rejection of the turn to the industrial unions that was decided on at the 1979 World Congress. That's exactly where the whole thing starts. The first expression of this in Australia that anyone here has seen was in a report published in December 1982. It is a report by Jim Percy entitled, "Further Steps in Proletarianizing the Party." It was presented to the National Committee of the Australian SWP in July 1982. [Published in the Australian SWP publication *Socialist Worker*, Vol. 2, No. 3, December 1982.]

In this report, Comrade Percy declares that the turn "is behind us." He begins the report by stating that the "percentage of comrades in industry, or who are looking for industrial jobs, or who are on fulltime is 81 percent of our full and provisional membership."

Included in the category of "industrial jobs" are some that we would not define as basic industry. For example, the Australian SWP's largest union fraction is made up of ticket collectors in public transport. This is not basic industry. This doesn't entail a moral judgment — it is simply a fact. We have built temporary fractions in areas such as transit when we have suffered layoffs in auto or steel, or when it was useful as a stepping stone to better placed jobs. However, that didn't lead us to revise our definition of basic industry. We didn't try to deceive ourselves about how far we had to go in continuing to deepen our industrial turn, or the scale of the difficulties and political challenges still before us.

Percy reports that 23 percent of the membership of the organization is on full-time or attending the party school. This is a huge bloated apparatus for any party.

The report also says that 44 percent of the National Committee is in industry or looking for industrial jobs.

There's nothing wrong with these figures *per se*. They may indicate real progress. But to conclude from these figures that it is time to declare the turn completed and "behind us" is to retreat from this perspective. It can result only in a complete reversal of the line adopted by the 1979 World Congress.

This turnaround is not done openly by the Australian SWP leadership as a change of course and a break from the line of the 1979 World Congress. Instead, it is justified in Percy's report by

quoting a paragraph from the 1979 World Congress report on the turn, a paragraph ripped out of the political context of the report as a whole.

This paragraph reads:

The more successful we have been in drawing the lessons and implementing the resolution, the quicker the turn *per se* will be behind us. The turn is a radical *tactical* move necessitated by the historical development of our movement and the current stage of world politics. It is an abnormal response to an abnormal situation — a situation in which the big majority of our members in every section have *not* been industrial workers. Once this historically necessary tactic has been carried out — once the abnormal situation of our current social composition and arena of work has been changed — the turn will be behind us. If it is carried out to the end, the tactic ceases. [See "The Turn to Industry and the Tasks of the Fourth International," by Jack Barnes, published in special supplement to *Intercontinental Press* containing the resolutions and reports from the 1979 World Congress. Available for \$1.00 plus postage from SWP, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014.]

After quoting this, Percy continues, "Well, I think in that sense, there is no doubt at all, that for our party the turn is behind us." Later in the same report he refers to the high level of activity of the membership and explains, "That's one of the reasons why the turn for us, all things considered, was comparatively easy."

I asked some questions about the turn in Australia of the comrades from the Melbourne branch who are here at the educational conference. The Melbourne branch comprises about a third of the Australian SWP's total membership. In that branch there are some 65 full and provisional members. Four are full-time organizers for either the party or the youth organization, nine are students, ten are unemployed, three are retired, and 37 are in union fractions.

The breakdown of the union fractions is as follows: three in rail, three in what we would call auto plants, and 12 ticket collectors on trams. In addition there are 19 comrades in a "general fraction" which includes everyone who is in a union but not in one of the previous fractions, such as white collar workers, nurses, teachers, plus several machinists, and so on.

This is not what we would call the end of the turn.

Then, further in this same report, Comrade Percy explains some organizational conclusions that the leadership derives from declaring that the turn is at an end.

He explains that "completion of the turn makes it possible to experiment, and makes our discussion new in that we are dealing with a very changed party. So I want to look at some of these questions and pose some organisational moves."

Erosion of membership decision-making

Is there a way, Percy proceeds to ask, of "eliminating some aspects of our formal democratic functioning, the *formalism* of our democratic functioning, and putting more *real content* into the democratic functioning of the party, and therefore allowing a greater centralization, a greater efficiency of the party?"

The main proposal is to no longer have weekly branch meetings, but to hold them only once every month. This is projected as a way of increasing the democracy of the organization, since branch meetings were allegedly too dull and there was not much active participation. "Often the executive committee has in fact over-prepared the branch meeting, leached the life out of the branch meeting itself." But the solution being proposed by Percy is for *less* political responsibility and decision-making powers for the branches.

This reduction in the participation of the membership in political decision making is presented as "an elevation of the political importance of branch meetings, making the political life more relevant in the branch meetings. That would increase the poten-

tial centralisation of the party, because in a way it would give the branch executive committee more authority, both formal and real."

Percy contrasts branch meetings with meetings of the Political Committee. "It has a much more flexible procedure. I don't think we have ever had time limits in the Political Committee. So in reality, the way the Political Committee functions is as the most democratic organ of the party, more democratic than the National Committee, because we are forced to have time limits at the National Committee meetings. Obviously, the party would have a much, much bigger problem if the Political Committee was leached of political life than if one branch was, but it is a useful comparison." I leave aside the fact that this is an odd view of party democracy. Is democracy really less critical for the branches than for the Political Committee: What does such a statement imply about the relationship between the leadership and the membership?

There is another organizational innovation, which we recently found out about quite by accident: the Australian section's Political Committee keeps no minutes for the information of the National Committee. NC members have no regular way of being informed of the proposals, decisions, or actions of their subcommittee, the Political Committee. We discovered this because we thought that the SWP Political Committee had somehow been dropped off the list for receiving PC minutes from Australia, since we hadn't been receiving them. When we wrote to inquire, we learned that there *are no minutes* — at least none that are sent out.

The decision to reduce the frequency of branch membership meetings is explained as a proposal "designed to alleviate the problems of industrial workers joining the party."

"The point is," Percy explains,

it's going to take quite a time to train those sorts of workers [that is, workers recruited out of industry] and it may take other political conditions, too, to finish the process. That's not to say they are inactive, that they should not be members at all. They *should* be members, but, in a sense, it is a *provisional* process.

He continues:

Over a period we will win and convince, train and educate those workers into full participation in party life. As their political consciousness rises, they put the party first more and more. But that is not a process of three months, and not even of one year, but of several years of persistent work.

What is laid out here is a blueprint for an organization with two classes of membership — the central leadership and active cadre on the one hand, and a layer of passive, worker half-members on the other. The implication is that industrial workers are slow to learn, and less interested in participating in the political life and decision-making of the party. It's a typically petty-bourgeois view of the capacities of workers who see the need to build a revolutionary workers' party and who want to become involved to the fullest extent possible in the political life of the organization they've chosen to join.

There is another aspect of this two-tier membership concept that should be noted. It is not only comrades who are industrial workers who suffer from a lack of democracy in such a situation, but also many other members who are not part of the executive committee, but upon whom a large burden of activity often falls. For example, we read later in the report that "the process of not organising [paper sales] through the branch meeting once a week won't affect the active sellers, who are self-motivating by and large." This is a policy for organizing "activists," as opposed to organizing the entire membership.

This view implies that the source of all political ideas is the leadership and that the main role for the membership is to listen

and receive reports from the leading bodies. This comes through clearly in the way Comrade Percy counterposes the role of the party newspaper to the weekly branch meeting. "Obviously," he says, "*Direct Action* has a much richer content in any one issue than any single branch meeting does, so it already is [the organizer of the party] if comrades read and study it."

And he comments on this further. "At a meeting of the printshop staff, comrades will discuss how to do the work better, the problems that have arisen. The same with our editorial boards and so on in all the areas of our day-to-day work. They can have a richer life than the general meetings of the branches."

In other words, the members would do better to read the paper every week than to sit around in branch meetings that have become, as Percy says, "a little bit of a dry bone to gnaw on."

Reading the party paper, however, is quite a different thing from participating in a branch meeting. At a branch meeting, the membership doesn't just, or even primarily, hear reports, but thinks about and discusses proposals, modifies them, or if necessary rejects them, debates alternative proposals and decides by majority vote what the comrades in any city or locality are going to do. Branch meetings are not for the "information" of the comrades. They are the party's most basic unit, where the membership discusses and decides branch priorities, policies, and political positions.

Trade union policy

Now, an essential aspect of the matter is how these changes, which represent a retreat from the turn to the industrial unions, are reflected in the trade union policy of the organization. The members of the Political Committee began to take a closer look at the Australian SWP's new trade union policy when we received a letter from Comrade Lovell a couple of months ago saying he had read some of the Australian SWP material and thought the Australians were doing model trade union work.

There are two reports that lay this new line out very clearly. One was a report that Comrade Percy gave about a year ago, entitled "What was wrong with our old trade union line." The other is the trade union resolution that was adopted at the most recent conference of the organization.

Percy's report published in Vol. 10, No. 8, of the Australian SWP's discussion bulletin begins, as we've seen, with the assertion that "the turn is behind us" so, it continues, it's time to be asking "where do we go from here?" A few sentences are worth quoting here to get the drift of the argument. Percy quotes a previous report he gave in September 1981, which stated:

What we're pointing out about this period is that the objective conditions exist for the development of a class-struggle left wing. That's why we raise this idea, not because it's some far-off prospect. The problem is that the bureaucrats stand in the way of its development. At every turn, in every direction, they block it.

After quoting this, Percy resumes:

That is a very important statement. If that position is true (and no one has challenged it as yet) then certain conclusions flow from it in my opinion. If the *objective conditions exist* for the class struggle left wing, what are the next steps? What is the way this class struggle left wing can develop? What things can we do? How can we help the process forward? (Original emphasis.)

Pointing to the past orientation, Percy says "... our perspective becomes overwhelmingly *propagandistic*. That is not good enough for a party that says the class struggle left wing is possible to be built *now*. He emphasizes again later that if the class struggle left wing is "already able to be built ... we should not say that it is possible only by the rising tide schema of the class struggle," that is a massive upsurge in the class struggle, "there is an economic crisis *now*. It is a situation for the Australian

working class *now*." (Emphasis in original.)

Comrade Percy points out the main conclusion of all this — "the question left out is what is our role in the *development* of the class struggle left wing, which in another breath, in another place we always say will be essential, on the level of program anyway." He goes on: "if we are saying that a class struggle left wing is possible to be built today [then] our demands are relevant, our program can be implemented, if there was a leadership that would fight for it in the labor movement today."

The simple assumption underlying this was explained in Percy's report. "People talk about a conservative worker. But what is a conservative worker in the end. A conservative worker is a by-product of the interaction between the trade union bureaucracy and the boss. . . . Workers wouldn't be conservative if they knew they had better leadership, they could struggle better, if the deck wasn't stacked so much against them right from the beginning." We'll come back to this theme in a minute.

This line is then spelled out and elaborated in the trade union resolution, the draft of which is reprinted in *Socialist Worker* Vol. 2, No. 1, October 1982, pp. 29-47, and which was subsequently adopted at the January 1983 conference. The entire proposal, the heart of it, boils down to running in trade union elections, often through "rank and file" groups or caucuses, and orienting to these caucuses. This is presented as the axis of the work of the fractions and as the means by which a class-struggle left wing will be brought into being in Australia today.

This resolution begins with some discussion of the unions, the labor aristocracy, and the relationship between it and the labor bureaucracy. It has some good quotes from Lenin describing the rise of imperialism, and the rise of the labor aristocracy that came with it. But then something strange happens in the analysis. The connections between the labor bureaucracy, the labor aristocracy, and imperialism are thrown out the window. The social foundation on which the labor bureaucracy bases itself within the labor movement is said to no longer exist. Everything that Lenin explained is gone. As a result, the labor bureaucracy is left hanging in midair, ready to be swept away like a cobweb by a small but determined party.

The bureaucrats' role helps to maintain conservatism in the ranks of the unions even after the elimination of the economic circumstances that gave birth to that conservatism.

Today, that is, the economic basis of their hold is gone. The resolution goes on:

the bureaucracy is an extremely narrow layer. And it is weak in that it lacks the stable base provided by a necessary relationship to the means of production, was brought into existence by economic circumstances that are increasingly abnormal and exceptional, and can maintain its influence only through widespread false consciousness in the ranks of the unions.

The political conclusion that flows from this, or more accurately the political premise from which this theory is derived, is now introduced as the reason for the turn. Everything we wrote and agreed about the meaning and purpose of the turn is now rewritten to say the turn was a response to this development — the weakening of the bureaucracy and the immediate openings for an alternative class struggle formation, however small, as long as it's bold enough and determined enough.

The resolution says that the

turn was based on an understanding of the necessity for revolutionaries to take their program to the working class in its mass organizations and on an analysis of objective conditions which saw that it was both necessary and possible to begin the struggle against the bureaucracy for influence over the union ranks.

It goes on to explain:

Now is the time for the party to step up its efforts at linking up with and bringing together the initial nuclei of the class-struggle left wing, those militant sections of the working class that are looking for solutions to the present crisis on the basis of class-struggle unionism and a fight against the bureaucracy of both the "left" and right varieties.

This only makes sense, of course, if you declare war on the entire bureaucracy. This is the explicit line of the resolution.

All this is focused on short-term efforts to change the leadership of the unions.

Class struggle fighters can no longer ignore the question of the official leadership in the fight for immediate demands. . . .

But if an election campaign is to be part of our union strategy, if it is to be a natural step in the party's winning of influence in the unions, then it will also be aimed at winning, even when the likelihood is small. The standing of candidates is a *declaration of war on the bureaucracy, delivered openly before the entire membership*. [Emphasis added.] It announces that the party is serious about becoming the official leadership as its transitional policies win support. Hence to run a campaign that was only propagandistic would in effect be to make light of the problems confronting the membership. It would trivialise the burning question of proletarian leadership.

Because the party is serious about becoming both the *de facto* and official leadership of the unions, the growth of party influence will eventually mean that standing in union elections is the norm rather than the exception.

