

INTERNAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

October 1975

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MINUTES OF THE 27th NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

Ohio, August 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 1975
CONVENED, SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 1975, at 9:20 A.M.

Convened by Barnes.

Welcome to guests present at the convention.

Motion by Reid to send the following message to Joanne Little:

Dear Sister Joanne Little:

The more than 1600 of us gathered at the national convention of the Socialist Workers Party join you in the celebration of your victory. The cry 'Free Joanne Little' was taken up by Blacks, by women, by prisoners, and by many others who saw in your struggle the struggle against the forces of racism, of sexism, and of reaction—not just in North Carolina but throughout the country.

All of us who joined in the movement to defend you were inspired by your courage in the face of this monstrous frame-up, and by your eloquent testimony during the trial. We agree with your statement that your acquittal was not the result of the American system of so-called justice, but of the determined fight put up by you and the hundreds of thousands who rallied to your side.

You have vowed to devote your energies now to working to win freedom for other Blacks and women still held behind bars. We pledge our full support and offer our collaboration in this endeavor. We further pledge to continue our efforts on your behalf until the sentence you were serving at the time of Alligood's vicious attack is overturned.

We extend our warmest congratulations and grasp your hand in solidarity.

Carried by Acclamation

Moment of Silence in Tribute to the memory of comrades Mark Alvarado, James P. Cannon, Bob Chester, Duncan Ferguson, William Gregory, Bill Kitt, Dan Murphy, Greg Nickel, Frances Rosen, Larry Trainor.

Proposal by Barnes: That Oliver chair the first session.
Moved.

Carried.

I. ORGANIZATION OF CONVENTION

Following proposals by D. Jenness for the Presiding Committee:

Proposal: To amend the agenda and schedule proposed by the National Committee, beginning the convention with the reports and discussions on the Political Resolution and

the Black Struggle Resolution, and rescheduling the World Political Situation Report for later in the convention when additional guests from Portugal have arrived.

Moved.

Carried.

Proposal: That the proposed motions for the organization of the convention, as amended, be taken as a whole.

Moved.

Carried.

Proposal: To adopt the following motions:

Motion: That the following rules govern convention procedure:

1. In cases of procedural disputes, discussion shall be limited to two speakers, one for and one against, and that each speaker be limited to two minutes.

2. Discussion from the floor shall be limited to 10 minutes per speaker.

3. A speaker may have the floor only once in a given discussion until all those who wish the floor have had the opportunity to speak.

4. All voting, except for election of National Committee and National Control Commission, will be done by voice vote unless a division of the house is called for; then the vote will be taken by a show of delegate's cards. Election of National Committee and National Control Commission shall take place by secret ballot.

5. Only delegates shall have voice and vote. Fraternal delegates shall have voice and consultative vote.

6. Alternate delegates have voice and vote only when acting to replace a regularly elected delegate.

7. In all other cases, Roberts Rules of Order shall apply.

Motion: That the Presiding Committee be composed of the outgoing Political Committee: Barnes, Breitman, Camejo, Clark, A. Hansen, D. Jenness, Lovell, Seigle, Shaw, B. Sheppard, Thomas, Waters, and convention reporters Stone and Miah.

Motion: To adopt the following agenda:

1. Political Resolution
2. Black Resolution
3. Tasks and Perspectives Report
4. Youth Report
5. World Political Situation
6. World Movement Report
7. Election of National Committee

Motion: That the following time allotments be given to reporters:

1. Political Resolution: 1 hour plus 1/2 hour summary
2. Black Struggle Resolution: 1 hour plus 1/2 hour summary
3. Tasks and Perspectives: 1 1/4 hours plus 1/2 hour summary
4. Youth: 1 hour plus 1/4 hour summary
5. World Political Situation: 1 1/4 hours plus 1/2 hour summary
6. World Movement: 1 1/4 hours plus 1/2 hour summary

Motion: To grant Milt Alvin an extension of 10 minutes during the discussion of the Political Resolution and that he be recognized as the first speaker after the reporter on the Political Resolution.

Motion: That the following workshops and fractions take place:

1. How to win new members, led by Joel Britton
2. Organizing support for SWP campaign against government harassment, led by Syd Stapleton
3. Election campaign, led by Andrea Morell
4. Defense of Iranian political prisoners, led by Caroline Lund
5. Blanco tour and Latin American defense work, led by Mirta Vidal and Jim Little
6. Writing articles and taking photos for the *Militant*, led by Larry Seigle
7. Teachers, led by Erich Martel
8. Defense against right-wing attacks, led by Rich Finkel
9. Blacks in the unions, led by John Hawkins
10. Chicano work, led by Olga Rodriguez
11. Antiracist work, led by Malik Miah and Maceo Dixon
12. Party finances, led by Barb Matson
13. Pathfinder literature distribution, led by Jon Britton
14. Forums, led by Susan LaMont
15. Steel workers, led by Steve Chase
16. Coalition of Labor Union Women, led by Linda Jenness
17. Disclosure suits and campaign finance laws, led by Cindy Burke
18. Puerto Rican work, led by José Pérez
19. Public employees, led by Lynn Henderson
20. Circulation of the press, led by Rose Ogden
21. United Farmworkers support work, led by Nelson Blackstock
22. Regional work and teams, led by Brian Williams
23. Printing trades, led by Sarah Lovell
24. Building trades, led by Nat Weinstein
25. Soviet and Eastern European defense work, led by Dave Frankel
26. Fundraising in the antiracist movement, led by Kipp Dawson
27. Filipinos, Japanese-Americans, and Chinese Americans, led by Steve Chainey
28. Speakers bureau, led by Jean Savage and Rick Berman
29. Women's liberation work, led by Linda Jenness
30. ERA work, led by Nancy Brown
31. Mineworkers, led by Cindy Jaquith
32. Communication workers, led by Frank Lovell

33. Auto workers, led by Frank Lovell
34. Hospital workers, led by Frank Lovell
35. Education, led by Fred Feldman

Motion: To approve the convention schedule (see attached). To be amended according to the changed agenda.

Motion: That Eidsvik, Rupp, M. Scott, and R. Wright serve as convention secretaries.

Motion: To elect a Credentials Committee consisting of five delegates.

Motion: To elect a Constitution Committee consisting of three delegates.

Motion: To elect a Nominating Commission consisting of one delegate from each branch.

Motion: To seat as fraternal delegates the following: (1) National Committee members, (2) members of the National Control Commission, (3) heads of national departments, (4) members of the youth National Executive Committee, (5) one delegate each selected by branch organizing committees, (6) special guests.

Motion: That the convention be open to party members, YSA members, and sympathizers vouched for by the branches.

Motion: That the official convention tape recording be directed by West.

Motion: That the official convention photographers be Hendrickson, Lippman, and H. Snipper.

Motions Carried

Proposal: To take nominations for the Credentials Committee.

Moved.

Carried.

Nominations: P. Wright, Chase, Markey, Hardy, Mann.

Motion: To elect the five nominees.

Carried.

Proposal: To take nominations for the Constitution Committee.

Moved.

Carried.

Nominations: Uhl, Murphy, C. Hildebrand

Motion: To elect the three nominees.

Carried.

The following delegates were subsequently elected by delegations to serve on Nominating Commission:

Dutrow, Atlanta
Petrin, Boston
Gallo, Brooklyn
Scheff, Chicago
Singler, Cleveland

Feigenberg, Denver
Reimers, Detroit
Singer, Houston
Prince, L.A. Central-East
Finkel, L.A. West
Manuel, Lower Manhattan
Schwarz, Milwaukee
Powers, Oakland-Berkeley
David, Philadelphia
Stanton, Pittsburgh
Studer, Portland
Schneider, San Diego
Chainey, San Francisco
Cobet, Seattle
Sandler, St. Louis
Henry, Twin Cities
Myers, Upper West Side
Budka, Washington, D.C.

II. POLITICAL RESOLUTION REPORT

Reporter: Waters

Discussion: Alvin

Motion: To grant Alvin a further 3-minute extension.

Carried.

Further Discussion: Roberts, Lux, Kerry, Mann, R. Sheppard, Seidman, D. Garza

Recess for lunch 12:21 PM—Reconvene 2:10 PM

Further Discussion: Markey, Frankel, Mackler,
Motion: To grant Mackler a 1-minute extension.

Carried.

Further Discussion: Reimers, Teitelbaum,

Motion: by Teitelbaum to amend the rules of the convention to grant Beren 10 minutes speaking time under the political report.

Speaker against: B. Sheppard

Defeated.

Further Discussion: Pulley, Washington, Sojourner, Rose, Thompson,

Proposal by Presiding Committee: To close speakers list and limit remaining speakers time to 8 minutes.

Moved.

Carried.

Further Discussion: Henderson, Lieberman, DeBerry, Nordquist, Ring

Proposal by Barnes for Presiding Committee: To grant Alvin an additional 10 minutes speaking time, and that he be the last speaker before the summary.

Moved.

Carried.

Further discussion: Alvin.

Summary Political Resolution Report: Waters.