This line is promoted with a lot of what can only be called hype. The immediate possibilities are exaggerated, quick gains are projected, immediate growth is promised, the perspective is held out of outdistancing all rival currents in the working class in short order — all if we act *now*.

For instance, in his political report to the 1983 conference of the Australian SWP, Comrade Percy said that, "the prediction we made of a confrontation with *all* of the layers of the labor bureaucracy is coming true." (Emphasis added.) He went on:

We reject any idea of retreat, of not slugging it out, any idea that we are not yet bold enough, not yet aspiring enough to lead this offensive. Next year, with the boldness of our election campaign, with the boldness of trying to pull together a left-wing current in the trade union movement, we don't care if we are called a small fringe group in this framework because we are winning youth more quickly than any other current in this country. And that's the pledge of the future.

The fact that the Australian SWP is only a tiny nucleus is not seen as an obstacle to implementing this perspective. The trade union resolution asserts, "While the present small size of the vanguard party in Australia limits the number of workers who can be directly exposed to the revolutionary perspective for the unions, this is no reason for pessimism and no justification for delaying the process of beginning to unite whatever class-struggle tendencies are available."

As Comrade Percy put it in October 1982, "We have thrown down a gauntlet to the bureaucracy."

There are two immediate and related conclusions that flow from this. First, challenging the bureaucracy across the board, right and left, no distinction, as the major axis of the work of the trade union fractions. Second, an extension of this is that participation in, or initiation of, small caucuses composed of our fractions and other individual militants or small groupings of radicals becomes the framework of the work in industry and in the unions in general.

This is all motivated by the promise of quick gains — we can really grow, we can outdistance our rivals. And it all comes from a reaction against the turn. It feeds on impatience and disappointments that are generated when the turn is projected as leading to

immediate growth, when it is projected as an "easy" thing, without problems. When comrades run into problems, when the projected short-term gains fail to materialize, a reaction against the turn can set in. When the leadership gives in to and encourages this reaction, you have the beginning of a headlong political retreat. That is what has happened in the Australian SWP.

One thing that is particularly striking about the trade union resolution is that while it quotes heavily from a lot of books, one set of books it never refers to at all is the Teamster series by Farrell Dobbs. In fact, none of the things written by Farrell are mentioned — not his books, nor the articles on trade union strategy and tactics, which have recently been reprinted in a new *Education for Socialists Bulletin* ["Selected Articles on the Labor Movement," available for \$1.50 from Pathfinder Press]. All the lessons contained in these materials are simply ignored.

Apparently the Australian leadership no longer thinks, as we in the SWP do, that understanding the lessons of the experience of our comrades in the Teamsters union in the 1930s and the application of these lessons to today is essential to an understanding of a communist approach to work in the trade unions. Maybe they think that reading too much Dobbs threw them off the track, although none of them have ever mentioned this to any of us, nor made any other explanation of their rejection of Farrell's books as an essential part of our approach in the labor movement.

That is a shame because much of what Farrell has written deals directly with the questions of strategy on which the leadership of the Australian SWP has developed its adventurist policies.

For example, the comrades in Australia would benefit from reading or rereading the "Afterword" to Farrell's *Teamster Bureaucracy*. There he writes, for example, that under conditions of intensifying employer offensive as part of the overall capitalist offensive, and the resulting growing combativity of the ranks,

... opposition to the present official union policies can be organized on an expanding scale. Large numbers of workers can be brought, in stages, toward adoption of a class-struggle program required to defend their interests — if the left-wing forces in their midst proceed with the necessary patience and astuteness.

It would be unwise, for instance, to begin with efforts to vote incumbent officials out of office so that correct policies might be instituted forthwith by a new leadership. The bureaucrats could normally counter such a move rather easily at the present juncture. They would need only to direct an appeal to the more backward sections of the union membership, claiming no more was involved than the "outs" trying to dump the "ins." Since arguments in favor of new policies would seem rather remote to many workers upon first hearing them, the reactionaries could easily fog the issues. There would be no real prospect of immediately ousting the incumbents, and a false impression could be created that they are immune to removal through an election contest.

If the rebel forces proceed, instead, by pressing at the outset for official adoption, or at least tolerance, of policies that will enable the workers to fight off the capitalist assault on their living standards, better results can be obtained. As things get worse under the present officers, broadening layers of the membership will become more open-minded toward new ideas and methods of action. Awareness will grow that organized labor is on the wrong track programmatically. Pressures will mount for a major shift in line. When the incumbents fail to respond adequately, more and more workers will come to recognize that the leadership personnel must be changed, and they will be ready to act accordingly. (*Teamster Bureaucracy*, p. 292.)

As comrades will recall, our party has had to discuss these very same questions of strategic orientation in the unions today. This had come up in the fractions, and we have had to think through carefully these questions, including the question of making participation in union elections an axis of the work of the fractions. In this regard, it is worth rereading the report by Craig

Gannon that was adopted by the national Machinists' fraction in April 1980, which discusses exactly this question. (See *Party Organizer*, Vol. 4, No. 3, September 1980.)

Craig stressed that:

Under conditions of class combat, revolutionary Marxists will have a chance to show what we can do in action — to demonstrate in practice the correctness of our perspective and prove our capacity to lead. We will win the allegiance of our co-workers through the role our tendency plays in charting an effective struggle against the bosses and government.

As this kind of mass rank-and-file movement develops it will also divide the officialdom. Most will be unceremoniously booted out of the way. A few will come over to the side of the class-struggle fighters.

It is in this kind of a combat period, on the crest of a much broader wave that will sweep the misleadership of the unions aside, that we will contend for the direct leadership of the unions. To attempt to do so now is premature, to say the least.

It is this approach, apparently, that Comrade Percy refers to and dismisses as "the rising tide schema" of the class struggle — although he doesn't say explicitly who is supposed to hold this schema. In fact, a good portion of the trade union resolution and Percy's report on "What was wrong with our old trade union line" are indirect polemics against the approach of the SWP in the United States to building union fractions and carrying out communist work in the unions.

How does this new line get expressed in practice? In the auto fraction in the Melbourne branch, for example, there were some disagreements over the orientation of the party. This is all detailed in discussion contributions contained in the Australian SWP's pre-conference discussion bulletin (Vol. 10, No. 10, December, 1982).

The Australian SWP had five comrades working in auto, all in the one plant. The union has around 15,000 members in that state. These five comrades got together with three or four other union members from another plant to organize a caucus, which had a structure and regular meetings, averaging seven or eight people including our comrades. Participation in the caucus, whose aim was to contest the union elections, was projected as the major orientation and task of the party fraction. The fraction went through the election campaign and then kept this caucus going afterwards.

If you read the facts in these discussion contributions, you can see how an ultraleft, adventurist, and sectarian stance towards the bureaucracy gets combined with rightist concessions and capitulations on important political questions. For example, the workers our comrades formed the caucus with didn't agree with us on protectionism, which is an important issue in Australia like it is here, and an issue on which the Australian SWP has campaigned. But these people held quite strongly to a different position. In fact, one of the main candidates in the election and major spokesperson of the caucus was known as a person who, even during the election campaign, campaigned for protectionism by circulating a petition to demand that imported cars and trucks be kept out of Australia. This was handled in the caucus by agreeing that the campaign would not deal with the question of protectionism. In the meantime, each of the candidates expressed their own views.

In the steel industry the comrades initiated a "Militant Action Campaign" to contest the leadership of the union. Again, there is a lot of information about this in the pre-convention discussion bulletins. The fraction even ran against a local leadership that was to the left of the national leadership, and widely regarded as such by the union ranks.

In the ironworkers' union the fraction organized a slate of candidates, the majority of them party members, to oppose both national and local officials. Because the fraction only had members

in two or three places, the Australian SWP mobilized party members who were not members of the union to distribute leaflets all around the country for the candidates of the caucus.

Such union election campaigns are now the chief focus of the Australian SWP's union activity. You can draw your own conclusions from our own experiences what impact this must have on the work of the fractions in industry — what they're doing and what they're not doing.

Ultraleft stance toward Labor Party

This adventurist and sectarian policy in the unions is accompanied by an ultraleft stance towards the Labor Party, and an orientation toward attempts to "regroup" with others on the left with whom the Australian SWP leadership believes can proceed to build a class-struggle left wing. For example, it finds common ground with the pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia, which has a similarly sectarian attitude to the Labor Party.

In March this year a Labor government came into office in Australia with the biggest parliamentary majority ever. In this election campaign, for the first time, the Australian SWP broke from what had been its past practice. Previously it had campaigned for a Labor Party victory, while using the opportunity to run several candidates in safe Labor districts for the purpose of explaining the program being advanced by the party.

Instead, in this election campaign the organization ran as many candidates as it possibly could, and not just in safe Labor seats. The real content of the campaign, the thrust of the propaganda, was not so much to vote Labor as to vote Socialist Workers. This was the clear message, for example, in the election supplement in the February 8 *Direct Action*, which introduced the party's 48 candidates — about a quarter of the membership of the organization.

The slogan for a Labor Party victory got reduced here to "For a labor government with socialist policies." But this is "labor" in lower case, and a labor government with socialist policies. It is ambiguous on the question of whether you are clearly for the election of the *Australian Labor Party* as the existing mass party of Australian workers, regardless of the procapitalist program of its misleaders. There is an ambiguity about whether in fact this "labor government with socialist policies" is not in fact one and the same thing as the Socialist Workers Party. It avoids a clear declaration in support of an ALP victory.

In fact, much of the SWP's election propaganda was aimed as much, if not more, at the Labor Party as at the capitalist Liberal Party. This blurring over of the fundamental differences between Labor and the Liberal Party comes through in the text of the election supplement.

The employers have every reason to be delighted with the way this election campaign is being presented. The *two big parties* [emphasis added] are telling us it's a choice between the Liberals' wage freeze and Labor's "prices and incomes" agreement with the ACTU [Australian Council of Trade Unions]. But for workers, both policies are a fraud.

And, later, "The 'gimmicks' promised by *the big parties* will raise profits all right, but they won't save any jobs [emphasis added]."

The articles in *Direct Action* instead take the form of a warning of the treacherous policies that will be implemented if Labor is reelected. The articles are full of statements such as, a Labor government "will be little more than another group of faces presiding over the capitalist recession"; the Labor Party's "prices and incomes policy" is no different from the Liberal Party wage freeze; "What alternative does the Labor Party leadership offer? . . . Only a less obvious and therefore more insidious version of [Liberal Prime Minister] Fraser's wage-cutting policy."

In the course of the campaign this year, it turned out that the preferential votes for at least one SWP candidate may have been decisive in defeating a left-wing Labor Party candidate. This received quite a lot of publicity in the labor movement, according to the reports in *Direct Action*. There was widespread hostility to this candidacy from many workers in the Labor Party who no doubt wondered why the SWP should deliberately stand against one of the left-wing Labor candidates running in a marginal non-Labor seat.

The Australian section responded to this discussion by defending this policy and further deepening this sectarian line. "We categorically reject the notion that the ALP [Australian Labor Party] has a divine right to monopolize alternative courses of action presented to the working class."

The *Direct Action* article of March 15 asserts:

. . . if there is a leakage of SWP preferences [there is a preferential voting system in Australia] to the Australian Democrats or the Liberals, the fault for this does not lie with the SWP. The fault lies with those who give the ALP a program so class-collaborationist that the program of the Democrats or the Liberals can appear superior to some workers. And it lies as well with 'socialists' who refuse to distance themselves from that program.

It continues:

Were the ALP leaders to give us their preferences, that is to make a united front of all workers' parties against those of the bosses, they would build workers' consciousness and far fewer of the workers' parties preferences would 'leak'.

The approach is summed up in the concluding paragraph of the article. "Alerting workers to the dangers and opportunities ahead is far more important than the number of 'socialists' [Labor Party head] Bob Hawke has helping to cover for his social contract."

Some other differences

In reviewing some of the publications of the Australian SWP, it is evident that there are a growing number of issues on which sharp divergences with working-class politics are emerging. I am not going to review them all, but there are a couple that I want to call to the attention of comrades so that we can be thinking about them.

One of these concerns a strike by sheep shearers in Australia. One of the issues in this strike was the importation of sheep shearers from New Zealand, where they use wider and more productive shears. One demand of the union officialdom was to ban the importation of these tools, the wide shearing combs, on the grounds that this would help protect jobs for Australian workers.

The following paragraph appeared in *Direct Action* (April 19, 1983) on this:

The woolgrowers are using non-union labor, especially from New Zealand, to get their sheep shorn. New Zealand shearers are being lured here with promises of special exchange rates, plus bonus payments out of season. Many fly in, work seven days a week, sleep in cars, pay no tax and then fly back to New Zealand.

These workers "pay no tax and then fly back to New Zealand"! This is the repetition of the utterly anti-working class, anti-Marxist idea that workers in Australia suffer because immigrant workers "pay no tax" — even if it is true that they pay no taxes. And what is the point about these workers sleeping in cars? Is it supposed to show they are less civilized, or greedy, or what? (There is no demand raised about decent housing for these workers — or any other demand aimed at protecting the interests of *all* the sheep shearers — whether Australian or from New Zealand.)

These are the kind of arguments we hear all the time from labor bureaucrats in the United States against immigrant workers from Mexico and the rest of Latin America. I don't know the de-

tails of the situation of sheep shearers in Australia, but you don't need to know that to catch the disturbing odor of this kind of argument being advanced in the paper of the Australian section of the Fourth International.

A second thing especially worth noting is the political approach of the Australian SWP to building a youth group. In the June 21, 1983, issue of *Direct Action* there is an advertisement headed "Join Resistance: the young fighters for socialism." It begins:

"I wish I was young again!" Ever heard that before? Most young people have. But these days, perhaps being young is not the best thing in the world. In fact being young makes life quite hard sometimes.

But "being" young in the abstract doesn't make your life hard. Being a young worker, yes, but not just "being young".

The ad continues:

The dole is only \$40, there are no jobs for people who leave school early, there is no good, cheap, entertainment going in most places. . . . The future really looks a bit gloomy when you add that ever-increasing threat of nuclear war, and the general absence of peace [!] in the world today. It is quite difficult to pinpoint the cause of all the problems in the world today, but one thing is clear — there are a lot of them.

Resistance is an organisation of young people who want a better world. We don't have all the solutions, but we do know that by working together, discussing things out, and getting active around the issues that concern us, we can be a lot more effective than on our own.

We are easy to find, and easy to join. Drop into the Resistance centre in your city or send in the clip-off below.

This entire advertisement has no class content, and no class orientation. Nor does it have anything to do with working-class politics. What is the meaning, for example, of terms such as "the general absence of peace in the world today"?

The differences over Poland seem to have deepened, as well. Take, for example, what the Australian SWP has said about the Pope's visit to Poland. *Direct Action's* assessment of this event was to see the visit chiefly as a triumph for Solidarity, an opening for Polish workers to demonstrate their support for their outlawed union. It ignored the reactionary character of the Pope's visit, and the fact that this was part of imperialism's drive against the workers and peasants of Poland and the rest of the world.

Thus in its June 28 issue, *Direct Action* explains:

There can be no doubt that the Pope's visit provided Polish people — at least 70 per cent of whom are Catholic — with a special opportunity to turn the huge, open-air celebrations of mass into political demonstrations.

From the moment he arrived, of course, the Pope made no bones about declaring his support for the Polish workers [!] and opposition to the martial-law rule of the Jaruzelski regime.

To the dismay of the Polish bureaucracy, such an immensely popular political stance served to embolden Polish people and give them the courage to demonstrate clearly that the regime continues to have no significant base of support or social acceptance whatsoever.

In an editorial on the Pope's visit in the preceding issue of *Direct Action*, contrast is made between the Pope's role in Poland and his role when he visited Central America some months earlier. But the heart of the matter is the complete continuity between the two trips.

Support for right-wing Croatian group

An example of the erratic political positions taken, and clung to, by the leadership of the Australian section is its support for a right-wing organization of Croatian emigres, the HDP, which calls for the destruction of the Yugoslav workers' state and the

establishment of multiple states in the region "along the lines of the Scandinavian states." HDP are the initials for "Croatian Movement for Statehood." The Australian leadership in a report adopted by its National Committee, June 12, 1983, and reprinted in the August 1983 issue of the SWP's journal *Socialist Worker*, states, "In our view, the HDP leaders are revolutionaries."

There has been quite a big debate over this issue in the Australian left and labor movement, sparked by the Australian SWP's embrace of this organization. The debate has even been taken up by the bourgeois press. It will also be a discussion within the Fourth International.

There is a large Yugoslav immigrant population in Australia. It includes some 200,000 Croats. So this is not a small question in the working-class movement there. There are numerous political differentiations within the Croatian community, not only between left and right, but also among the right-wing forces.

The Australian SWP has established a relationship with an organization in the Croatian community that openly traces its roots and heritage back to a fascist movement in Croatia, which was installed by the Nazis as the "Independent State of Croatia" in April 1941. The HDP, in fact, holds anniversary celebrations on the day this movement was placed in power.

This was a movement called the Ustasha. The Ustasha regime, which ran the so-called Independent State of Croatia between 1941 and 1945, organized the massacre of up to half a million Yugoslavs — including Croats, Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, Communists, and Partisans.

The Ustasha still exists today under one guise or another in many countries. It organizes among right-wing Croats and has a lot of enemies among Yugoslavs, including progressive Croats. It has boasted of responsibility for many acts of terrorism against Yugoslav government officials, consular buildings, travel agencies, and airlines around the world. It is also responsible for terrorist acts against political opponents in Yugoslav-Croatian communities abroad.

The paper published by the HDP features photos and interviews with military leaders of the wartime Ustasha regime, presenting them as heroes of the struggle of the Croatian people.

A constant theme of the HDP's propaganda is its objections to what it claims is exaggeration and misrepresentation of this wartime regime, which really wasn't so bad.

The Ustasha didn't really massacre half a million people during the war but only 50,000. . . . The Ustasha has been given a bad rap.

So the Australian SWP leaders try to help them out. A special supplement to *Direct Action* explains that,

. . . in order to avoid falling into stereotyped anti-Croat positions, it is important to have a scientific analysis of Pavelic [the head of the Ustasha government during World War II] and the Ustasha.

The first point to make is that the Ustasha was *not* a fascist movement, not, that is, in the Marxist meaning of the term.

Fascism is a term which is somewhat loosely used by many people. It is often applied to any regime whose methods of repression resemble the police-state techniques of Hitler. . . .

But rather than use the term in this all-embracing sense, it is far more useful to give fascism the precise Marxist meaning which it carried in Leon Trotsky's masterly writings on the subject in the 1930s.

Direct Action then proceeds to cite Trotsky's class analysis of fascism for the purpose of prettifying the Ustasha's wartime regime — all in the name of "scientific" Marxism.

This is the way *Direct Action* describes the HDP:

The HDP feels that all avenues for fundamental reform of the existing Yugoslav federation have been exhausted. . . . The HDP argues that only a break from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia and the

creation of a completely independent state will provide a framework for the full development of the Croatian nation.

It remains implicit that the SWP also shares these views, as there is no alternative point of view presented in this article or in the entire four-page supplement.

Then the article has to start defending the HDP's views and justifying its interviews with Ustasha leaders, and so on.

It [the HDP] is forced to confront the wartime experience of the regime of Pavelic and the Ustasha. This was a civil war which split the Croatian people. The HDP works in a community where many people come from the Ustasha tradition, or have been influenced by it, or have illusions in it.

Hence the HDP, correctly, discusses and debates the Ustasha tradition or aspects of it. This is essential to mobilise support for the HDP program.

This may mean interviews with former Ustasha leaders who for many in the Croatian community represent a militant nationalist tradition and who may be changing politically. This is certainly going to be the case in the framework of a paper like *Croatian Weekly*, which is the largest circulation Croatian-language paper in the country and which reflects to some extent the spectrum of the nationalist aspirations of the Croat people.

Well, the former Ustasha leaders certainly represent a militant nationalist tradition — a militantly *reactionary* nationalist tradition.

So this question of the SWP's support for the HDP has become quite a topic of discussion in Australia. Almost every organization on the left and many people in the Labor Party have been criticizing the position taken by the Australian SWP. Some, of course, have pursued this campaign for purely factional reasons. However, the Australian SWP's only response has been to deepen the error, to justify it and construct abstract theories to this end.

This apparently didn't begin with any big, thought-out plan. The Croatian HDP, for its own reasons, made some approaches to various radicals, including the Australian SWP. The SWP actively defended their right to march in May Day demonstrations against criticism from others in the labor movement who objected to their banners reading "Smash Fascist Yugoslavia" and wanted to exclude them from this working-class celebration.

The reaction to this of the Australian SWP leadership was not to step back and think that maybe it was time to look a little more closely at who these people were. Instead, it was to react to every criticism by deepening the error. A big campaign was launched in *Direct Action* — full-page articles, four-page supplements. Special forums were held. Almost an entire issue of their magazine was given over to a defense of the politics of the HDP, and polemics against those who have criticized their support for it.

The concluding paragraphs of a report by Dave Holmes adopted at the SWP's June National Committee meeting and reprinted in the August issue of *Socialist Worker* read:

In our view, the HDP leaders are revolutionaries. They have a different history to ourselves; they have been formed by the experiences of national oppression in a Stalinised workers state. But we are confident that as a result of their experiences, including in this their collaboration with our party, they are moving in a progressive direction.

The HDP comrades have already registered impressive successes in building an organisation with a weekly paper and extending their influence. We can certainly appreciate that.

As a result of the collaboration between the HDP and the SWP and also through the development of the class struggle in this country, many more Croations will come to see the need to build a revolutionary workers' party here and fight to overthrow capitalism. We hope they will join the SWP. Some will belong to both the HDP and the SWP. In our view there is no contradiction in this, as

we are both working for the same end — a world free of class exploitation and national oppression.

Well, this organization certainly may have an "anti-bureaucratic dynamic," but it doesn't have anything to do with the fight against class exploitation or for proletarian revolution. It is an anticommunist outfit whose reactionary program on Yugoslavia is opposed to the interests of the Croatian workers and peasants, as well as to the interests of all the other working people of Yugoslavia, who will be thrown back in their struggle if the HDP and its ilk succeed in their goal of overthrowing the Yugoslav workers' state. This would be a defeat, not an advance, for the fight for "a world free of class exploitation and national oppression."

The stand on the HDP taken by the leadership of the Australian SWP, and vigorously promoted and defended by them, is a serious political problem for the entire Fourth International.

A couple of months ago, Comrade Mandel sent a personal letter to Jim Percy. Mandel enclosed a document written by "a specialist on Yugoslavia" arguing strongly against any political support to the HDP and its counterrevolutionary program. Comrade Mandel told the Australian comrades that:

While not necessarily concurring with her on all nuances, we believe that her line is fundamentally correct. We urge you to take her considerations seriously, and consider them as objections to any *political* support to the people concerned (another thing is of course solidarity in front of repression.) Please let me know what you think of her analysis.

This material from Comrade Mandel was circulated at the June 1983 National Committee meeting of the Australian SWP — but no answer to it has yet been made available to the International leadership, if indeed an answer has yet been sent at all.

It is clear that this issue will have to be taken up in the International. Silence in the face of this kind of scandalous political line by a section of the International can only be interpreted as acquiescence.

The Camejo-Percy-Lorimer resolution on Cuba

Now I want to turn to the resolution entitled "The Cuban Revolution and Its Extension," which has been submitted to the forthcoming World Congress for a vote by Comrades Camejo, Percy, and Lorimer. Everyone here has received a copy of this resolution in advance of the meeting, so I won't describe what is in it. [See *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. XX, No. 3, July 1984.]

This resolution, as I mentioned, is being circulated in the International for additional signatures. The members of the International Executive Committee who are members of the Socialist Workers Party are not going to add our names to this resolution.

If you have read the resolution, you can see that there is much in there that there is no reason to disagree with. The great bulk of the resolution is descriptive. It quotes heavily from books and articles, including a number that have appeared in *IP* and the *Militant*, and much of this material is of interest. But when it gets down to the discussion of the political and programmatic questions facing the Fourth International, it goes off.

The political heart of the resolution is in the final section, entitled "Castroism and the Fourth International." A critical difference on line between this resolution and the position that the SWP has adopted can be seen clearly from this section, beginning with what it says about what it refers to as the "Castroist" current:

Abstractly, it would be accurate to describe this current simply as "Marxist," but the term does not adequately distinguish these revolutionaries from the Stalinists, Social Democrats, and sectarians who falsely claim that title. Both enemies and supporters of

socialism have recognised the distinct character of these new Marxist vanguards by describing them, in reference to the first of them to achieve victory, as "Fidelista" or "Castroist." The term should be understood in the sense just outlined: The FSLN, for example, is "Castroist" in the same way that Fidel and the Cuban CP are "Sandinistas." Both terms refer to Marxist vanguards that have emerged in the specific conditions of the underdeveloped countries of the Western Hemisphere. A correct political orientation to this current is of the utmost importance for the Fourth International.

You know, some of these sentences sound, at first glance, fairly straightforward and not controversial. But if you go back over them a couple of times, they often dissolve into vague banalities, or you realize they are dead wrong.

The section begins, for example, with a fairly lengthy discussion of terminology, and why the term "Marxist" isn't so useful to describe the Cubans and the other proletarian vanguards that have come forward in Central America and the Caribbean. It says that to call them Marxists wouldn't distinguish them from the Stalinists and Social Democrats who claim to be Marxist. But surely that is a poor reason to not use the term Marxist, if it is accurate. What about us?

Then we learn that "enemies and supporters of socialism" have both acknowledged the "distinct character" of these vanguards by labelling them as "Fidelista" or "Castroist." But the Nicaraguans, the Grenadans, and the Salvadorans don't classify themselves as "Castroist." Nor do the Cubans. The Cubans see themselves as revolutionary Marxists.

The resolution then "explains" that the FSLN "is 'Castroist' in the same way that Fidel and the Cuban CP are 'Sandinistas.'" But what does that mean? What does it mean? You can't tell at all. All we know is that there is something about the "specific conditions of the underdeveloped countries of the Western Hemisphere" that these leaderships share and that binds them together, distinct from others. But what?

The political problem comes in when you try to define who is part of this "Castroist current" as it is defined in this resolution. The resolution lists, for example, both the FMLN and the FDR leaders as part of this current. Is that true? Is Guillermo Ungo, the Social Democrat who heads the FDR, really part of the "Castroist current"? If the comrades who wrote this resolution really think so, then what is it they really mean by "Castroism"?

Then we learn that this term refers to "the Cuban Communist Party, NJM, FSLN, FMLN, FDR, URNG [Guatemala], and similar organizations in other countries." [Emphasis added.]

But which countries? And which organizations? The resolu-

tion doesn't give us a clue. It does say, however, that there are such groupings in the imperialist countries, although these are "few." But even so, it would seem to be a pretty important fact. Who are they? And how can they be "Castroists" if what defines "Castroism" has to do with the "specific conditions of the underdeveloped countries of the Western hemisphere"?

As you can see, on the slightest scrutiny, the whole thing collapses in a mass of contradiction. But what is underneath this is a very real political line. You can see this if you refer back to the documents submitted by Camejo to the United Secretariat prior to the 1982 meeting of the IEC, in which Camejo explained some of his disagreements with the line of our party. (These documents are reprinted in *Internal Information Bulletin* No. 1 in 1982, pp. 126-137.)

One of these documents concerns the discussion that took place in the New York City local around the mayoral campaign in 1981. At that time, Camejo presented a line, which was rejected by the membership of the local at a convention, that would have oriented our election campaign toward a "left bloc" that Camejo proposed we try to pull together for the elections. He proposed we orient toward those groups in New York City who were "under the influence of the fidelista current." And who were they? Camejo named them: the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, El Comité, the National Black Independent Political Party, the Black United Front, Casa de las Americas — and "etc."