Amendment by Alvin (See SWP D.B., Vol. 33, 1).

delegates and seated alternate delegates

for: 0

against: 75

abstentions: 0

Defeated.

consultative delegates

for: 1

against: 54

abstentions: 0

Motion by Waters: To approve the general line of the Political Resolution and Report.

delegates and seated alternate delegates

for: 75

against: 0

abstentions: 0

Motion Carried.

consultative delegates

for: 54

against: 0

abstentions: 1

III. BLACK STRUGGLE RESOLUTION REPORT

Reporter: Thomas

Recess: 6:13 PM

RECONVENED, MONDAY AUGUST 18, 1975, at 9:20 AM

Proposal from Presiding Committee: That Hardy chair the next session.

Moved.

Carried

Discussion: Hernandez, Morrison, Musa, Harris, Kelly, Uhl, Miah, Williams, Singer, Kerry,

Proposal by Presiding Committee: To limit speakers time to 7 minutes.

Moved.

Carried.

Further discussion: Aber, Wright, Reid, Mirelowitz, Weinstein, Washington, Rose, Dixon, Nimtze, Vernier, Thompson.

Proposal by B. Sheppard for the Presiding Committee: That the schedule for the remainder of the day be as follows:

1:45 PM Summary

2:00 PM Tasks and Perspectives Report

3:15 PM Discussion

4:00 PM Recess for fraction meetings

6:00 PM Dinner
8:00 PM Talk by Joe Hansen on "James P. Cannon, The Internationalist."

Moved.

Carried.

Recess for lunch 12:23 PM—Reconvene 2:01 PM

Summary Black Struggle Resolution Report: Thomas

Motion by Thomas: To approve the general line of the Black struggle Resolution and Report.

delegates and seated alternate delegates

for: 75

against: 0

abstentions: 0

Motion Carried.

consultative delegates

for: 54

against: 0

abstentions: 1

IV. TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES REPORT

Reporter: Stone

Discussion: Lovell, R. Sheppard

Recess for Fraction Meetings: 3:45 PM

RECONVENED, TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1975, at 9:11 AM

Proposal from Presiding Committee: That Gannon chair this session.

Moved.

Carried.

Proposal by B. Sheppard from Presiding Committee:
To approve the following schedule for the remainder of the convention:

Tuesday, August 19

7:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 Discussion of Tasks and Perspectives Report
11:00 Summary, Tasks and Perspectives Report (1/2 hour)
11:30 Youth Report (1 hour)
12:30 PM Lunch
2:00 Discussion (2 hours)
4:00 Fraction Meetings and Workshops
6:00 Dinner
8:00 Fraction Meetings and Workshops

Wednesday, August 20

7:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 Summary, Youth Report (1/4 hour)
9:15 World Political Situation Report (1-1/4 hours)
10:30 Discussion (5-1/2 hours total)
12:15 PM Lunch
1:45 Discussion

5:30 Summary, World Political Situation Report (1/2 hour)

6:15 Dinner

8:00 Fraction Meetings and Workshops

Thursday, August 21

7:00 AM Breakfast

9:00 World Movement Report (1-1/4 hours)

10:15 Discussion (3 hours total)

12:30 PM Lunch

2:00 Discussion

3:45 Summary (1/2 hour)

4:15 Election of National Committee, Ralph Levitt appeal

Moved.

Carried.

Further Discussion: Roberts, Breitman, P. Chertov, Vasquez,

Motion: To grant Vasquez a 2-minute extension.

Carried.

Further Discussion: Finamore, Morell,

Proposal from Presiding Committee: To close speakers list and limit speakers time to 7 minutes.

Moved.

Carried.

Further Discussion: Haig, Vidal, Washington, Boehm, Lieberman, Ring, Kelly, Rose, Singer, Britton, Williams, Weinstein, Aber, Barnes, Frankel, Zimmerman, Reimers.

Summary Tasks and Perspectives Report: Stone

Motion by Stone: To approve the general line of the Tasks and Perspectives Report.

delegates and seated alternate delegates

for: 75

against: 0

abstentions: 0

Motion Carried.

consultative delegates

for: 54

against: 0

abstentions: 1

Recess for lunch 12:30 PM—Reconvene 2:05 PM

Greetings from the Revolutionary Communist League of Israel (Matspen), the Revolutionary Marxist Party of Ceylon, and the Internationalist Communist Organization of Greece, who were not able to send representatives, read by Thomas. (Greetings are included in the appendices).

V. YOUTH REPORT

Reporter: Miah

Proposal from the Presiding Committee: That there be a 7-minute time limit for speakers on this point.

Moved.

Carried.

Discussion: Gersh, Dixon, Warren, Hill, Moriarty

Recess for fraction meetings and workshops: 4:00 PM

RECONVENED, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 1975, at 9:14 AM

Proposal from Presiding Committee: That Warren chair the next session.

Moved.

Carried.

Further discussion: Johnston

Proposal from the Presiding Committee: That there be a 6-minute time limit for further speakers on this point.

Moved.

Carried.

Further discussion: Pulley, Star, Marsh, Quinn, Maisel, Libby

Summary Youth Report: Miah

Motion by Miah: To approve the general line of the Youth Report.

delegates and seated alternate delegates
for: 75
against: 0
abstentions: 0
Motion Carried.

consultative delegates
for: 54
against: 0
abstentions: 1

Proposals by Barnes for the Presiding Committee:

1. That after consultation with the leaders of the world movement who are present as guests at the convention it is proposed that during the discussion under the World Political Situation Report and the World Movement Report, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction and the International Majority Tendency each be given 1 hour speaking time.

2. That under the World Political Situation Report, each of the two Trotskyist groups in Portugal, the Liga Comunista Internacionalista, and the Partido Revolucionário Dos Trabalhadores, be given 20 minutes speaking time.

Moved.

Carried.

VI. WORLD POLITICAL SITUATION REPORT

Report for the Political Committee: B. Sheppard

Proposal by Horowitz for the Presiding Committee: that the following message be sent to the two Trotskyist groups in Portugal, the Liga Comunista Internacionalista and the Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores:

The situation in Portugal is at the center of attention of the working class throughout the world. The Portuguese masses, emerging only sixteen months ago from decades of dictatorial rule, have already given inspiring proof of their capacity for revolutionary struggle.

But today, as a result of the treacherous misleadership of the Stalinists and Social Democrats, the Portuguese revolution stands at a crossroads. Only the Trotskyists armed with the programmatic conquests of the international revolutionary movement, can point the way forward in these decisive hours.

The program of Trotskyism can show how to unite the vast majority—the broad masses of workers and their allies among the rural and city poor—in a mobilization to defeat reactionary mobs, to defend the democratic gains won so far from infringements by the capitalist government, to extend these gains into all areas of society and the economy, and to install a new socialist system by and for the vast majority.

Long Live Portuguese Trotskyism!
Long Live the Fourth International!

Moved.

Carried.

Greetings from the Liga de Juventud Socialista in Puerto Rico and the Groupe Revolution Socialiste in Martinique read by Seigle.

Recess for lunch 12:02 PM—Reconvene 2:05 PM

Greetings from United Secretariat of Fourth International, by A. Jones.

Report by A. Jones
Reports by : Ana Maria (from LCI), Fernando (from PRT)

Discussion: Horowitz

Motion. To grant Horowitz a 2-minute extension.

Carried

Further discussion: North, Foley, Frankel

Motion. To grant Frankel a 1-minute extension.

Carried

Further discussion: R. Sheppard, Kerry

Proposal by Barnes for Presiding Committee: To limit speakers time to 6 minutes.

Moved.

Carried.

Further discussion: J. Hansen, Musa, Murphy, Camejo, Fein, Mirelowitz, Buch, Mackler, Markey

Greetings from Peng Shu-tse and Chen Pi-lan read by L. Jones.

Proposal by L. Jones for the Presiding Committee: that the following message be sent to Peng Shu-tse and Chen Pilan.

The 27th National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party extends its most deeply felt greetings and solidarity to you. In the face of the world crisis of imperialism, our convention has enthusiastically adopted a course of action which will place the SWP in the center of the mass working class struggles now beginning in the United States. This response to the growing mass struggle was approved unanimously with much serious discussion. We are confident that the SWP's influence in the working class will increase in the near future and that this influence will be paralleled by a growth in the size of the party.

Especially important will be our participation in the struggles against oppression of the Black population in Boston and other cities.

Our convention has also conducted a serious and thorough discussion on the important issues of the world class struggle, in particular on Portugal.

Your decades-long collaboration and solidarity with the SWP is especially important to us at this point in the evolution of the world class struggle, and we look forward eagerly to the fruitful results of this continuing relationship.

Moved.

Carried.

Recess 6:30 PM

RECONVENED, THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 1975, at 9:10 AM

Proposal by D. Jenness from Presiding Committee: That Nordquist chair the next session.

Moved.

Carried.

Summaries World Political Situation: A. Jones, B. Sheppard

Motion by B. Sheppard: To approve the general line of the World Political Situation Report.

delegates and seated alternate delegates
for: 75
against: 0
abstentions: 0
Motion Carried

consultative delegates
for: 55
against: 0
abstentions: 0

Motion: To hear the Credentials Committee report.

Carried.