Most of these groups, then as now, were supporting the Democratic Party, and campaigning for the Democrats in the 1981 elections. What does that orientation have to do with "Castroism"? What does that have in common with the fight to advance independent working-class and Black political action?

What has that got to do with Marxism? This was debated and rejected by the New York Local — and shortly afterward Camejo quit the party. He failed to convince the comrades in New York that his orientation toward the "Castroists" in New York City was anything other than a retreat from Marxism and a retreat from proletarian politics, and a step toward petty-bourgeois and even bourgeois politics covered up with praise for the "Cuban" line.

This today is the line of the Camejo grouping in the United States — heading straight toward the Democratic Party while claiming to be carrying out the "Castroist" or "Sandinista" line in the United States! This is the line of the international Camejo-Percy current, and it is the line that runs through this resolution.

Summary

There is no proposal to put the line of this report to a vote here. There is no action proposed in this report. Its purpose is to inform the National Committee of the existence and political character of the international Percy-Camejo current, and to explain why none of the members of the party who are members of the IEC are going to sign the resolution submitted by these comrades. The leadership of the party needs to be thinking about all of this as we chart a course in the international discussion.

The Political Committee decided to propose this point on the agenda here in response to the communication from Percy, Lorimer, and Camejo soliciting support for their resolution. The report itself, however, is the result of a discussion in the Secretariat of the Political Committee; this was not one of the reports that the Political Committee discussed in preparation for the National Committee meeting.

But I repeat, there is no action proposed here. The National

Committee doesn't need to vote on the line of the resolution submitted to the international discussion by these comrades. And no other action in relation to the Australian SWP leadership is called for. The comrade who is here from the Australian SWP will give the comrades back there a report on the political views that have been expressed here, and I am sure we will have plenty of opportunity for political discussions on these questions with comrades from Australia in the future.

Now, what about the discussion inside the Australian SWP itself? How much of what I have reported here reflects the thinking of the entire leadership? Some comrades have asked here if there is opposition being expressed within the party to this course. There was some disagreement expressed at the last convention with some of these positions, although not with all of them. Some comrades disagreed with the line on Poland; there was some opposition to aspects of the trade union report; and

there was opposition expressed to the orientation of the Australian SWP leadership in the anti-nuclear weapons protests — one of the points that for lack of time I didn't take up in the report.

Some delegates to the convention, and some of the National Committee members opposed the line presented on one or more of these points. There were some counterline reports presented, including by some of the long-time central leaders of the organization. But there was, as far as we know, no one who drew all this together and presented a clear alternative to the overall direction of the leadership's evolution.

What will happen if and when opposition is raised that is more consistent and less nebulous than what has been expressed so far? That we don't know. That is the real question, and it is an open question. What will happen inside the party, and inside the leadership, when comrades who are increasingly opposed to the course of the leadership present a coherent counterposition, and start fighting for their position? Will they be allowed to present their views? To what extent will the degeneration of the organizational norms of the Australian SWP block a serious discussion and debate? That's not clear. We just don't know; but that is going to be the next stage in Australia if there is any hope of reversing the political course of the section of the Fourth International there.

We don't know how this will unfold. What is clear is that the central leadership of the party is finished politically. If it isn't replaced, and its programmatic and political positions and line are pursued and deepened, then the party will be finished, too. There is no other conclusion we can draw.

The retreat from the turn in Australia has been accompanied by moves away from democratic functioning, some of which I described in the report. But there are more, and they don't augur well for a democratic discussion in the Australian SWP. In the Melbourne branch (I don't know about the others) the branch executive committee has, in effect, been transformed into a committee of the National Committee members in the branch. This is not a formal constitutional requirement, but the motivation for the election of a new executive committee was that the branch should elect only the National Committee members, and they were the only ones elected.

The National Committee itself does not include a very high percentage of the developing leadership of the comrades in industry. There is a very high proportion of the comrades on full-

time in the party apparatus on the committee.

There is another illuminating innovation on the organizational front in the Australian SWP. There was recently a constitutional amendment that eliminated ranking of the alternate National Committee. The Political Committee now selects whomever they want from the alternate list to fill vacancies in the regular membership of the committee. I don't know if this has been explained in writing; it would be interesting to hear how this change was motivated.

Another step in the same direction and with a more immediate impact was the decision of the last national conference to not reelect to the National Committee at least two (I don't know if there were more than two) of the comrades who had presented or spoken in favor of counterline reports at the conference. These two are Dave Deutschmann and Deb Shnookal, each of whom has been on the National Committee for almost a decade.

These two comrades had both been elected members of the executive committee of their branch, in Melbourne. But since they weren't on the National Committee after the conference, they weren't reelected to the branch committee either, under the new criteria that branch executive committees should be made up of members of the National Committee.

These moves are part of a package with the elimination of weekly branch meetings, and other organizational innovations that all work to reduce the democratic rights of the membership.

The evolution of the Percy-Camejo international current poses a challenge to the Fourth International. We have already discussed what this means in connection with Camejo. [See "Resignation of Pedro Camejo from the SWP," a statement by the Secretariat of the Political Committee, in *Internal Information Bulletin* No. 1 in 1982.] Camejo is on a political trajectory that took him out of the SWP, and is going to turn him into an open opponent of the Fourth International.

We now face the danger that the political arch-outs of the leadership of the Australian SWP is going to arch the party right out of the Fourth International. That will mean losing valuable cadres, and will be a blow to the Fourth International. The challenge to the leadership of the International as a whole is to advance the political clarification of the differences with the leadership of the Australian SWP, to minimize the losses and maximize the chances of keeping the Australian section in the Fourth International.

Amendments to "The Cuban Revolution and Its Extension"

Submitted by National Committee, Socialist Workers Party, Australia

(The resolution on "The Cuban Revolution and its extension" (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Volume XX, Number 3, July 1984) was originally adopted by the Ninth National Conference of the Socialist Workers Party (Australian section of the Fourth International), held in January 1983. In May 1983 it was submitted to the United Secretariat for publication in the IIDB as a counter resolution for the 12th World Congress by three members of the International Executive Committee — Pedro Camejo, Doug Larimer, and Jim Percy. In October 1984 the National Committee of the Australian SWP approved the following amendments to the resolution.)

Page 3, column 1, para 1, line 6: delete "Grenada and" and add "a" between "Nicaragua" and "worker and farmers' governments". Change workers and farmers' governments" to "workers and farmers' government".

Page 3, column 1, para 1, line 7: change "are" to "is".

Page 3, column 1, para 1, line 9: change "new workers states," to "new socialist state." Delete "a process that in both cases has become irreversible except through outside military intervention." and add after "new socialist state," "while in El Salvador and Guatemala the popular movements aiming to create similar revolutionary governments continue to grow in political and military strength. Vast sums of US military aid to the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries and the Central American dictatorships have not reversed the revolutionary tide."

Page 3, column 1, para 2, line 1: delete "Precisely for that reason," add after "Imperialism has" "therefore put direct military" before "intervention on the agenda."

Page 3, column 1, para 2, line 3: change "workers states" to "socialist states".

Page 3, column 1, para 4, line 1: after "The US intervention has already begun:" add "The invasion of Grenada following the overthrow of the workers and peasants government in that country was only the most overt action so far in a campaign that has included".

Page 3, column 2, para 2, line 2: replace: "the Fourth International." with "revolutionary Marxists in other countries."

Page 3, column 2, para 3, line 1: replace "the Fourth International, its sections, and its sympathising organisations" with "Revolutionary Marxists".

Page 3, column 2, para 3, line 9: replace "people" with "People".

Page 3, column 2, para 4, line 1: replace "The press" with "Our press". Delete "of the Fourth International".

Page 4, column 1, para 1, line 2: replace "workers state" with "socialist state".

Page 4, column 1, para 2, line 6: replace "workers states" with "socialist states".

Page 4, column 1, para 4, line 4: replace "totally" with "that originated".

Page 4, column 1, para 4, line 9: replace: "almost until the moment of its victory." with "until May 1958."

Page 4, column 1, para 4, line 11: replace "Cuban workers state," with "Cuban socialist state,".

Page 4, column 1, para 5, line 2: replace "Cuban workers state." with "Cuban socialist state."

Page 4, column 2, para 3, line 5: delete "Even though initially they proceeded largely by trial and error,".

Page 4, column 2, para 3, line 7: replace "many" with "a host of".

Page 5, column 1, para 1, line 4: replace "European workers states." with "European socialist states."

Page 5, column 1, para 2, line 12: replace "Stalinised workers states." with "Stalinised socialist states."

Page 5, column 1, para 3: add new paragraphs reading
"From 1958 to 1980 steel production increased more than 12 times, to 303,000 tonnes, and per capita cement and electricity production rose nearly five times. The mechanisation of agriculture is reflected by number of tractors, which increased six-fold to 54,000 in the first decade and a half of the revolution. While the number of cane-cutters has declined from 350,000 to 100,000 since 1970, employment in construction more than doubled, to 272,000, from 1970 to 1978.

"The 1970s in particular saw a dramatic rise in industrial production. This has included the creation of new branches of industry. By 1980 some 48,000 people were employed in the machine building industry alone. The electronics and computer industry has been developed from scratch. Chemical production has grown from 7 to 11 per cent of total industrial output, and metal and engineering production from 1.4 to 9.7 per cent since the revolution. While sugar production has been maintained, its overall role in as an industry has fallen from 26 to 11.5 per cent

of total production. Many of the developing industries such as textiles and cement are now export oriented.

"This industrialisation has been accompanied by a rise in the availability of consumer durables. Between 1970 and 1983 the number of these increased dramatically. The percentage of households with televisions rose from 17 to 73 per cent, as did the figures for refrigerators (24 to 65 per cent), washing machines (0 to 36 percent), and radios (61 to 83 per cent)."

Page 5, column 1, para 5, line 8: replace "159" with "205".

Page 6, column 1, para 5, line 6: replace "women in the workforce" with "the workforce who are women" and replace "32" with "39".

Page 6, column 1, para 5, line 7: replace "a large number of" with "many".

Page 7, column 1, para 3, line 5: replace "Stalinised workers states," with "Stalinised socialist states,".

Page 7, column 1, para 6: change heading of thesis 5 from "The creation of the Cuban workers state" to "The creation of the Cuban socialist state".

Page 7, column 2, para 1: replace "proposals were radical but" with "program". After "did not" add "explicitly". After "bourgeois property relations" add ", but the revolutionary-democratic content of its proposals had a clearly transitional character."

Page 7, column 2, para 5, line 4: replace "wing" with "allies". Line 6: replace "wing" with "forces"

Page 7, column 2, para 7: replace "regime" with "government", and replace "were predominant." with "held the most prominent posts."

Page 8, column 1, para 3, 5: delete "power of the".

Page 8, column 2, para 3, line 1: replace "wing" with "leadership".

Page 9, column 1, para 4, line 3: replace "Cuban workers state." with "Cuban socialist state."

Page 9, column 2, para 1: change heading of thesis 6 from "The political evolution of the Castro leadership" to "The political course of the Castro leadership".

Page 9, column 2, delete paras 1 to 4.

Page 9, column 2, para 5: replace "The Castro team, while it began with a non-Marxist program," with "In preparing the struggle against the Batista regime and its imperialist backers, the young people who became the leaders of the July 26 Movement carefully studied the history of revolutions, successful and unsuccessful, in Latin America, Europe, and Asia, as is shown by Fidel's prison diary. This study, combined with the concrete experience of attempting to mobilise the social forces necessary to overthrow the dictatorship, enabled the Castro team to develop a program and strategy of alliances based on the Marxist-Leninist strategy of revolution in the underdeveloped countries.

"The Castro team did not use Marxist terminology or present an explicitly Marxist analysis of Cuban society and its relations with imperialism. But it".

Page 10, column 1: replace para 2 with "It was therefore not necessary for the masses of Cuban workers and peasants to accept an explicitly Marxist program in order to begin the transformation of society. Mobilised by the July 26 Movement to carry through its revolutionary-democratic program, they inevitably met obstacles that could be overcome only by socialist measures, which the Fidelista leadership then implemented with mass support. In this way, the workers and peasants overcame through their own experiences the anti-Marxist conditioning of capitalist propaganda."

Page 10, column 1, para 3, line 3: replace "Cuban leadership:" with "revolution:".

Page 10, column 2, para 4: replace "the" with "his own" and delete "of the July 26 Movement leadership".

Page 10, column 2, para 7: replace "learned a great deal more about" with "further enriched their understanding of".

Page 11, column 1, para 2, line 3: replace "440" with "404".

Page 11, column 2, para 3, line 4: delete "state farms or".

Page 12, column 1, para 9: replace "According to statistics presented to the congress," with "By May 1984," and replace "1140" with "1457" and "35 per cent" with "56 per cent".

Page 12, column 2, para 3: delete "Perhaps just". Replace "proceeded" with "been able to proceed" and replace "and with some unevenness" with "in a situation in which a shortage of experienced cadres and economic problems caused by imperialist hostility made it difficult to proceed more rapidly."

Page 12, column 2, para 6: replace everything after "democratic forms" with to guard against bureaucratic abuses began to make itself felt as early as 1962, when Fidel denounced the clique organised by Anibal Escalante.