VII. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Reporter: Hardy (see appendices)

Motion: To approve the Credentials Committee report.

Carried.

VIII. WORLD MOVEMENT REPORT

Report for Political Committee: Barnes

Report by A. Jones

Motion. To grant Jones a 10-minute extension.

Carried.

Discussion: Thomas, Shaw

Greetings from the Liga Socialista of Mexico read by Stone.

Recess for lunch 12:25 PM—Reconvene 2:05 PM

Further discussion: Waters, Camejo, Foley, Teitelbaum, Lund, D. Garza, Roberts, Weinstein, Finamore.

Summaries World Movement Report: A. Jones, Barnes

Motion by Barnes: To approve the general line of the World Movement Situation Report.

delegates and seated alternate delegates
for: 75
against: 0
abstentions: 0
Motion Carried

consultative delegates
for: 55
against: 0
abstentions: 0

It was reported by Jenness that many greetings have been received by the convention. It is not possible to read them all here, but they will be available in the published proceedings of the convention.

Proposal by Jenness for the Presiding Committee that messages of support that have been submitted be sent to victims of political repression including Michael Zinzun, Philip Allen, and the CGT in the Dominican Republic. The texts to be printed in the minutes of the convention.

Moved.

Carried.

Message from comrades in Costa Rica read by Jenness.

Proposal by Jenness for the Presiding Committee that the following message be sent to Hugo Blanco.

The 27th National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party sends you warmest revolutionary greetings.

We have recently learned of the arrest and detainment of six leading members of your party, the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, Peruvian Section of the Fourth International, and of the formation of a committee for

their defense in Sweden, your present place of exile.

Your forthcoming tour of the United States, under the auspices of the United States Committee for Justice for Latin American Political Prisoners, will be of invaluable help in building the worldwide movement to win freedom for our PST comrades and other victims of political repression.

We pledge our full support to the USLA's efforts to insure your right to enter the United States against the U.S. State Department's arbitrary attempt to deny you a visa.

Free all Latin American Political Prisoners!
Long Live the Fourth International!

Moved

Carried

The open sessions of the convention were adjourned at 4:20 PM followed by the singing of the International. Reconvened—4:30 PM

IX. ELECTION OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Present: delegates and seated alternate delegates, fraternal delegates, members of the IEC present as observers.

Report for Nominating Commission (See appendices): Studer

Proposal: To amend the Constitution by deleting Article V, Section 3, Paragraph 3, which stated: "Regular members who have served on the National Committee for an extended period and are no longer able to be fully active may be designated as advisory members of the National Committee with all rights except votes."

Moved.

delegates and seated alternate delegates
for: 75
against: 0
abstentions: 0
Motion Carried.

consultative delegates
for: 54
against: 1
abstentions: 0

Proposal: To amend the Constitution, Article V, Section 3, Paragraph 1 to read: "There shall be 33 regular members, elected by the National Convention."

Moved.

delegates and seated alternate delegates
for: 75
against: 0
abstentions: 0
Motion Carried.

consultative delegates
for: 54
against: 0
abstentions: 1

Proposal: To amend the Constitution, Article V, Section 3, Paragraph 2, to read: "The National Convention shall also elect 27 alternate members to fill vacancies in the National Committee in the order decided upon by the Convention."
Moved.

delegates and seated alternate delegates
for: 75
against: 0
abstentions: 0
Motion Carried.

consultative delegates
for: 54
against: 0
abstentions: 1

Presentation of Nominating Commission Nominees for Regular Members of the National Committee, Alternate Members of the National Committee and members of Control Commission:

Nominating Commission Nominees for Regular Members of the National Committee (33)

Jack Barnes	Caroline Lund
Nelson Blackstock	Wendy Lyons
George Breitman	Malik Miah
Joel Britton	Derrick Morrison
Peter Camejo	Andrew Pulley
Pearl Chertov	Harry Ring
Clifton DeBerry	Bev Scott
Maceo Dixon	Larry Seigle
Dick Garza	Ed Shaw
Fred Halstead	Barry Sheppard
Al Hansen	Syd Stapleton
Gus Horowitz	Betsey Stone
Doug Jenness	Tony Thomas
Linda Jenness	Jean Tussey
Lew Jones	Mary-Alice Waters
Carol Lipman	Nat Weinstein
Frank Lovell	

Nominating Commission Nominees for Alternate Members of the National Committee (27)

1. Andrea Morell	15. Rich Finkel
2. Les Evans	16. Steve Chase
3. John Benson	17. Jeff Mackler
4. Judy White	18. Sam Manuel
5. Gerry Foley	19. Olga Rodriguez
6. Susan LaMont	20. Willie Mae Reid
7. Frank Boehm	21. Steve Chainey
8. Peter Seidman	22. Baxter Smith
9. John Hawkins	23. Ed Heisler
10. Dick Roberts	24. Katherine Sojourner
11. Barbara Matson	25. Ray Markey
12. Dick McBride	26. Pedro Vasquez
13. Lynn Henderson	27. Omari Musa
14. Dan Styron	

Nominating Commission Nominees for National Control Commission

Peggy Brundy
Anna Chester
Wayne Glover
Helen Scheer

Derrick Morrison
Andrew Pulley
Harry Ring
Bev Scott
Larry Seigle
Ed Shaw
Barry Sheppard

Syd Stapleton
Betsey Stone
Tony Thomas
Jean Tussey
Mary-Alice Waters
Nat Weinstein

Proposal from Presiding Committee: That the talliers be Bagel, Hawkins, Horowitz, Matson, Schwarz, B. Sheppard, Wright, and Zimmerman.

Moved

Carried

Discussion of nominations for Regular Members of National Committee: Buch, J. Hansen, Barnes

No further nominations.

Proposal by Barnes for Presiding Committee: To hear IEC Recommendations Report while votes are being tallied.

Moved

Carried

X. IEC RECOMMENDATIONS

Reporter: Barnes

Motion by Barnes: That the convention approve the following motions adopted by the National Committee at its plenum on May 4, 1975.

1. To uphold and commend the July 4, 1974 action of the SWP Political Committee, both the procedures followed and the general line of the statement made by the PC evaluating the meaning of the IT split.

2. To accept the recommendation of Comrades Hansen and Barnes to weigh favorable implementation of the proposals commonly agreed on by the International Control Commission.

3. To assure objective and equal consideration of all former ITers, regardless of their current affiliations (the original IT referred to in the IEC resolution having broken up), to refer all requests for membership to the appropriate branch unit of the party.

Carried Unanimously

Results of voting on regular members of the National Committee:

Jack Barnes	Al Hansen
Nelson Blackstock	Gus Horowitz
George Breitman	Doug Jenness
Joel Britton	Linda Jenness
Peter Camejo	Lew Jones
Pearl Chertov	Carol Lipman
Clifton DeBerry	Frank Lovell
Maceo Dixon	Caroline Lund
Dick Garza	Wendy Lyons
Fred Halstead	Malik Miah

Discussion of nominations for Alternate Members of the National Committee: Boehm, Buch, Chainey, Henderson, Prince, Henry, Singler, Seidman, Manuel, Washington, Singer, Frankel, Mirelowitz, Budka, Reimers, Kelly, Gannon

Recess for dinner 6:10 PM—Reconvene 6:50 PM

Further discussion: Finkel, Boehm, Lieberman, Warren

Further Nominations: George Basley, Paula Reimers

Proposal by Presiding Committee: To take up further points on the agenda while votes are being tallied.

Moved

Carried

XI. RALPH LEVITT APPEAL

Reporter: Powers (see attached)

Discussion: Barnes

Motion from Outgoing National Committee: That the convention uphold the decision of the Oakland-Berkeley branch to drop Ralph Levitt for inactivity.

Carried unanimously

XII. CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Reporter: Uhl

Reported that Constitution Committee will submit a report for the consideration of the incoming National Committee.

Motion: To adopt the report.

Carried.

Results of voting on alternate members of the National Committee.

1. Andrea Morell	12. Dick McBride
2. Les Evans	13. Lynn Henderson
3. John Benson	14. Dan Styron
4. Judy White	15. Rich Finkel
5. Gerry Foley	16. Steve Chase
6. Susan LaMont	17. Jeff Mackler
7. Frank Boehm	18. Sam Manuel
8. Peter Seidman	19. Olga Rodriguez
9. John Hawkins	20. Willie Mae Reid
10. Dick Roberts	21. Steve Chainey
11. Barbara Matson	22. Baxter Smith

23. Ed Heisler
24. Katherine Sojourner
25. Ray Markey

26. Pedro Vasquez
27. Omari Musa

Floor opened for further nominations and discussion on nominations for National Control Commission.

No Further Nominations.

Results of voting on members of the National Control Commission.

Peggy Brundy
Anna Chester
Wayne Glover
Helen Scheer

CONVENTION ADJOURNED 7:58 PM

PROPOSED CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Saturday, August 16

6:00 - 7:30 Dinner
7:30 - National Committee
Plenum

Sunday, August 17

7:00 - 8:30 Breakfast
9:00 - 9:45 Organization of Con-
vention (3/4 hour)
9:45 - 11:00 World Political Situ-
ation (1-1/4 hours)
11:00-12:30 Discussion (2 hours
total)
12:30- 1:45 Lunch
2:00 - 2:30 Discussion
2:30 - 3:00 Summary (1/2 hour)
3:00 - 4:00 Political Resolution
Report (1 hour)
4:00 - 6:15 Discussion (4 hours
total)
6:15 - 7:45 Dinner
8:30 -10:00 Expansion Fund
Presentation

Monday, August 18

7:00 - 8:30 Breakfast
9:00 -10:45 Discussion
10:45-11:15 Summary (1/2 hour)
11:15-12:15 Black Resolution Report
(1 hour)
12:30- 1:30 Lunch
1:45 - 3:45 Discussion (3 hours)
4:00 - 6:00 Fraction Meetings
6:00 - 7:30 Dinner
8:30 -10:00 Talk by Joe Hansen on
"James P. Cannon: the
Internationalist"

Tuesday, August 19

7:00 - 8:30 Breakfast
9:00 -10:00 Discussion
10:00-10:30 Summary (1/2 hour)
10:30-11:45 Tasks and Perspectives
Report (1-1/4 hours)
11:45-12:30 Discussion (3 hours)
12:30- 1:45 Lunch
2:00 - 4:15 Discussion

4:15 - 4:45 Summary (1/2 hour)
6:00 - 7:30 Dinner
8:30 -10:30 Fraction Meetings

Wednesday, August 20

7:00 - 8:30 Breakfast
9:00 -10:00 Youth Report
10:00-12:00 Discussion (2 hours)
12:00-12:15 Summary (1/4 hour)
12:15- 1:30 Lunch
2:00 - 4:00 Fraction meetings and
workshops
4:15 - 6:15 Fraction meetings and
workshops
6:15 - 7:45 Dinner
8:30 -10:00 Talk by George Novack
on "In Defense of
Engels"

Thursday, August 21

7:00 - 8:30 Breakfast
9:00 -10:15 World Movement Report
(1-1/4 hours)
10:15-12:30 Discussion (3 hours)
12:30- 1:45 Lunch
2:00 - 3:45 Discussion
3:45 - 4:15 Summary
4:15 - 7:00 Election of National
Committee
6:00 - 8:00 Dinner
8:30 -10:30 Rally
10:30- Party

Friday, August 22

8:00 - 9:45 Breakfast
10:00-12:00 Classes (series A)
12:00- 1:30 Lunch
2:00 - 4:00 Classes (series B)
4:00 - 6:00 Free
6:00 - 7:30 Dinner
8:00 -10:00 Classes (series A)

Saturday, August 23

8:00 - 9:30 Breakfast
10:00-12:00 Classes (series B)
12:00- 1:30 Lunch

Appendix

Greetings Received

by the 27th National Convention
Socialist Workers Party

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP of BRITAIN

The IMG, British section of the Fourth International, sends its warm greetings to this 1975 Convention of the SWP. In this year of final victory of the Indochinese fighters against American imperialism we salute the invaluable role played by the SWP in this dispute. In the same way your work in repulsing the racist offensive in Boston is an inspiration to British Trotskyists.

It is because of your successes that the IMG looked with anticipation to this convention. For a whole period we have been expecting the SWP to make its turn to the development of the radicalization inside the American working class.

On many questions the IMG has learned from the lessons of the SWP experience. Your experience in the antiwar movement and the women's movement especially has been invaluable to the work of the IMG. As you know the IMG has been in the forefront of a mass campaign which is defending the right of women to abortion to which your experience has been a source of reference even when we have had disagreements with your precise tactics. The same is the case in our efforts to build a mass movement to get British Troops out of Ireland and allow the Irish people the right of self determination. Your work has provided many lessons for us, especially in the antiwar movement.

Today, the turn which you are making at this convention we believe can be aided by the experiences of the sections in Europe as a whole and Britain in particular. The radicalization of the European working class developed some years ahead of the anticipated developments in the U.S. Our experience now becomes a store from which you can draw.

This is what gives us confidence in the future of the SWP and the Fourth International. More and more, we will be sharing common experience and common problems. The problems we face in the fight against the economic crisis of British capitalism and the attempt of the British bourgeoisie through the attempts of the Wilson Labour Government to off-load this crisis on the backs of the working class, the struggle against racism and sexism, our struggle to build a class struggle left wing, in general the program which we have developed—all will more and more intersect with your concerns and experience.

The debate on Portugal has shown how big our initial differences on the question of the working class revolution can be. But we are confident that with a serious exchange of ideas and development of common experience we will arrive at a higher unity and more profound agreement.

Long live the SWP; long live the Fourth International!

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP of CANADA

The Revolutionary Marxist Group (Canadian Sympathizing Organization of the Fourth International) extends Communist greetings to this 27th convention of the Socialist Workers Party. We have a special interest in the deliberations by the SWP. The development of the Quebec, Canadian and U.S. revolutions will be closely interwoven—in this light the practical collaboration and political discussion regarding strategic perspectives among revolutionary Marxists in North America is vital. From our perspectives this convention of the SWP has contributed to this process. We wish you success in the implementation of the turn effected at this convention.

Long Live the Socialist Workers Party!

Long Live the Fourth International!

For a Red North America!

Political Committee of the RMG.

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST PARTY of CEYLON

Dear Comrades,

The Revolutionary Marxist Party, (Ceylon Section of the Fourth International) extends its fraternal greetings to the Twenty-Seventh National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, USA, and trusts that the convention will contribute to the further strengthening of the revolutionary socialist movement in the United States, which is vital to the advancement of the World Revolution, not only in the United States but outside it.

We regret our inability to send a fraternal delegate to the Convention, but we wish it all success.

Peng Shu-tse and Chen Pi-lan

Comrades:

We send our warmest revolutionary greetings to your convention.

This convention is being held at a crucial time, a time when the depression and the economic crisis is developing throughout your country and the world. Under this growing crisis, the working class has been and will continue to be affected by inflation, increased costs and high unemployment. Already more than nine million workers are unemployed, and this stands as the biggest threat to the working class as a whole.

The capitalist crisis provides a special opportunity for the development of the party. The party will intervene in this crisis and will participate in the day-to-day struggles of the working class. From this leadership intervention, the party will be able to recruit young militants from the working class to its ranks. Thus, continuing the process of creating a mass revolutionary party in the United States.

We all know well that the SWP and the YSA recruited hundreds of young militant cadre from the antiwar movement in the recent years. Now the objective situation provides the party with the opportunity to use its cadres to participate in the growing workers struggles, and to recruit thousands of militants to your ranks.

We hope that the SWP convention will take this new opportunity open before you, and adopt the resolution presented by the party's National Committee, which reaffirms our proletarian orientation and which places the correct and necessary emphasis on the struggles of the most oppressed of the working class—women and national minorities.

We are confident that in the near future years, we will see the Socialist Workers Party become the mass revolutionary party you are now striving to construct.

Comradely,
Peng Shu-tse
Chen Pi-lan

THE COSTA RICAN COMRADES

The world revolutionary strategy is the construction of the revolutionary international party. We solidarize with this struggle and that is why we come to this convention. We want to participate in this conscious construction of the only real world alternative. We thank the SWP for inviting us to this convention as observers; we thank the SWP for being responsible with small groups like ours that do not allow themselves to fall into either adventurism or reformism.

Revolutionary greetings to all comrades here.

ORGANIZATION COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALIST of GREECE

Comrades:

Unfortunately, the OCIG is not in a position to send a representative to the National Congress of the SWP, mainly because of financial reasons. We appreciate the great importance of this National Congress of the SWP in this deep and generalized crisis of the world imperialist system and the importance it has for the building of the mass revolutionary workers party in the very heart of the stronghold of imperialism and the building of the Fourth International that now, in this phase of the deepening crisis and the rise of the revolutionary movement internationally, gets the more urgent necessity and the highest priority.

With our wishes for the most fruitful results of the National Congress of the SWP, the Central Committee of the Greek Section of the Fourth International sends also our warmest communist greetings to all the participants in the Congress.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE (MATSPEN) of ISRAEL

Dear Comrades,

At the occasion of your National Convention, we want to send you our fraternal internationalist salutations.

This convention should be and will be the beginning of a new stage in the building of the party of the socialist revolution in the U.S. The development of this party, the

SWP, is not merely an "American" problem; the world place and the world role of American imperialism make the building and the strengthening of the SWP the immediate interest and a permanent preoccupation of the revolutionary Marxists through the whole world.

And mostly for us, Trotskyist militants in Israel for whom the existence of American imperialism is the guarantee to the very existence of the Zionist state and the sine qua non condition for the continuation of its policy of expansion, spoliation and repression.

The development of the revolutionary leadership of the American proletariat is, then, for us an immediate factor in the revolutionary struggle we are part of.

This convention will also be, we hope, a new stage in the reunification of the Trotskyist movement in the US, and in the strengthening of the unity of the world revolutionary marxist movement.

Long live the Socialist Workers Party!
Long live proletarian internationalism!

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE of JAPAN

Hope IT comrades be integrated immediately. Hope your convention stands for building Fourth International as new communist international.