"Escalante sought to give the nuclei of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations veto power over administrative decisions, while the nuclei in turn would be directed by Escalante. 'The nuclei decided and governed on all levels,' Castro said. 'When a ministry faced a problem, instead of solving it themselves, they would refer it to the ORI.' Such exaggerated authority, Fidel warned, was becoming a source of privilege that could undermine the party:

"'And what was the nucleus? Was it a nucleus of revolutionists? The nucleus was a mere shell of revolutionists, well versed in dispensing favors, which appointed and removed officials. And, as a result of this, it was not going to enjoy the prestige which a revolutionary nucleus should enjoy, a prestige born solely from the authority which it has in the eyes of the masses, an authority imparted to it by the example which its members set as workers, as model revolutionists. Instead of coming from these sources, the authority of the nucleus came from the fact that from it one might receive or expect a favor, some dispensation, or some harm or good. And as was to be expected, around the nucleus conditions were being created for the formation for a coterie of fawners, which has nothing to do with Marxism or socialism.'"

Page 13, column 1, para 2, line 1: delete "However,".

Page 13, column 1, para 3: delete ", however," and replace "still felt a need to look into this question more deeply," with "decided to investigate the sources of bureaucratism theoretically as well

as practically.”

Page 13, column 1, para 5: after “campaign against bureaucracy!” insert new paragraphs reading

“‘If the party does not win this battle over bureaucracy,’ the series warned, ‘if this danger is not eliminated through the formation of the new man and the application of an unyielding policy consistent with Marxist-Leninist principles, the party will end by bureaucratizing itself. And a party which stagnates is a party in decomposition.

“‘What does this mean? What occurs if the party organization sinks into this bureaucratic morass? When that occurs, a special stratum consolidates itself in the administration and direction of the state and in political leadership, a special stratum with aspirations toward self-perpetuation that draws constantly farther away from the masses, divorced from fruitful productive labor and from those who perform it, to become a privileged body, incapable of impelling the people forward, incapable of leading the consciousness of the people toward higher levels.

“‘And when this occurs the construction of socialism and communism has already been abandoned.’

“‘Bureaucracy,’ one article stated, ‘causes us more damage than imperialism. Imperialism is an open and external enemy. Bureaucracy corrodes us from within and attacks the healthiest, firmest elements of the masses, those who must suffer the most from it. It is clear that our people have an extraordinary sensitivity in detecting these problems and full confidence in the leadership of the revolution. Our people do not believe in the omnipotence of any bureaucratic functionary.

“‘They react immediately when something goes wrong, when it is necessary to discover and fight these errors of administrative overgrowth. For that reason the masses and our party, their vanguard, must lead the constant, stubborn battle against bureaucracy.’

Page 13, column 1, para 6: before “the series” insert “Saying that ‘the struggle against bureaucracy has come to be a veritable revolution within the revolution,’” and after “the series” insert “concluded: ‘It is only when the young cadres and workers in general have acquired an ample, profound understanding that we will win this decisive battle, that is, that we will be victorious in the revolution that is yet to be made: the antibureaucratic revolution!’ It”.

Page 13, column 1, para 6, line 1: after “proposed an ideological campaign against bureaucratic and petty-bourgeois attitudes,” insert “and number of specific measures such as frequent rotation of administrative posts, requiring administrators to deal directly with the specific problems of production.”

Page 13, column 1, para 7: delete “undoubtedly useful and progressive,” and “still fell short of institutionalising mass control over administrators and their policies”.

Page 13, column 1, para 7, line 4: delete “and social”.

Page 13, column 1, para 7, line 6: delete “and for socialist democracy”.

Page 13, column 1, para 7, line 7: replace “level appropriate to” with “capacity of”.

Page 13, column 2, para 1, line 9: before “base” insert “social” and after “base” delete “of support”.

Page 13, column 2, para 1, line 16: replace “significant” with “a

base of”.

Page 13, column 2, para 1, line 17: replace “population” with “party or state apparatus”.

Page 13, column 2, para 2, line 3: replace “brought the situation to a head” with “showed that institutionalised democratic structures were desirable on economic grounds as well as for curbing bureaucracy.”

Page 14, column 1, para 5, line 5: replace “six” with “eight”.

Page 14, column 1, para 8, line 2: delete “As the revolution was consolidated, the soviets were reorganised in July 1918 on a territorial basis.”

Page 14, column 2, para 1, line 1: delete “also”.

Page 15, column 1, para 1, line 4: replace “(up to about 3,000 people)” with “(with fewer than 600 voters each, on average)”.

Page 15, column 1, replace para 6 with new para reading:

“The revolutionary victories in Grenada and Nicaragua in 1979, and the subsequent development of the revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala, have ended Cuba’s isolation and confronted US imperialism with the possibility of a series of struggles tearing Latin America out of its claws. As imperialism feared from the beginning, the example of Cuba is inspiring workers and peasants throughout Latin America to attempt to emulate it.”

Page 15, column 2, para 2, line 1: replace “the Cuban leaders evidently hoped for” with “revolutionaries in a number of other countries of Central and South America sought”.

Page 15, column 2, para 2, line 3: delete “in one or more countries of Central and South America”.

Page 15, column 2, para 2, line 15: after “guerrilla method” insert “by itself”.

Page 15, column 2, para 3, line 1: replace “The Cuban Communists’ support for revolutionary currents in Latin America failed” with “The guerrillaists were unable”.

Page 15, column 2, para 3, line 5: replace “Cubans” with “guerrillaists”.

Page 15, column 2, para 4: insert new para reading:

“In these conflicts, the Cuban leaders always sided unambiguously with the revolutionaries against the reformists. This stance led to extremely sharp polemics with the conservatised Communist parties of Latin America and the effort by the Cubans to create an international organising centre for anti-imperialist struggles in the form of the Organisation of Latin American Solidarity. Fidel Castro’s state visit to Chile, during which he repeatedly warned of the need to mobilise and arm the masses against the threat from imperialism and the Chilean right wing, typifies the Cubans’ revolutionary attitude.”

Page 15, column 2, para 4, line 3: replace “made it clear, however,” with “began to clarify the debate between revolutionaries and reformists by showing”.

Page 15, column 2: replace para 5 with new paragraph reading:

“At the same time, the Cuban leaders have always been careful not to abuse their authority by factional intervention in the af-

fairs of other revolutionary organisations. While the Cubans are clear in their support for other revolutionaries, they do not try to force their advice on others who have not asked for it. This attitude is exemplified by their scrupulous noninterference in the 1983 split in the New Jewel Movement.”

Page 15, column 2, para 6: replace “A change in this attitude has become evident, following the impact of” with “Unlike its impact in Latin America, during its first decade the Cuban Revolution did not galvanise broad layers of revolutionary or radicalising forces in the imperialist countries, with the partial exception of sections of the Black movement in the United States. This situation began to change following”.

Page 15, column 2, para 6, line 3: delete “in the imperialist countries”.

Page 15, column 2, para 6, line 6: replace “approach to” with “possibility of approaching”.

Page 16, column 1, para 3: delete para 3.

Page 16, column 1, para 4, line 5: replace “the Stalinist rulers of the Soviet Union and China, who” with “Stalinist ruling parties, which”.

Page 17, column 2, para 2: replace “This necessary support and encouragement, however, is sometimes expressed in a manner that implies political confidence in these governments. In particular the Cuban leaders regularly and repeatedly refer to the Angolan and Ethiopian governments as “revolutionary,” despite the fact that they defend capitalist property relations and resist leading the workers and peasants in consistent struggle to transform the conditions created by imperialist exploitation. While it is undeniable that the MPLA and the Dergue stand at the head of governments created by mass struggles against imperialism and against precapitalist social structures, they have demonstrated neither the ability nor the willingness to lead the struggle forward to the next stage of establishing the power of the workers and poor peasants — in marked contrast to the actions of the July 26 Movement. They rely on the masses in order to defend themselves against imperialism or its agents, but not in order to transform their societies. By characterising as “revolutionary” governments that are unwilling to go beyond the tasks of the national-democratic revolution, the Cubans blur over the distinction between national-democratic and socialist revolution and the importance of a conscious leadership to guide the transition from one stage to the next.” with “This approach has sometimes been misunderstood by leftists in other countries, particularly in connection with the Cuban government’s attitude to the issue of Eritrea.

“The Cubans recognise that the Eritreans are engaged in a struggle for national liberation, but they do not favor the secession of Eritrea from the Ethiopian state, believing that separation would weaken the Ethiopian revolution and leave both Ethiopia and Eritrea weaker in a conflict with imperialism. The Cuban government has therefore sought to help bring about a peaceful settlement on a basis acceptable to both sides. The Cubans’ attitude on the question of Eritrea was expressed by Castro in a 1975 speech hailing the Ethiopian revolution:

“‘Unfortunately, a fratricidal struggle between the new government which broke the old structure and a national liberation movement is being waged within that very state. This situation in which two causes of progressive trends are confronting each other is complex. Therefore, what is the duty of the Non-Aligned? It is perhaps to cross our arms or support one side to the

detriment of the other? Urge on the war? Decidedly not. The least that should be done is to make a serious effort and seek a peaceful and just solution that would be acceptable to the parties in the conflict which is separating and confronting the Ethiopian revolutionary process and the Liberation Movement in Eritrea.’ (quoted in *The Ethiopian Revolution*, by Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, p. 252)”

Page 17, column 2, para 3, line 1: after “At the same time” insert “as they attempt to strengthen anti-imperialist struggles”.

Page 18, column 1, para 3: delete para 3.

Page 18, column 2, para 5, line 1: replace “effort to encourage the building of large class-struggle organisations in Latin America was not successful, largely because of the error already noted, but” with “criticism of Communist parties that refused support to armed struggle against imperialism and its agents”.

Page 18, column 2: delete paras 6 and 7.

Page 19, column 1: delete paras 1 and 2.

Page 20, column 1, para 3, line 5: replace “workers states” with “socialist states”.

Page 20, column 1, para 3, line 14: delete “Consequently a struggle such as that led by Solidarnosc, even when it is provoked by disastrous “mistakes” of the government, is seen primarily as weakening the workers states and creating openings for imperialism.”.

Page 20, column 1, para 3, line 20: replace “workers states” with “socialist states”.

Page 20, column 2, para 5: replace “Thus the Cubans’ position on the bureaucratised workers states is a mistaken view of how to defend the historic gains of proletarian revolution, which derives from an inadequate analysis of Stalinism. Unlike the policies of the Stalinist ruling castes, the Cuban position is not one of support for a counter-revolutionary social layer, but a mistaken method of defending the workers states against the consequences of that layer’s misrule.” With “Answering questions of visiting Australians in January 1984, Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Ricardo Alarcon explained in more detail what the Cubans consider to be the errors made in Poland:

“‘We feel that these problems have to do with the socialist model that was being applied in that country, a model which on the one hand had certain characteristics wherein there is no advancement in the socialist sphere, for instance in agriculture.

“‘Without meaning to imply that you have to hurry or force socialisation in agriculture, we do have our own experience in Cuba where we have advanced much more than Poland in the cooperative movement in the rural areas without forcing the issue, always on the basis of voluntary decisions of the individual farmer to join what we consider superior forms of production, that is the cooperative. . . .

“‘But the basic thing in our opinion is the model of economic development which the Polish party implemented, a model which apparently is easy: to promote a sort of consumer society which is beyond their real possibility.

“‘This led to the situation we have, which is that Poland is one of the most heavily indebted countries, and that certain trends have developed toward crass material interests and certain accommodation of sectors of the working class. And they were able to do this by acquiring great dependence on the international

banking institutions.

“These levels were making them more indebted to the West and putting them into a vicious circle which meant that, at the moment Poland faced any economic difficulties, it would not be easy to find the conscious participation of important sectors of the working class.

“Our experiences are quite the contrary. We have taken great care in Cuba to avoid setting up objectives which are not inherent to socialism. Socialism offers mankind a society which we consider to be better. But not better because there are more cars or more obvious material advantages, even at the price of deforming the economy and acquiring indebtedness, apparently to satisfy immediate needs of the people and to gain the support of given sectors.

“There is an apparently complex way which we are convinced is the sure way and a better way, which is to develop an awareness, a conscience among the people, so that the nation can assume the responsibility and the burden of building a genuinely just and democratic society.

“This does not mean that our people have not advanced and reached material levels that are obviously better than before the revolution. But we have been able to do this on the basis of our own efforts, with a combination of seeing to material needs but at the same time creating an awareness that there must be sacrifices and that a country must live within its means in a given historic moment.

“I am speaking a bit theoretically. But the list of mistakes in Poland is impressive.

“Now this situation there led to violent changes in policies. There were sudden drops in prices when there was opposition to them. There were sudden increases in prices.

“Here we have had to explain things that were more complex than raising the price of bread. We have had to explain, for instance, the limiting of some food products at the beginning of the revolution. But when there is a leadership that has a relationship with the people which is open and frank and direct, the people understand and it becomes possible to overcome any difficulty. The people develop their political awareness through this facing up to difficulties.

“In Poland the situation was quite the contrary, and all this led to a very peculiar situation where you had a socialist government which wanted to build socialism and at a given moment becomes alienated from appreciable sectors of the working class. And that brought about phenomena such as solidarity or any other type of phenomenon. Because what is inevitable is that a response will have to emerge.

“This malaise has to be expressed, not necessarily against the system, but against the way that certain objectives are reached. We feel that in Poland socialism itself, its laws and rules have not been questioned. What we have seen is that any social system, no matter how just or good it may be, is susceptible to serious mistakes that can lead to consequences which might even endanger a system such as socialism.”

Page 21, column 2, para 2, line 9: replace “workers state” with “socialist state”.

Page 21, column 1, para 2, line 10: after “world socialist revolution.” insert “The most favorable situation in a workers state advancing to socialism is in fact to have the entire working people united in support of one party, the revolutionary communist party. This should of course be achieved, not by decree, but as a result of the genuine conviction of the masses that such a party represents their interests, and the voluntary unification of all the pro-revolution political forces into a single party.”

Page 21, column 2, para 2, line 10: replace “shown itself equal to these tasks” with “truly represents the interests of the workers and peasants, and unites the proletarian vanguard in the struggle for socialism”.

Page 21, column 2, para 1, line 14: delete “Naturally, the unity of the working people led by the revolutionary party is most real and effective when it is entirely voluntary and not based on the legal proscription of other parties.”

Page 21, column 2, para 1, line 2: replace “, even though their factional activities were not a crime under Cuban law.” with “for distributing secret government documents and attempting to undermine Cuba’s relations with other countries.”

Page 21, column 2, para 1, line 5: after “because of” insert “misdeeds related to”.

Page 21, column 2, para 5: replace “Thus, unlike the July 26 Movement, the FSLN based itself on a program which, while it had a revolutionary-democratic axis, also included measures transitional to the establishment of a workers state.” with “The FSLN therefore clearly understood the potential of a revolutionary-democratic and transitional program to mobilise the masses of workers and peasants to change society.”

Page 22, column 2, para 5, line 4: delete “(a product of Vietnam’s victory over US imperialism).”

Page 24, column 2, para 7: before “The revolutionaries of the FSLN” insert new para reading:

“The decision to hold elections for president and for a constituent assembly in November 1984 has also benefited the revolution against its domestic and foreign enemies. The boycott by right-wing forces only underlines their lack of popular support, while US imperialism’s lies about ‘totalitarianism’ in Nicaragua are further exposed. The elections make clear that the Sandinistas have broad popular support for the social changes they have led, and will constitute a mandate for the further progress of the revolution.”

Page 25, column 1, para 1: replace “Whatever the precise view of the FSLN or the CCP at the moment, the indication is that the views of both are open to modification through discussion and the influence of events.” with “This process of learning from each other’s experiences can enrich the understanding not only of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutionaries but also of revolutionaries everywhere.”

Page 25, column 1, para 2: change heading of thesis 13 from “The revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala” to “The revolutionary struggle in El Salvador”.

Page 25, column 1, para 1: replace: “The revolutionary victory in Nicaragua has given a major impetus to the revolutionary forces in El Salvador and Guatemala. One important lesson that revolutionary forces in both countries have drawn from the 1978 reunification of the FSLN is the need for unity in the struggle against the US-backed dictatorship.” with “The revolutions in Cuba in 1959 and in Nicaragua in 1979 both mark major turning points in the political history of El Salvador. By assimilating the key lessons of these two victories the leadership of the Salvadoran revolution, which is today organised in the Democratic Revolutionary Front/Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, has been able on both occasions to move the revolutionary process

ahead qualitatively.

"At the same time the Salvadoran revolution has its own strong traditions going back at least to the 1920s and 1930s when the fledgling Communist Party, under the leadership of Augustin Farabundo Marti, began the struggle for power.

"This early insurrectionary struggle was crushed, however, and for almost three decades prior to the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959 the Salvadoran political process became dominated by electoralism among the opposition parties, including the Communist Party. With the Cuban victory a minority in the Communist Party drew the conclusion that it was necessary to break with electoralism and reformism and adopt the strategy of armed revolutionary struggle in order to overturn the ruling oligarchy. This political break and the establishment of guerrilla forces marks the opening of the modern period of revolutionary struggle in El Salvador.

"The revolutionary victory in Nicaragua gave a major impetus to the revolutionary forces in El Salvador. One important lesson that revolutionary forces there have drawn from the 1978 reunification of the FSLN is the need for unity in the struggle against the US-backed dictatorship."

Page 25, column 1, para 3, line 2: replace "has been" with "was" and after "formed" insert "in 1980".

Page 25, column 1, para 3: after "student organisations." insert new paras reading:

"Under the leadership of Augustin Farabundo Marti, the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS) was formed in 1930 from the Salvadoran Revolutionary Workers' Federation, which Marti also led. This was a product of a period of peasant and labor struggles in the 1920s inspired by the Russian revolution. The PCS was associated with the Third International.

"On January 22, 1932, an ill-planned and abortive insurrection led by the PCS was crushed at the cost of 30,000 dead, including Farabundo Marti himself. This defeat, which decimated the fledgling PCS, ushered in the period of military dictatorship which still exists today.

"Worker and student mobilisations inspired by the Cuban victory in 1959 played a role in the demise of the ruling military regime which fell to a junta pledged to the recognition of the Cuban government. This junta fell in a counter-coup which established a "Civilian-Military Directorate" constructed to implement the US 'Alliance for Progress' plan, Washington's attempt to counter the influence of the Cuban revolution.

"The 1960s were a period of rebuilding the mass movement and the resurgence of mass struggles including a general strike in 1967 and a strike wave, led by teachers, a year later. In these circumstances, the Salvadoran rulers used a series of fraudulent elections — in 1962, 1966, 1967, 1972, and 1977 — as a tactic to head off the mass movement. The opposition parties, including the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats organised into the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), and the Communist Party — under the name of the National Democratic Union (UDN) — all regarded these elections as the main arena for political struggle against the oligarchy.

"It was also in these conditions that the debate on armed struggle developed in the mass movement and within the Communist Party. A minority in the PCS which had fought for nearly 10 years to reorient the party in a revolutionary direction finally split in 1969 over this question and by 1972 had formed the Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), which began the organisation of the guerrilla struggle.

"When, in an attempt to head off the repercussions of the Nicaraguan revolution in July 1979, a reform-minded civilian-military junta took power with heavy US backing in the coup of Oc-

tober 15, the UDN along with the PDC and the MNR accepted cabinet posts. However, the repression continued and the junta proved incapable of instituting any reforms. As a result, the opposition parties left the junta, precipitating a split in the PDC and the formation of the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC).

"An earlier split from the PDC produced the revolutionary organisation, the Party of the Salvadoran Revolution (PRS) — with an armed wing, the Revolutionary People's Army (ERP) — in 1971. In 1975, the National Resistance (RN) — linked to the guerrilla force known as the FARN — was formed from a split in the PRS.

"While the 1970s were a period of differentiation and reorientation among the revolutionary organisations, the '80s are a period of unification. This was marked by the formation of the FMLN in October 1980 — including the FPL, PCS, PRS, RN, and the MPSC. In the preceding April the FDR was formed by mass organisations linked to these parties and included also the MNR."

Page 25, column 1, para 4: delete "Unlike the situation that existed in Nicaragua, there are not major divisions within the Salvadoran bourgeoisie, and no significant sector of that class is in opposition to the dictatorship."

Page 25, column 2, para 5, line 3: after "workers and peasants' government." insert "The leadership of the FDR/FMLN consciously understand this as a transitional form to a socialist state. In a 1984 interview conducted with the FMLN magazine, Senal de Libertad, Ruben Zamora, a member of the FDR/FMLN Political/Diplomatic Commission explains it as follows:

"The Program for a Revolutionary Government is the basis of the FMLN/FDR alliance . . . In the face of the final, global objectives of the revolution, which are consummated in a socialist society, the FDR/FMLN's Proposal for a Revolutionary Democratic Government was not a proposal for socialism, but a medium-term proposal for advances towards socialism."

"The 1984 proposal by the FMLN/FDR for a Provisional Government of Broad Participation is consistent with this program and a necessary tactical step to advance the needs of the Salvadoran revolution. The object of the proposal is the establishment of a provisional government including all revolutionary and democratic forces outside the oligarchy, which will eliminate the repressive forces linked to the oligarchy, purge and reform the armed forces which will then be amalgamated with the FMLN, institute a range of immediate economic, social and political reforms, and conduct open and free general elections.

"As Ruben Zamora explains: 'The Proposal for a Government of Broad Participation, as its name indicates, is first of all a proposal for negotiations, and secondarily, for a provisional government; that is a short term proposal. It sets forward the measures that are indispensable in the country right now.'

"Zamora correctly answers criticism of this proposal that it is an unprincipled compromise which overturns the previous FDR program:

"At the heart of this whole problem is the problem of reformism. The fundamental question, in my opinion, is this: does the plan for a Government of Broad Participation mean that our fronts are abandoning their revolutionary character and becoming reformist organisations — yes or no?

"If you were to try to answer this question solely on the basis of the proposals and concrete measures in the document, you would conclude: Yes, the FMLN-FDR have turned reformist.

"But this would involve a totally idealist analysis of Salvadoran reality, a formal analysis ignoring the fact that what is decisive in every social situation, in every process of social struggle,

is the character of the social forces that are brought into action around the various proposals. It is on this basis, I believe, that one's analysis must be begun.

"If the majority of our people, if the organised power of our people were in the hands of sectors of the petty bourgeoisie holding to reformist positions, then the FMLN-FDR's proposal would amount in practice to reformism. But if the basic forces of our people, that is to say the organised workers and peasants, are tightly bound up with the revolutionary forces, that is with the FMLN-FDR, then the proposal for a Government of Broad Participation helps draw in intermediate forces, while the fundamental direction of the process is determined by the camp in which the basic forces are located.

"For this reason, proposing a measure in a European country is not the same as proposing it in El Salvador. In the European countries basic forces such as the organised working class are in the hands of parties like the social democrats and christian democrats. The thrust of a proposal will therefore be determined by the control exercised by the social democrats and christian democrats over these forces.

"In El Salvador on the other hand the basic forces, the organised workers and peasants, are not on the side of the christian democrats or the army. They are with the FMLN-FDR, and therefore give the FMLN-FDR its fundamental direction."

"Political differences with this analysis are behind the split in the FMLN which occurred during 1983, producing the Revolutionary Workers' Organisation (MOR). While it claims to represent the continuity of the revolutionary program of the FMLN/FDR, the MOR is outside this organisation and maintains a sectarian attitude towards the proposal for a Broad Government, claiming that the inclusion of democratic sectors is a betrayal of the revolution. Zamora answers this criticism as follows:

"First of all, the thesis that the MOR represents the mass work in El Salvador has to be rejected. That's false. The proof lies in the fact that the strikes, if they are to be linked to any revolutionary organisations, are to be linked to the organisations of the FMLN and not to the MOR. The MOR has no right to go into the exterior speaking about mass work which they are not doing within the country. That is the first element.

"But let's proceed to the question of continuity. I believe that to an extent the positions of the MOR do represent a continuity, but an ahistorical and mistaken continuity. The MOR represents the positions of the revolutionary movement of the 1970s and has been incapable of modifying these positions: it has proven incapable of recognising the very strength of the revolutionary movement as it has developed, and of recognising the change in the conditions that four years of war have produced in the country.

"The problem of the MOR is not a problem of who may or may not be revolutionaries; I don't believe we have to discuss that. The basic problem is that they are revolutionaries who are totally mistaken, who are living in the 1970s instead of in 1984. They are thus expressing hard-line positions which would have made sense and been correct in 1975, but which in 1984 are quite divorced from reality.

"Because of the actual development of events in El Salvador we believe that the MOR does not represent and will never represent a really important force. It is the problem of remaining anchored in the past and not recognising the realities of the country."

Page 25, column 1, para 6, line 5: delete "Even the intervention of several thousand Honduran troops in mid-1982 was unable to achieve anything that the regime could point to as a victory.

"The increasing military strength of the FDR/FMLN and the growing weakness of the dictatorship are to a large extent based on corresponding political advances and defeats. The failure of

the January 1981 offensive to overthrow the regime has clearly not stopped the FDR/FMLN from continuing to broaden its support. The electoral charade of March 1982 succeeded only in destroying the fig leaf of a "middle course," supposedly represented by the Duarte regime, between the real alternatives of brutal repression and a revolutionary victory."

Page 25, column 2, para 7: after "revolutionary victory." insert new paras reading:

"Since the General Offensive of January 1981 which signaled the opening of the civil war on a broad scale across the country, the FMLN has increased both its ability to fight and defeat contingents of the armed forces on numerous fronts and to secure as "liberated zones" big areas of territory in the north and east which the dictatorship cannot penetrate.

"The FMLN/FDR now controls and administers one-third of the Salvadoran countryside in which it organises social and military production, operates an extensive health system, conducts literacy and other education classes, and in which it has established organs of popular power through elections to local administrative bodies. These liberated zones are defended by the troops of the FMLN, popular militias and the people in arms.

"This is correctly characterised by the FMLN/FDR as a situation of dual power.

"Under heavy pressure from the government of the United States the dictatorship responded to these advances by the revolutionary forces by staging elections in 1982 and 1984. Behind this was an attempt to win support in the United States, especially in Congress, for Reagan's military policy in the region by making it appear that the US is supporting a democratically elected government. Consistent with this is US support for Christian Democratic forces led by Napoleon Duarte as the so-called middle ground between the extreme right (D'Aubuisson-ARENA-oligarchy) and the extreme left. For this reason, the CIA contributed a reported \$1 million to ensure Duarte's victory in the 1984 presidential elections.

"While this strategy frees the hands of the US administration to continue funding the dictatorship, in the longer term it can only succeed in destroying the fig leaf of a "middle course" between the real alternatives of brutal repression and a revolutionary victory. Consequently, the US has carefully supported its political manoeuvres by completing preparations for a massive invasion of El Salvador in the event of an FMLN military victory and/or to overthrow the government of Nicaragua.

"By putting forward the proposal for a government of broad participation the FMLN/FDR has responded in the best possible way to these complex political and military conditions. The proposal is based on the unity and military strength of the FMLN/FDR, the achievement of extensive support throughout El Salvador for the rebel forces, and the social, economic and political developments in the liberated zones. It is significant, for example, that the proposal calls for the inclusion of popular power organs already developed into the provisional government.

"The proposal is also designed to split the armed forces between the extreme right wing supporters of the oligarchy, the "gorillas," and a "constitutionalist" wing which was evident in the first civilian-military junta of 1979 in which many of the current leaders of the FDR participated as ministers.

Page 25, column 2, para 8, line 1: after "has" insert "also".

Page 25, column 2, para 8, line 2: after "initiatives" insert ", of which the provisional government proposals are a part,".

Page 25, column 2, para 8: after "risking their lives" insert new subhead "14. Developing class struggle in Guatemala and Hon-

duras”.

Page 25, column 2, para 10, line 2: replace “is particularly strong” with “most of its struggles have been conducted”.

Page 25, column 2, para 10, line 3: delete “Since the unification, there has clearly been an intensification and broadening of the armed struggle.”