Long live the SWP!

Long Live the Fourth International!

GROUPE REVOLUTION SOCIALISTE of MARTINIQUE

Dear Comrades,

We extend our warm appreciation for the invitation to attend your convention. Being able to follow the discussions of the sections and sympathizing groups of the international is a rich experience for us.

In the Antilles, due to our small size and the direct domination of French imperialism, we feel acutely the need for proletarian international solidarity. This was shown in the strikes last year which shook Martinique, from November 1973 to February 1974; the French government tried to ban our organization in order to outlaw our activities and punish us for the leadership role we often played in some strike committees. But the government was unable to ban us, because the eyes of international public opinion were turned toward the Antilles and because our comrades of the Fourth International had already begun to mobilize.

We want to strengthen our collaboration with our North American comrades. For the people of the Antilles, the fact that in the U.S., the SWP and the YSA are an important component of the American revolutionary movement is a guarantee, a guarantee that the radicalized layers will not forget their task of supporting the liberation movement in the Caribbean.

We are paying close attention to the Boston campaign, the victorious struggle of Joanne Little, your increasing role in the Chicano movement and other movements of oppressed nationalities, and your work in the women's movement.

We are favorable to joint campaigns with USLA, for the freeing of political prisoners in the Caribbean, such as in the Dominican Republic, or on Dominica, where twenty-one political prisoners, members of the Movement for a New Dominica, are sitting in the prisons of an autonomous government which is fronting for the British crown.

Among these prisoners, Desmond Trotter has been sentenced to death after a trial filled entirely with false testimony and numerous irregularities and illegalities. He was accused in the death of a Canadian tourist.

This campaign includes all English-speaking revolutionary groups in the Antilles as well as the G.R.S. This campaign creates favorable conditions for a discussion of the Trotskyist program with groups in the Caribbean which have members who are really devoted but still under the influence of a narrow nationalism.

This is all to say, comrades, how all these tasks show us the need for fraternal collaboration in the Trotskyist movement; in the direction of emigrés from the Caribbean in the USA, Canada, Great Britain, France, etc. (Puerto Ricans, Haitians, Jamaicans, Martinicans, etc.); in the direction of colonial populations. Those who claim to support Trotskyist ideals have an opportunity to carry out common actions and demonstrate the need for the Fourth International, irreplaceable tool for the world socialist revolution.

Long live the convention of the Socialist Workers Party! Long live the struggle of the Blacks, Chicanos, oppressed minorities, women and workers in the U.S.

For a stronger Fourth International; Long live proletarian internationalism.

Gilberto Pago
member of the political
leadership of the G.R.S.

GRUPO COMUNISTA INTERNACIONALISTA of MEXICO

The convention of a section or sympathizing group of the international is always important. But this convention of the SWP is particularly important.

The progress of the revolutionary movement all around the world, particularly with the victory of the Indochinese revolution and the rise of the workers movement in Portugal has created a privileged situation for the development of the Fourth International.

Despite the important differences existing inside the Fourth International, this turns more and more into an alternative pole for the vanguard of the workers movement.

That is why, more than ever, the unity of the Fourth International is the key for its strengthening. But unity doesn't mean political differences disappear. On the contrary, in a Leninist organization as the international is, the existence of tendencies and political differences is not alien but is a clear demonstration of its vital force, knowing of course that these differences must be within the principles of democratic centralism. It is for these reasons that in Mexico we are firmly struggling for the unification of the GCI with the Liga Socialista, whose political leadership coincides with the LTF.

We think the unification of our organizations will strengthen, even more, the Fourth International. Within this framework, the SWP convention should serve not only to discuss frankly our differences but also to make the international stronger.

We are confident that it will be that way.

Long Live the Fourth International!

LIGA SOCIALISTA of MEXICO

Dear Comrades of the SWP and the YSA:

We wish to extend our warmest greetings to our comrades in the United States of (North) America, who are holding the 27th National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

It is not by pure chance that this convention is discussing the Portuguese question as its central topic. To the contrary, this testifies that the ranks and the leadership of the SWP are internationalists to the marrow of their bones. You can be sure we will follow this example, and that our organization in Mexico is being educated in this same spirit.

Permit us to state that you can count on us for international collaboration, because we feel your party is also *our* party!

The Political Committee
of the Liga Socialista
in México

LIGA DE JUVENTUD COMUNISTA of PUERTO RICO

The members and sympathizers of the Liga de Juventud Comunista send you greetings and best wishes for the success of the work of your convention.

Our organization owes a lot to your summer conferences. Last year we had the opportunity to exchange experiences both with comrades of the YSA, SWP and other sections, which helped in the development of a Trotskyist group in Puerto Rico. We remember all the nights we stayed up discussing with comrades the problems we faced and how to overcome them.

From then until now it has been a year and we are proud to be able to tell you that in the next few weeks the first Trotskyist monthly in Puerto Rico will see the light of day.

We also want to use the occasion to ask those in attendance to approve a motion of support to the three Puerto Ricans, members of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, who have been condemned to thirty years of prison and hard labor by the Trujillo-Balaguer regime in the Dominican Republic for allegedly transporting guerrillas into that country. We believe the Dominican courts are totally controlled by the oligarchy of that country and North American imperialism, and therefore their verdict is not unbiased. We urge that comrades from each country that are present at this conference make sure that letters of protest are sent from their country.

We also must use this time as an opportunity to demand a halt to the repression that is carried out in that country against members and sympathizers of the unions.

Success to the work of the convention!

For the development, consolidation, and unity of our international movement, the Fourth International!

Free all Political Prisoners!

REVOLUTIONÄRA MARXISTERS FÖRBUND of SWEDEN

To the convention of the SWP:

Comrades,

In light of the decision of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party to invite the leader of the OCI, Lambert, to be present as an observer at the SWP's convention, the

Political Bureau of the League of Revolutionary Marxists has decided that it is not appropriate for us to send our traditional greetings to your convention. The decision to invite an opponent organization to the convention without first consulting the leadership of the French section as well as maintaining the invitation after the protests of the French section, can only be understood as a disloyal act towards the Fourth International as a whole.

Long live the Fourth International

Political Bureau
League of Revolutionary Marxists
Swedish section of
the Fourth International

LIGA SOCIALISTA of VENEZUELA

Dear comrades of the SWP:

We warmly greet the 27th Convention of your party. This convention is a reflection of all the activity you have carried out over many years to construct a strong party tied directly to the exploited and oppressed masses of North America; and you have carried out this activity within the very heart of the imperialist monster. Moreover, in your struggle you haven't left aside for one moment the proletarian internationalism which can be seen in the enthusiasm with which you aid the construction of a

Fourth International capable of leading the masses to definitive victory.

Our party sends warm greetings to the SWP which we see as an example of how to construct, in Venezuela, a strong party tied to the mass struggle.

Long live the SWP!

Long live the Fourth International!

Executive Committee
Liga Socialista
Venezuela

GRUPPE REVOLUTIONAERE MARXISTEN of AUSTRIA

Dear Comrades,

Unfortunately it is impossible for us to send a comrade to the United States to attend your convention. We have nevertheless been following your discussions with the greatest attention, so far as is possible from afar. They take place at an important moment in the development of the American class struggle.

We extend our revolutionary greetings and wish your convention a successful conclusion.

Fred,
for the Political Bureau,
Revolutionary Marxist Group

Other Messages Sent

by the 27th National Convention
Socialist Workers Party

TO PHILIP ALLEN

The Socialist Workers Party National Convention meeting in Ohio vigorously protests your conviction on frame-up murder charges. Sixteen hundred delegates and observers at our convention pledge our support in your fight to overturn this racist conviction.

TO MICHAEL ZINZUN

The convention of the Socialist Workers Party condemns the racist frameup of the Pasadena court. Your conviction on a trumped-up charge of felonious assault is a continuation of the broad assault on the Pasadena Black community and their supporters by the city of Pasadena, its courts, the police, and the thoroughly racist school board. You have been singled out because of your ongoing fight to mobilize the Black community in defense of the Pasadena Desegregation Plan, the Pasadena Community Information Center's community work and the successful fight to eliminate the so-called Burglary Abatement Detail.

The Socialist Workers Party recognizes the seriousness of this attack on the democratic right to organize protests and the actions of militant fighters such as yourself. We stand with you in your defense in the tradition that an attack against one is an attack against all.

TO THE CENTRAL GENERAL DE TRABAJADORES of the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The 1600 people gathered at the National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party in Ohio, express our complete solidarity with your struggle to free the three leaders of the Central General de Trabajadores, unjustly imprisoned by the Balaguer dictatorship.

We in the U.S. have a particular responsibility to come to the defense of civil liberties in Santo Domingo. We pledge our full support to the campaign waged in behalf of the CGT prisoners, the prisoners of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party and all political prisoners in the Dominican Republic. We pledge to actively support the defense campaign being organized in the U.S. by the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners to defend the democratic and human rights of the Dominican working people.

Free Santos, Cepeda, Vargas and Peña Valdez!
Free Gandia, Garcia and Sampson!
Free all Political Prisoners in the Dominican Republic!