Page 26, column 1, para 5: after “(Intercontinental Press, March 18, 1982).” insert new paras reading:

“The founding document of the URNG indicates that its goal is a workers and peasants’ government that would implement policies broadly similar to those being carried through by the FSLN in Nicaragua:

“The principal cause of our people’s poverty is the economic and political domination of the big, wealthy, and repressive foreigners and Guatemalans who rule our country. The revolution will put an end to that domination and will guarantee that the product of the labor of all will benefit those who produce the wealth through their creative efforts.

“The property of the big, wealthy, repressive ones will pass into the hands of the revolutionary government, which will ensure that this wealth is utilized to solve the needs of the working people. The revolution will assure the implementation of a true agrarian reform, distributing land to those who work it in an individual, cooperative, or collective way.

“The revolution will guarantee the existence of small and medium agrarian holdings, and will distribute to those who work it the land now held by the top military chiefs and by the corrupt, avaricious, and repressive officials and businessmen. The revolution will guarantee small and medium commercial property, and will encourage the creation and development of the national industry that Guatemala needs in order to progress.

“The revolution will guarantee effective control over prices so as to benefit the great majority, and will guarantee by law adequate wages for all rural and urban workers. Power in the hands of the people will be the basis for solving the big problems of health care, housing, and illiteracy that the immense majority of the Guatemalan people suffer.” (Intercontinental Press, March 8, 1982)

“Responding to the threat posed by the formation of the URNG, younger officers of the Guatemalan army staged a coup in the aftermath of the March 1982 elections and placed General Efraín Ríos Montt in power. The new regime expanded and intensified the army’s war against the population, basing its strategies on counterinsurgency techniques developed by the US in Vietnam. Urban death-squad activities, which had become politically expensive, were curbed; at the same time a ferocious onslaught was unleashed against the Indian population of the highlands. By mid-1983 the Ríos Montt government had presided over the murder of an estimated 10,000 civilians; close to 200,000 people, mostly Indian peasants, had fled over the border into Mexico, and as many as one million people had been displaced within Guatemala itself.

“Initially, many villagers fled into remote mountainous areas to escape the army massacres; when the guerrilla organisations proved incapable of providing food for them, most of these people were forced into army-controlled “model villages.” These are little better than concentration camps.

“As the areas where the URNG was strongest were largely depopulated, the guerrilla advances of the earlier period were brought to a halt. But although the revolutionaries were forced by the attacks on their social base to curtail their military activity, the movement’s fighting cadre remained virtually intact.

“By mid-1983 Ríos Montt’s many unorthodox methods had

alienated important sectors of the Guatemalan ruling class. On August 8 that year he was ousted in a military coup, apparently organised with the connivance of Washington. The new head of state was General Oscar Mejía Victores, a soldier of a more conventional stripe.

“Under Mejía Victores the urban terror has resumed its former ferocity. Between October 1983 and April 1984, 57 political leaders and activists were reported killed. Later in 1984 murders of civilians were reportedly running at close to 100 a month. Undismayed by this slaughter, the Reagan administration has resumed supplies of military hardware to Guatemala and has greatly expanded economic assistance. Washington announced plans to extend “non-lethal” military aid worth \$10 million to Guatemala in fiscal 1983, along with food and economic aid worth \$96 million.

“During 1984 the URNG appears to have partially reconsolidated its base in the countryside, and the level of armed struggle is said to be increasing. The revolutionaries claim to have caused the army 200 casualties in the month of March alone. In April 1984 the US State Department was advising tourists against travel in most of the western half of the country because of guerrilla activity.

“In addition, the URNG has stepped up its urban work during the recent period. In March 1984 it was reported that the army was obliged to commit 4000 troops to the defence of Guatemala City.

“Meanwhile, the Guatemalan ruling class shows no sign of being able to cure the long-term economic malaise that underlies its political dilemmas. The country’s Gross Domestic Product shrank by 2.5 per cent in 1983; the external debt, much of it contracted on highly unfavorable terms, was expected to reach \$2.2 billion in 1984. In August 1984 the Guatemalan government was reportedly under strong pressure from the International Monetary Fund because of a domestic budget deficit twice that planned.

“In Honduras, acute economic crisis and a rising tempo of class struggle have helped bring about a significant destabilisation of ruling-class politics during 1984. Serious antagonisms have developed between bourgeois factions over the large-scale US military presence in the country and the local military’s close integration into Washington’s war plans.

“During the period from 1980 to 1983, Honduras’ gross domestic product per capita shrank at an average annual rate of 3.1 per cent. USAID economic assistance of \$68.9 million in 1984 has gone nowhere near offsetting capital flight, estimated by the US embassy at \$1 billion over the past few years. Private investment in the economy has fallen to negligible levels. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund has made stringent demands on the government to cut living standards and government expenditures in order to contain the spiraling foreign debt, which by early 1984 exceeded \$2 billion.

“Most of the burden of this economic collapse has been placed on Honduras’ impoverished workers and peasants. Six of every 10 Hondurans are now living in conditions of extreme poverty, with half of the population receiving only 17 per cent of national family income. Unemployment and underemployment are estimated at 65 per cent.

“The Honduran labor movement, traditionally among the better organised in Central America, has fought back against the attempts to cut workers’ living standards. In late May 1984 50,000 workers marched in protest against new tax and bond laws, forcing the government to withdraw the measures. These struggles have been impeded by the right-wing leadership of most labor movement organisations, and also by armed forces terror. According to the Honduran Human Rights Commission, 113 people have disappeared since early 1982 after being detained by the police. Many more have fallen victim to death-squad killings.

"The attacks on human rights have been met with repeated mass protests. Workers have responded to the kidnapping of labor leaders by organising strikes and demonstrations; in March 1984 25,000 people rallied against what labor leaders termed 'escalating anti-union repression.'

"Unable to come up with a workable strategy for dealing with the social and economic crisis, the traditional Honduran ruling parties have split in recent years into a long series of warring factions. Nominally, Honduras is ruled by the Liberal Party administration of President Roberto Suazo Cordova, elected in November 1980. However, real executive power in the country is reckoned to lie with the armed forces commander and with the US ambassador.

"During 1982 and 1983 Honduran political life was dominated by high-handed, bellicose armed forces chief General Gustavo Alvarez. Under Alvarez, the Honduran military collaborated closely with the US in organising the counter-revolutionary guerrilla war against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. On at least one occasion, in early 1982, plans by Alvarez to stage an all-out invasion of Nicaragua reportedly reached an advanced stage of preparation.

"Alvarez also provided enthusiastic support for Washington's efforts to turn Honduras into a support base for direct US military intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Mesoamerica in its March 1984 issue provided details of these preparations:

"To date, US-funded military construction includes five airstrips, two barracks and office complexes, a field hospital and 13 miles of anti-tank trenches, as well as the Regional Military Training Centre (CREMS) near the Caribbean port of Puerto Castillo, where 120 US Green Berets are training Honduran and Salvadoran troops. Plans for future building include four more airstrips, creation of an ammunition storage depot, a permanent base north of Honduras's capital, Tegucigalpa, and the \$32 million US-Honduran naval base at Puerto Castillo, which could replace the Pentagon's Guantanamo (Cuba) and Panama bases after their leases expire in the year 2000.'

"In 1983 the US and Honduran armed forces increased their readiness for war in Central America by beginning an open-ended series of large-scale joint manoeuvres code-named "Big Pine" and, unsubtly, "Grenadier." Since these exercises began, the minimum number of US military personnel stationed in Honduras has been put at 700-800; at times the total has exceeded 5000.

"In March 1984 Alvarez was sacked and exiled, in what amounted to a virtual coup d'etat. The reasons for his ouster reportedly relate both to his imperious methods of command and to a widespread sentiment in the armed forces that Alvarez was demanding too low a price for Honduran collaboration in Washington's war projects. Honduras at this stage was spending 20 per cent of its state budget on the military, and was setting aside tens of millions of dollars in scarce foreign currency to purchase extra fuel for the military exercises.

"Alvarez's opponents in the military are also believed to have been dissatisfied at his failure to insist that the US train more Honduran troops at the CREMS base, which was set up in order to provide extended training for Salvadoran units. Suspicions in the Honduran military of the Salvadoran armed forces have remained strong ever since the 1969 war between the two countries.

"Under new strongman General Walter Lopez Reyes, the Honduran military announced its determination to review the country's 30-year-old military agreement with the US. Lopez also set out to create an image of greater independence of imperialism. Nicaraguan contra installations were moved from near Tegucigalpa to the border region. Unlike Alvarez, Lopez has expressed support for the Contadora peace efforts.

"The changes Lopez has brought to Honduran policies, though

essentially cosmetic, represent a response to the increasing popular opposition that the US presence in Honduras is encountering. At the end of July 1984 a demonstration of 2000 people demanded the expulsion of US military personnel from Honduras. One of the three main factions of the Liberal Party has also demanded an end to the US military presence, and a cut in Honduran military spending. Furthermore, the Catholic church in Honduras has taken a strong and vocal stand against the foreign military presence.

"The revolutionary left in Honduras has not been strong enough to play a major political role, but it is implanted in fertile soil. Early in 1983 six revolutionary organisations joined forces in a single front, the National Unified Leadership of the Honduran Revolutionary Movement. Members of the front are the Revolutionary Workers Party of Central America (PRTC), People's Revolutionary Forces-Lorenzo Zelaya (FPR-Lorenzo Zelaya), Movement for Revolutionary Unity (MUR), Communist Party of Honduras (PCH), People's Liberation Movement-Cinchoneros (MPL-Cinchoneros), and Morazanist Front for the Liberation of Honduras (FMLH)."

Page 26, column 1, para 6: change heading of thesis 14 from "14. Revolution in Grenada" to "15. Revolution and counter-revolution in Grenada".

Page 26, column 1: delete para 6 and insert new para reading:

"The Grenadian revolution, led by the New Jewel Movement, brought to power the first workers and farmers' government in an English-speaking country. In the four and a half years of its existence, this government provided an inspiring example for the oppressed peoples of the other Caribbean islands."

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 1: replace "and the NJM have confronted" with "headed by Maurice Bishop sought to overcome".

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 4: replace "They are" with "Under Bishop's leadership, the Grenadian revolutionaries took major steps forward in".

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 6: after "example." insert "Unionisation itself rose from 30 per cent to 90 per cent of the workforce, with the organisation of agricultural and unskilled workers."

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 7: replace "They have built and led new" with "New".

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 8: after "children" insert "— were built by the NJM." and replace "They are carrying out an ongoing campaign to wipe out functional illiteracy and raise the educational level of the producing classes. They have organised a" with "A".

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 12: after "workers and farmers" insert "began to be constructed."

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 14: after "zonal councils" delete "is" and insert "was".

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 14: replace ". These councils are" with "as".

Page 27, column 1, para 2, line 15: replace "can" with "could".

Page 27, column 1, para 2: after "government officials." insert new para reading:

"Under the Bishop government impressive progress was made within a few years in bringing about a series of improvements in the economic and social conditions of Grenada's working people. The living standard of the vast majority of the people rose rapidly. Between 1979 and 1983 an overall real growth in the economy of 13.4 per cent was achieved. Unemployment dropped from nearly 50 per cent in 1979 to 14.1 per cent by the end of 1982, and plans were underway to eliminate it entirely by 1986. The inflation rate was reduced from 22 per cent in 1978 to 6.5 per cent in 1983. For the first time in Grenada's history workers' wages rose faster than prices. During the period 1981-83, real wages rose by 30 per cent. In addition, the PRG exempted the poorest 30 per cent of the population from taxes."

Page 27, column 1, para 3, line 1: delete "has".

Page 27, column 1, para 3, line 5: delete "has".

Page 27, column 1, para 3, line 7: replace "have been" with "were".

Page 27, column 1, para 3, line 12: replace "is becoming a reality" with "was nearing completion in 1983."

Page 27, column 1: replace para 4 with new para reading:

"The PRG provided Grenadians with free health care, new expanded hospital services, and, with Cuba's help, a 100 per cent increase in the number of doctors. Free education and a major literacy campaign reduced the number of illiterates to 3 per cent of the population. Milk for young children and lunches for school-children was provided free or at subsidised prices."

Page 27, column 1, para 5: replace "Grenada follows" with "The Bishop government followed".

Page 27, column 1, para 5, line 5: replace "has sought" with "tried".

Page 27, column 1, para 6, line 1: replace "seeks" with "sought".

Page 27, column 1, para 6: after "Atlantic coast." insert new paras reading:

However, the immense economic and social problems that confronted the PRG and the limited number of politically experienced cadre that were available to the NJM to carry out the tasks of state administration and the building of the mass organisations meant that the work of building the NJM itself was neglected. This weakness provided an opening for the development within the NJM of a clique centered around Bernard Coard, which, through methods that were very reminiscent of those used by the Escalante group in the Cuban Communist Party, set out to usurp control of the NJM and the PRG. Using his position as chairman of the Organising Committee of the NJM and as minister of planning and finance, Coard, by offering special privileges to those who would support him, consolidated a secret faction within the leadership of the NJM and within the army command.

"The Coard faction sought to foster opposition to Bishop and other leaders of the NJM by claiming the difficulties the revolution faced were not due to objective circumstances but to the supposed "petty-bourgeois" character of these leaders. The Coard faction considered itself to be the "genuine" Marxist-Leninist wing of the NJM. It expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of the revolutionary process and advocated the immediate implementation of "socialist" measures. Coard's views, however, far from being Marxist-Leninist, expressed the bureaucratic impatience characteristic of a petty-bourgeois functionary who has become divorced from the masses. Not surprisingly, the Coard faction's

adventurist perspectives were combined with a contemptuous attitude toward the masses and their authentic revolutionary leadership.