Correspondence on Ralph Levitt Appeal

Oct. 15, 1974

SWP National Office
New York

Dear Comrades:

Enclosed please find copies of letters to Ralph L., Ted D., and Bob M., informing them of the branch's motion that they be dropped from membership because of inactivity.

Comradely,
/s/Jeff Powers
Oakland-Berkeley
Organizer

* * *

October 15, 1974

Dear Ralph,

This letter is to inform you that the Oakland-Berkeley branch voted at its Oct. 14th meeting to write you a letter informing you that you will be dropped from membership in the SWP at our Oct. 21 branch meeting because of inactivity.

Comradely,
/s/Jeff Powers
Oakland-Berkeley
Branch Organizer

* * *

Oct. 22, 1974

Dear Barry,

Enclosed is a copy of Ralph's letter. We will have the other information for you shortly.

Comradely,
/s/Jeff Powers

* * *

October 28, 1974

Executive Committee
Berkeley Branch

Dear Comrades:

I have received a letter from Jeff Powers notifying me of my expulsion from the Socialist Workers Party. Since this is obviously a political expulsion, I am writing to request a trial and that the trial take place at the branch meeting of Nov. 11.

Powers, in his letter cynically refers to the reason of "inactivity" while he is certainly aware of the fact that minority comrades in the Party have for years been denied assignments and responsibilities of any kind. In my own case, it has been over three years since I have been offered an assignment. Moreover, Powers never offered such an assignment and he is well aware of this fact.

In point of fact, I have been quite active for many years in the most pressing area of work for the Party: the

struggle against the present petty-bourgeois, anti-Trotskyist leadership of the Party and the effort to restore the Party to the proletarian road of Trotskyism.

I will cite a little from my so-called record of inactivity to convince the comrades that a trial should be held before my expulsion.

My membership in our movement goes back 13 years, including several as a prominent civil liberties defendant facing six years in prison for my "inactivity." I am a former National Committee and National Executive Committee member of the YSA and a member of the local Party branch executive committee. I have taken several national speaking tours for our movement, written articles for our press and participated in the life of three branches. Most honorably, I was the political reporter for the Proletarian Orientation tendency at the 1971 Convention of the Party. I believe that the above would entitle a comrade to a trial before the Party ranks.

Let me mention two points here:

1) I am ready now and in the future to accept a responsible Party assignment, including and especially a full-time assignment.

2) If I am expelled I intend to vigorously appeal my expulsion to the highest body of Trotskyism, the Fourth International.

Fraternally,
/s/Ralph Levitt

October 22, 1974

Barry Sheppard
New York, N.Y.

Dear Barry,

At our branch meeting of Oct. 21 we dropped three comrades—Bob M., Ralph L. and Ted D.—from the party for inactivity. Two of the comrades, Ted and Bob, expressed agreement with the desire of the branch and requested that they be placed in sympathizer status. They indicated that they would continue to make a financial contribution to the party and help us in any way they could, but they felt that they could not be active at this time. Ralph wrote us a letter, a copy of which I sent to you earlier.

The following is a report on the activity of the comrades in question over the past year.

Attendance at branch meetings

Bob: 6 out of 40
Ralph: 2 out of 40
Ted: 7 out of 40

Attendance at forums

Bob: 1 out of 31
Ralph: 1 out of 31
Ted: 0 out of 31

Finances

Bob: \$15/month sustainer; arrears \$15
Ralph: \$1/week sustainer; arrears \$67
(no payments over past year)
Ted: \$3/week sustainer; arrears \$24

Militant sales

(Spring Sales drive, 15 weeks)

Bob: 0; average per week 0
Ralph: 8; average per week .53
Ted: 45; average per week 3

(Fall sales drive, 6 weeks)

Bob: 0; average per week 0
Ralph: 0; average per week 0
Ted: 4; average per week .66

(Summer)

Bob: 0; average per week 0
Ralph: 0; average per week 0
Ted: 4; average per week .66

Militant and ISR subs, past year

Bob: 0
Ralph: 0
Ted: 0

Bob, Ralph and Ted did not attend any of the sessions of our spring educational series or any of the classes in our summer school. They have not attended any of the '74 campaign functions or contributed any money to the campaign. They have not participated in any branch mobilizations over the past year for: 1) support of the Sears workers, 2) in solidarity with the Chilean workers, peasants and students, and 3) for our subscription drives. None of the three attended the summer educational conference in Ohio and none of the three came to the Cannon tribute we jointly sponsored with the San Francisco branch this past September.

None of the three had a branch assignment during the past year. Ralph claims in his letter that he had not been offered one. That simply is not true. Since he came to almost no branch meetings I found it difficult to discuss any proposed assignment with him. After numerous attempts to reach him on the phone I managed to leave a message with his wife on one occasion for him to call me about assignments. He never responded.

Comradely,
/s/Jeff Powers
Oakland/Berkeley
Organizer

Ralph Levitt
Walnut Creek, Calif.
August 7, 1975

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

Comrades:

This is to appeal my expulsion from the Party. This

supplements my appeal to the Oakland-Berkeley branch which you have.

Fraternally,
/s/ Ralph Levitt

cc: United Secretariat

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
August 12, 1975

Ralph Levitt
Walnut Creek, California

Dear Comrade Levitt:

Your appeal to the Political Committee of the decision of the Oakland-Berkeley branch to drop you from membership because of inactivity arrived following the last Political Committee meeting prior to the upcoming national convention.

Your appeal is being referred to the pre-convention plenum of the National Committee.

Comradely,
/s/Doug Jenness
SWP National Office

cc: SWP organizer, Oakland-Berkeley

P.S. We are sending this letter to the Oakland-Berkeley SWP branch, since you did not send us a return address and have not had a subscription to our press for some time. The branch will forward the letter to you.

Ohio
August 16, 1975

Ralph Levitt
[address in original]
Walnut Creek, Calif.
Air-Mail; Special Delivery

Dear Comrade Levitt,

This is to confirm my telephone call this evening informing you that the National Committee had just met and referred your appeal to the convention. As I indicated it will be taken up at the session of the convention this coming Thursday, August 21, and the National Committee will recommend to the delegates that you be given time to orally present your appeal to the convention.

If you are unable to attend, I will write you following the session concerning the decision of the delegates.

Thank you for your address.

Comradely,
/s/Doug Jenness
for the National Committee
Socialist Workers Party

cc: SWP Organizer, Oakland-Berkeley Branch

14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014
August 26, 1975

Ralph Levitt
Walnut Creek, California

All the delegates were provided copies of your appeal and correspondence relating to it.

Comradely,
/s/Doug Jenness
SWP National Office

Dear Comrade Levitt:

I'm writing to inform you that the convention upheld the decision of the Oakland-Berkeley branch to drop you from membership for inactivity.

cc: SWP Organizer, Oakland-Berkeley branch

Report on Ralph Levitt Appeal

by John Powers

All the comrades here have had an opportunity to read the correspondence that was in the delegates kits. Our branch, Oakland-Berkeley, discussed last fall a number of comrades who had been extremely inactive. We decided that three of these comrades, Ted Dennis, Ralph Levitt, and Bob Mattingly had been so inactive for a period of time that the correct thing to do was apply the Constitutional provisions and drop them from membership without prejudice. We had a thorough discussion in our executive committee, followed by a discussion in the branch. The branch decided to write the three comrades letters, which are in the delegate kits.

Both Ted and Bob agreed with the branch's recommendation and asked to be considered party sympathizers. Ralph disagreed but Ralph didn't come to the branch meeting where his membership was discussed. Instead he wrote us a letter which is in your kits.

We dropped Ralph for inactivity, and the record on Ralph is here. Ralph attended two branch meetings in the entire preceding year, and no forums or public events of the party. He had a \$67 sustainer arrears, and hadn't made any payments on it in a year while being employed the entire time. He had not attended a single one of the

branch's voted mobilizations.

We have had no contact with Ralph since the time of that meeting. I would think that if someone wanted to get back into the party, they would contact the branch in their area to propose that. But Ralph didn't bother. He hasn't been by our headquarters. He hasn't talked to any comrades on the phone. He hasn't come to any of our forums, to our bookstore, to our banquets, election rallies, etc. Not only that, we haven't run into him in any of the public activity in the class struggle that we have been involved in. He hasn't attended any of the antiracist demonstrations, taken part in any of the trade union work that we've done, etc.

When several individual members of the IT New Faction approached me about rejoining the party, I specifically asked them if Ralph was interested in coming back into political activity. They said they had little contact with him, but as far as they knew he was not interested.

No one was more surprised than I when I found out that he was appealing the fact that he was dropped for inactivity. If he wants to get back into the party all he has to do is inform us and become active. He was dropped without charges or prejudice. Up to now he has not done that as the record shows.

Nominating Commission Report

by John Studer

We are not sure but we think we came close to breaking the record this time for the number of hours we met. We estimate that we met for approximately 38½ hours, which is longer than the deliberations of the convention so far.

The national committee is the political leadership of our party between conventions. It reflects the party, and should reflect the party in microcosm when it meets between conventions, so that it represents the party and is able to make decisions and lead the party between conventions. It is supposed to provide direction for the campaigns of the party as they have been mapped out at the conventions, and make new decisions between conventions.

At this convention, the deliberations of the nominating commission took place in a couple of contexts. The first, I think, is the new stage in the transition of leadership in the party. The nominating commission concurred with the proposal referred to this convention by the outgoing national committee to eliminate the category of advisory membership on the national committee. Eliminating this category brought to our attention a couple of important factors that were noted in the report given to the National Committee plenum last May by Jack Barnes, which is available in SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 33, No. 4. There are just a couple of things I want to quote from it which played a big role in our deliberations.

One related to the size of the National Committee. In his report, Jack suggested, that, "If the National Committee adopts this proposal, if the convention concurs, and the category of Advisory membership on the National Committee is eliminated, we can consider a slight increase in the size of the National Committee. I raise this very hesitantly because I'm convinced by reading all the past reports of different turning points in making the transition in party leadership, that simply increasing the size of the NC would have been the easy way out and avoided grappling with the problem. But one of the things we do by eliminating the category of advisory membership on the national committee is make the size of the national committee smaller by eight places. [I think it actually ended up being nine places.] The advisory members of the National Committee are members of the National Committee like all of us, with one difference: like the Alternate members they have consultative rather than decisive vote. That is the only difference. They are members of the National Committee with all the rights and responsibilities of members. So we have an edge if we want to move in the direction of slightly increasing the number of Regular members. The nominating commission at the convention will have to consider this. We should keep in mind that this committee is going to have to change over time, not only in the normal way, but also, as we recruit from and are involved in the mass movements more and more, the

comrades that are proving themselves in these movements need to be systematically and consciously brought on to the committee."

In addition to considering the size we gave careful thought to the continuing process of leadership transition, and as Jack indicated in his report, "how to organize the entire leadership structure in tune with the perspectives we have projected at this point." That is, the perspectives that have been rounded out, discussed, and decided on at this convention, in terms of our assessment of the coming period and the turn of the party.

The size of the outgoing national committee, including regular, alternate and advisory members was 59. To elect a new national committee with the same number of regular and alternate members would have reduced the overall committee to 50. We felt that this reduction in the membership of the national committee wasn't justified. We did not face a situation where the leadership of the party in this process of transition was smaller. As a matter of fact, the leadership of the party has grown considerably in the past period. Even if we maintained the size of the committee at approximately 59, the choices that the commission and the convention delegates would be faced with in selecting a national committee would be as difficult as they have ever been. It certainly was our experience as a nominating commission that that was the case.

It is in this sense that I think that the composition of our nominees directly reflect the convention deliberations and decisions. We looked at the nominees through the prism of the decisions and perspectives the party saw. During the convention the point was made that the new political perspectives that the party is discussing did not come as a surprise, that in many ways they were already being reflected in the thinking and the work of the comrades. Likewise we discovered in the nominating commission that the discussions of the delegations about nominees for the national committee anticipated some of the directions we should be going with the national committee.

I want to just sketch a little bit of what our thinking was. We recognized a significant growth in the Black leadership of the party and felt that this should be reflected in the incoming committee, both in the regular list and the alternate list. This is a reflection of the struggles that we have been involved in and the perspectives we have. We saw too—on a smaller scale—the development of Chicano leadership. On our list for the first time in the recent period we have nominations of developing and leading Chicano comrades, both out of the struggles of the Chicano movement and out of the cadre in our own party, that we can recommend with confidence to the delegates to include on this slate.

Also we had to take note of our increasing work in the labor movement and the development of some leaders in that area that could be included on our list of proposed nominees. We also noticed the continuation of the development of women leaders in our party, which could be proposed for election to the national committee. We also noted the growing involvement of our party in community struggles—probably the best example was the District 1 struggle in New York—where some of our comrades were emerging as mass leaders and party leaders in that work.

I've mentioned that in respect to many of these categories we have noted the recruitment and the development of mass leaders. Leaders who came out of the big struggles of the Chicano movement in Texas, out of the Black movement, in Boston and in other cities, and community struggles like those in District 1.

I want to indicate how we viewed the national committee in trying to come to this proposed list of nominees. First, in terms of the list of nominations for regular members. The regular members of the national committee represent the rounded team of the tested leaders of the party. Here, as on the alternate list, we found that there were new layers of party leaders that we could with confidence include on the list.

The alternate list we viewed as serving two purposes. It includes those who are next in line to be brought on to the full list. For instance, between the last convention and this one there were two openings that developed on the list of regular national committee members. That is one important function that the alternate list plays, and that is why it is ranked.

But there is a second role that we felt was important about the alternate list, and that is as a testing ground for developing party leaders. Comrades of significant stature developing in and out of the mass movements of the oppressed and exploited can bring both significant contributions to the national committee in its deliberations, and also can learn from their experience on, and be tested by their experience on, the national committee. Part of this relates to some of the things that we have been discussing since the plenum before the last convention. We are trying to create an attitude that the alternate list is more open and changing and better able to draw newer, developing comrades on to the committee to be tested. The comrades move on and move off the alternate list as part of this process. This does not mean that these comrades, like shooting stars, suddenly become great and then just as suddenly terrible, but it is a reflection of the development of the leadership and the testing of the comrades.

Jim Cannon made the point in *Letters From Prison* that there was a tendency in the party at that time to view the national committee as a group that, once you got on it, the only way you could be gotten off was with a chisel. The nominating commissions then tended to approach the question by proving these people didn't belong on. We took the opposite view—by demonstrating that our nominees *should* be on.

It is within these general considerations that we feel we have developed a balanced list of nominees, an inclusive not exclusive team, that will be a microcosm of the party when it meets. Our proposed list maintains a significant continuity of leadership within the whole process of the transition of leadership while also bringing new experiences out of the struggles we have been involved in

because of the new opportunities that have opened.

I don't have a comparison between the composition of the outgoing NC and the regular members that we are recommending, but I can give you some statistics on the list we are proposing. There are six Black leaders of the party, nine women, three active trade union comrades, and one Puerto Rican comrade. Nine comrades will be recommended for regular membership who were not elected to regular membership at the last convention. In terms of the alternate members, we are recommending five Black comrades, seven women comrades, three comrades active in their trade unions, three comrades who are trade union directors in their areas, two Chicano comrades, and a total of fourteen comrades who haven't been alternate members before. As comrades will see when we go through the list there is also at the same time a significant continuity in the list.

We took a lead from the last nominating commission and convention in relation to the control commission, for which we were also charged with proposing nominees. And that is the addition of younger comrades to the control commission who combine the features that we feel are important on a body of the character of the control commission. These features include comrades with stature and exceptional objectivity that are appropriate to the control commission.

These are the general considerations that help explain why we developed the list that we did. Following the presentation of our proposals the nominating commission will be disbanded as a distinct body that has been meeting during the convention. Those of us who served on it will return to being just delegates to the convention like all the other delegates. Our nominees will be before the delegates as a whole for deliberation and decision. I would like to indicate here that two long time leaders of the party, Joe Hansen and Art Sharon, both asked not to be nominated this year to aid the process of transitional leadership.

Given the general considerations I outlined, the first proposal that we want to make is to amend the constitution in concurrence with the recommendation of the outgoing national committee. Specifically we want to move to eliminate Article 5, Section 3, Paragraph 3 of the constitution, which reads, "Regular members who have served on the national committee for an extended period who are no longer able to be fully active may be designated as advisory members of the national committee with all rights except vote."

The size of the national committee, both its regular and alternate list, are included as constitutional provisions. Because of the considerations I have mentioned earlier, we have further amendments to the constitution we would like to move. The first is in relation to Article 5, Section 3, Paragraph 1, which used to read, in relation to the regular members, "There shall be 28 members elected by the national convention." We move to amend that paragraph to read, "There shall be 33 regular members elected by the national convention."

We move to amend Paragraph 2, which used to read, "The national convention shall also elect 22 alternates to fill vacancies in the national committee in the order decided upon by the convention" so that it will now read, "The national convention shall also elect 27 alternate members to fill vacancies in the national committee in the order decided upon by the convention."

Credentials Committee Report

by Terry Hardy

I know comrades are always excited when the time comes for the credentials report because it's a reflection of where the party is. The growth of the party is reflected by the number of people attending this convention. This is true both in terms of members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance and the guests who are interested in our ideas and thinking of joining the Trotskyist movement.

Before giving the total number of people at the convention this year I want to give the figures for previous conventions. At the 1969 convention there were 660 people attending; in 1971 there were 1100; and in 1973 there were 1400 people. At this convention there are 1,613 people registered.

Of those attending the convention this year, 1,037 are members of the Socialist Workers Party; 297 are American guests, visitors, and people who are interested in our ideas; and 265 are international guests. Of those attending the convention, 43 percent are women, and 57 percent are men. This is about the same ratio as it was at the 1973 convention. 484 indicated that this is their first party convention.

Those attending the convention came from 28 different states, including Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, and West Virginia. The largest number came from New York—299. In spite of the distance and the cost, California was second with 257. Our Canadian guests were third with 105!

The 260 international guests came from 18 different countries, including a number of countries that have not previously sent guests to SWP conventions. This includes Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Martinique, Portugal, and Puerto Rico.