"Having lined up a majority of the Central Committee of the NJM, the Coard clique placed Bishop under house arrest on October 12, 1983, and usurped control of the PRG. A week later, Bishop and five other central leaders of the NJM were murdered by soldiers acting on the orders of the usurpers. General Hudson Austin, a Coard supporter, declared the PRG dissolved and proclaimed the establishment of a "Revolutionary Military Council" headed by himself. A four-day, round-the-clock curfew was immediately imposed, effectively placing the entire Grenadian people under house arrest. These events marked the overthrow of the workers and farmers government and created the opportunity that US imperialism had long sought to invade Grenada and re-establish a stable neocolonial regime.

"On October 25, two weeks after the Coard coup, thousands of US troops landed on Grenada. US imperialism's goal, as Fidel Castro explained to a rally of over one million people in Havana on November 14 to honor the Cuban volunteer construction workers killed during the US invasion, was to 'kill the symbol of the Grenadian revolution.' However, as Fidel said, 'the symbol was already dead. The Grenadian revolutionaries themselves destroyed it with their split and their colossal errors. We believe that, after the death of Bishop and his closest comrades, after the army fired on the people, and after the party and government divorced themselves from the masses and isolated themselves from the world, the Grenadian revolutionary process could not survive.'

"'In our view,' Castro said, 'Coard's group objectively destroyed the revolution and opened the door to imperialist aggression.'

"The brutal overthrow of the Bishop government demobilised the Grenadian masses, severely weakening the resistance to the US invasion. Many Grenadians, in fact, regarded the US military occupation as a lesser evil in comparison with the terrorist regime imposed by the Coard faction.

"Following the US invasion, some 2000 Grenadians were detained and held in barbed-wire concentration camps. Cadres of the NJM and the mass organisations were particular targets of the US occupiers' repression. A major purge of government employees was launched and the US-imposed puppet regime of Governor-General Paul Scoon set about reversing the political, economic, and social gains the masses had made under the Bishop-led workers and farmers' government.

"Numerous PRG programs, such as the international airport project, the agrarian reform, the adult literacy program, and free milk distribution have been halted. Idle land expropriated by the PRG to create state farms has been handed back to its former owners. Industries set up by the PRG have been closed or sold off to private owners. Within six months of the US occupation the numbers of Grenadians who were unemployed had trebled.

"However, the pace at which the US puppet regime is able to carry through its goal of dismantling the accomplishments of the PRG is hampered by the fact that the Grenadian people continue to identify with the policies of the Bishop government. As the real goals of the US occupation have become clear to the Grenadian masses, resistance to the counter-revolutionary policies of the US-imposed government has begun to grow.

"The experience of four years of a workers and farmers' government provides an indestructible legacy upon which the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist wing of the NJM, regrouped in the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, will be able to rebuild the mass revolutionary movement in Grenada.

Page 27, column 2, para 1: change heading of thesis 15 to "16."

Page 27, column 2, para 1, line 1: after "followed by the" insert "Bishop leadership of the". Replace "since" with "from".

Page 27, column 2, para 1, line 2: replace "has" with "had".

Page 27, column 2, para 1, line 14: delete "by the FSLN and the NJM".

Page 28, column 1: delete para 3.

Page 28, column 1: change thesis 16 to "17".

Page 28, column 1, para 5, line 2: replace "led by the national bourgeoisie, but must be led by the working class, in alliance with the broad masses of the peasantry and other petty-bourgeois strata;" with "consistently led by the national bourgeoisie. If it is to carry through a thoroughgoing agrarian reform and the destruction of the old neocolonial state apparatus, it must be led by the working class, in alliance with the broad masses of the peasantry and other petty-bourgeois strata, united around a revolutionary democratic program."

Page 28, column 1, para 8, line 6: replace "workers state (dictatorship of the proletariat)" with "socialist state".

Page 28, column 1, para 8, line 7: after "nationalised, planned economy." insert "The workers and peasants' government is thus the transitional form of the state power of the proletariat and its allies preceding the consolidation of a socialist state. As Trotsky pointed out in 1922, it is a 'transition to the proletarian dictatorship, the full and completed one.' (The First Five Years of the Communist International, Vol. 2, p. 324)."

Page 29, column 1, para 3, line 2: delete "and Grenadian".

Page 29, column 1: change thesis 17 to "18".

Page 29, column 2, para 2, line 2: delete "FDR".

Page 30, column 1, para 1, line 3: replace "characterisation was accurate in the sense that Trotsky first used the phrase — to stress that the point is now to change the world, the great theoreticians of Marxism having already completed the fundamental work of analysing it. The characterisation was also accurate in the sense in which it was more often used — namely, to mean that the team" with "phrase had been used by Trotsky to stress that in this epoch of imperialist decline, the fundamental task of Marxists is to lead the revolution, not to engage in further theoretical elaborations of program or analysis. But as applied to the Cuban revolutionaries, the phrase was used to suggest something quite different: that they had".

Page 30, column 1, para 1, line 14: after "revolutionary action." insert new paras reading:

"This view was based on a false conception of the relationship between theory and action, implying a dichotomy between the two that is contradictory of historical materialism. The source of this error was the failure of the Fourth International to assimilate the Leninist theory of revolution in the underdeveloped countries, which guided the actions of the Cuban revolutionaries. Because of this failure, the Fourth International tended to view the successive stages of the Cuban Revolution as the result of a changing consciousness in the Fidelista leadership rather than as the course of development foreseen by Leninist theory. Our own underestimation of and consequent impatience with revolutionary-democratic tasks caused us to misjudge those who were lead-

ing the Cuban masses through the necessary development from the national-democratic to socialist revolution.

"This approach, of belittling the Cuban revolutionaries' theoretical understanding in order not to confront the weaknesses in our own grasp of Leninist theory, was expressed in a resolution of the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International in 1963:"

Page 30, column 1: delete para 2.

Page 30, column 1: delete para 4.

Page 30, column 1, para 4: after "patronising and sectarian." insert new para reading:

"The concept that the Cubans were "revolutionists of action" had further harmful consequences in addition to allowing the Fourth International to delay confronting the flaws in its theory of revolution in the underdeveloped countries. It inevitably suggested that the "Castroists" were theoretically handicapped by their supposedly late acceptance of Marxism, and that they would therefore be less able than other Marxists to resist hostile pressures, in particular the pressure of bureaucratisation."

Page 30, column 1, para 6, line 3: replace "deepening their own understanding of Marxism." with "reviving for Marxists everywhere important Leninist ideas that had long been obscured by Stalinism."

Page 30, column 2, para 1, line 2: after "in the region." insert new para reading:

"The conscious extension of the socialist revolution in Central America takes place in the context of a new rise of mass struggles throughout Latin America as a whole, as evidenced by the collapse of military dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia, and the mass upsurge against the Pinochet regime in Chile. In this situation the influence of the Marxist leaderships of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions has been greatly enhanced throughout the continent. Other revolutionary and class-struggle forces, such as the Brazilian Workers Party leadership, have been inspired by the Sandinista revolution and have sought to assimilate its lessons for their own struggles. These forces are seeking to extend and deepen their collaboration with the Cuban and Nicaraguan leaderships. These developments greatly increase the opportunities for overcoming the crisis of revolutionary leadership in Latin America as a whole."

Page 30, column 2, para 6, line 2: after "seen in the fact that" insert "our errors concerning revolutionary-democratic tasks in the underdeveloped countries did not prevent".

Page 30, column 2, para 6, line 3: replace "was" with "from forming".

Page 30, column 2, para 6, line 8: after "proletarian leadership." insert "In the 1960s our movement was presented with major opportunities to link up with and collaborate with the "Castroist" current. The failure to achieve significant advances in this regard were not due to an unwillingness on the part of these comrades to enter in collaboration with us. Rather, it was due to the failure of the Fourth International to give this process of seeking collaboration the priority it deserved."

Page 30, column 2, para 6, line 8: after "It is" insert "also".

Page 30, column 2, para 6, line 8: delete ", however,".

Page 31, column 1, para 3, line 4: replace "workers states." with "socialist states."

Page 31, column 1, para 3, line 11: replace "deformed and degenerated workers states" with "bureaucratically-ruled socialist states".

Page 31, column 1, para 3, line 12: after "proletarian leadership." insert "We must recognise that we are part of the same movement as these comrades — the world revolutionary Marxist movement, the genuine world communist movement, and act accordingly. We must seek to maximise at every point our fraternal political collaboration with these comrades, to seek out and emphasise the points of agreement we have with them, and to subordinate our differences with them in order to achieve the maximum possible collaboration. Without ignoring or blurring over the differences we do have, we should nevertheless not make a priority of polemicising with them on these differences.

"In our propaganda we must seek to inspire our own members and those whom we influence with the achievements and revolutionary example provided by Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Salvadoran revolutions and their Marxist leaderships. We must devote major resources to building the solidarity movement with these revolutions, seek to work closely with the representatives of the Cuban and Central American revolutions in the countries in which we have sections in order to build this movement, invite them to our conferences and other major gatherings, and organise tours by our members and leaders to Cuba and Nicaragua. Already many sections of the Fourth International have taken

exemplary initiatives along these lines with regard to the Nicaraguan revolution and its revolutionary vanguard, the FSLN. Similar initiatives should be taken in regard of the Cuban revolution and its revolutionary vanguard, the Cuban Communist party."

Page 31, column 1, para 3, line 14: make sentence beginning "In countries where "Castroist" parties are leading revolutions" a new para.

Page 31, column 1, para 3, line 17: after "Marxist revolutionaries" insert "who adhere to the Fourth International".

Page 31, column 1, para 3, line 18: after "loyal builders of those parties." insert "We must seek to link up with and attempt to fuse with other revolutionaries in Latin America and elsewhere who identify with the Cuban and Central American revolutionaries. Adherence to the Fourth International should not be made an obstacle to this process. We must ensure that the articles our press publishes or that are written by our members does not cut across these efforts to deepen and extend our political collaboration with the "Castroist" current. This is particularly important because the past history of sectarian attacks on these comrades by those claiming adherence to Trotskyism has created justified suspicion of our movement on their part."

Page 31, column 2, para 1, line 3: delete "the political continuity of Marxism-Leninism and the lessons of the struggle of the Left Opposition to defend that continuity in the face of the bureaucratic degeneration of the first workers state. We bring as well".

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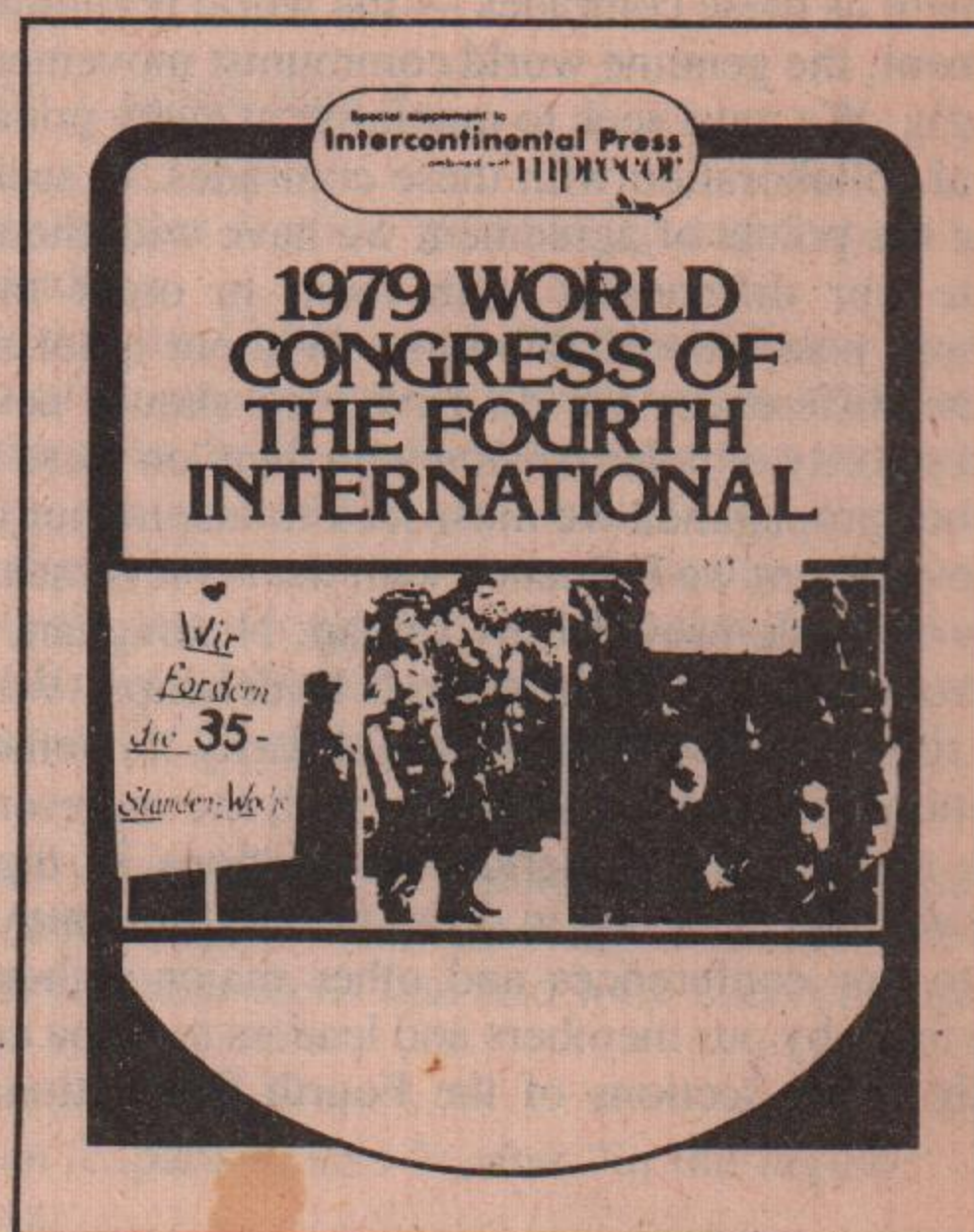
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