There are a total of 218 delegates, including 83 women and 135 men. There are 75 full delegates, 72 alternate delegates, and 71 fraternal delegates. Of the full delegates, 26 were women and 49 were men; of the alternates, 31 were

women and 41 were men; and of the fraternal 26 were women and 45 were men. 19 full delegates, 30 alternates, and 7 fraternal have been in the party under 5 years. Of the full delegates, 13 were under 25, 34 were between 26 and 30, and 28 were over 30. Of the alternates, 17 were under 25, 41 were between 26 and 30, and 12 were between 31 and 40 and two were over 40. Of the fraternal, 5 were under 25, 21 were between 26 and 30, 24 were between 31 and 40. Four were between 41 and 50, and 16 were over 50. Also, it is interesting to note that the oldest—from what we could find out—the oldest person at the convention, this year, is 74 today. The youngest was just born July 31, 1975. The longest time that anyone attending the convention has been in the Trotskyist movement is 43 years. And the delegate who has been in for the shortest period of time has been in for 2½ years.

Of those attending who are members of either the SWP or the YSA, some were in other organizations before they joined the Trotskyist movement. For example, 7 were in the Communist Party, 3 in the YWLL, 8 in the DuBois Clubs, 9 in the Socialist Party, and 108 from SDS. One person also said they had been a member of a left-Zionist youth organization. And two said they had been in the Democratic Party.

Of those attending the convention, 346 are presently in 62 different trade unions. Other organizations that people belong to include the National Black Feminist Organization, United Irishwomen, the NAACP, NOW, Por Los Niños, the Dominican Student Union, Boricua Student Union, Women's Political Caucus, La Raza Unida Party, United Farmworkers, Mujeres Unidas, Brown Berets, and Crusade for Justice. Also one person that had just joined the party indicated that she is also in Stewardesses for Women's Rights.

In conclusion I'd like to add that during the convention a number of people have asked to join the Socialist Workers Party or the Young Socialist Alliance.

Tasks and Perspectives Report to SWP National Convention

by Betsey Stone
August 1975

On a world scale, the capitalist system is entering into a new stage of crisis. We believe this to be a social crisis which is the counterpart in the last quarter of this century to the crisis of the 1930s.

At this convention, we've discussed the many ways the U.S. is being profoundly affected by this crisis—about how, even with the so-called "bottoming out" of the present depression, we'll see continuing efforts by the ruling class to drive down our standard of living. We'll see continuing high unemployment, more inflation, more cutbacks, more attempts to make Black people bear the brunt of these attacks, more attempts to make women bear the brunt. We'll see more attempts to weaken and push back the labor movement. And, along with a growing class polarization, there will be a growing polarization of political views.

We can't predict the pace at which the crisis will develop or all the forms it will take. We can't predict the specific ups and downs of the economy. Nor can we predict the pace of all the forms of the countermobilization of the workers. What we do know is that we are changing from a stage in world capitalist development generally characterized by expansion to a stage characterized by relative stagnation and deepening crisis. And we do know that in such a period the capitalists cannot allow for raises in the standard of living of workers in the way they can when the economy is expanding. They will, no doubt, be compelled to give some concessions, but their options for doing this are becoming more limited.

Moreover, all the ills of capitalism which helped spark the radicalization of the late 1950s and 1960s are exacerbated by this crisis. There is the continuing threat of war, the threat of nuclear annihilation, the continuing destruction of the environment, the further erosion of bourgeois democracy and the whipping up of racist sentiment.

In such a period of crisis, all the rules begin to change. Politics change. The mood of the working class changes. The ruling class response to struggles of the workers changes. The union bureaucrats find they can't produce as much in terms of gains for workers within the confines of their routine, class collaborationist methods. And the opportunities for socialist workers to get a hearing increases.

If all this is true, if what we are saying about the change in the objective situation is correct, then what is required is a corresponding change in the functioning of the party. Our tasks change. Our priorities change. We make a turn.

Under this point on the agenda we'll be talking more concretely about this turn the party is making, about what the turn means in terms of the day-to-day activity of the party.

The best way to begin, I think, is to look at the changes

the party has already gone through in response to the new situation. For already the party's activities have begun to look somewhat different than they did at the time of our convention two years ago.

There are three things we can point to in particular which sum up the changes that are taking place.

The first is the fact that the party now has the opportunity to take part in broader working class struggles—in the union movement, in the struggle against racism, in the Puerto Rican struggle, in the Chicano struggle, in the women's movement and in a few instances among unemployed workers.

Second is the fact that we are finding a broader response among working people to our socialist ideas. Our election campaigns are taken more seriously by working people. And the program we are campaigning on, the solutions we raise, make more sense to more people.

And third is the recruitment of a small but growing number of workers directly to the party. That is, until recently almost all the party's recruits were youth who first joined the YSA and then the party. Now this is changing. More working people, in particular Blacks, women, and young workers, are becoming sympathizers of our movement and are joining the SWP.

In making this turn, it's important first of all to take note of these changes so we can be more conscious of what's happening and generalize about it. Then we want to map out what further changes we should make in the party's functioning so we can take full advantage of the openings that exist and that will open up in the future.

Participation in Broader Struggles

What are the new openings we have to participate in broader struggles of the working class? A good way to get a feel for this is simply to look through the pages of recent issues of the *Militant* and see all the different kinds of struggles we are involved in. It's quite striking to note all the pickets, rallies, strikes, protest meetings, campaigns and various organizing efforts we've helped build in recent months.

Just to give an idea for this, let me read you some of the recent headlines that have appeared in the *Militant*: "Boston commission hears testimony on racist violence," "L.A. coalition sets Aug. 26 women's rally," "J.B. Johnson released, thanks supporters," "Colorado teachers march for right to strike," "Texas farm worker drive draws new support," "Detroit pickets want killer's prosecution," "Atlanta public employees win dues checkoff," "Milwaukee pickets say, 'Free Ray Mendoza,'" "Minneapolis rally demands end to police brutality," "Rallies and pickets for

Joanne Little from coast to coast," "15,000 in May 17 march on Boston," "Colorado women unite to defend the ERA," "Gay pride demonstrations draw thousands," "Oregon sit-in protests closing of Chicano school," "Racist threats won't stop abortion rally," "District 1 parents press Fuentes reinstatement," "Washington state students, teachers, parents united in fight to 'save our schools,'" and so on and so on.

These are struggles we've participated in building and they're the types of struggles we can expect will continue. Our orientation should be to continue to look for openings to take part in such actions.

The struggle against racist oppression will be at the center of much of our activity. In his report on the Black struggle Tony Thomas pointed to the fact that there is widespread demoralization and disillusionment in the Black community because of the fact that instead of making steady gains, Blacks are running into intensified economic problems and racist attacks. He also described the other side of this, the fact that, along with disillusionment and the dashing of old hopes about what this society can give, goes further radicalization. This is especially true given the rising expectations, confidence and increased feeling of political strength in the Black community today as a result of the radicalization of the 1960s and the proletarianization of the Black population.

More people are beginning to see that racism is more intrinsic, more deeply embedded in this system, than they had realized. And they see that a more deep-going struggle against it will be needed than they thought.

There are a growing number of Blacks—and also a growing number of Chicanos and Puerto Ricans—who want to fight back, who are looking for ways to unite with others in action, who believe that, as one woman put it at the NAACP convention, "We've got to get back into the streets." This means there are going to be more opportunities to unite with others in action against racist oppression, whether it be in support of desegregation of schools, or against police brutality or racist school books, or the fight to free the future Joanne Littles. And we can be sure that there will be more developments—like what's happening in Boston right now—which will make the urgent need to mobilize the Black community and its allies more clear.

There will also be more people who are going to be interested in our socialist view of the causes of racism and who are going to be looking for a political party that is challenging the whole system which is responsible for racism.

The previous point on the agenda was a discussion of the Black struggle, and under the youth report Malik Miah is going to go further into some of our concrete activities in this struggle. So what I want to do in regard to the fight against racism in this report is simply to reiterate the main points that have already been made about the importance of this struggle, the new openings for action, and to indicate the key place this work has in our overall activity.

I also want to make another point about the Student Coalition Against Racism. Building this coalition is not only a youth activity. It's an important activity of the party. The Student Coalition has already played an important role in helping to unite broad forces in the fight against racism and we want to continue to help build it as a broad united front coalition. We also want to work with

and participate in building activities of other organizations fighting racism such as the NAACP. We should also collaborate on common projects with the many various groups in the Black community who relate to antiracist struggles—all the way from organizations such as Operation PUSH, to the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, to the Black churches.

Trade Union Activity

An important aspect of the turn will be the strengthening of our trade union work and our trade union fractions.

We have new openings in the trade union movement. One of the best examples of the changing situation was the New York "budget crisis." We've had a lot of discussion on the New York situation, and this is good, since just as the strikes and other trade union developments in San Francisco and Atlanta helped prepare the party for new developments at an earlier stage, so understanding what happened in New York can prepare us for what's ahead now.

The success of the employing class in making the cutbacks in New York will have repercussions nationally. Every city is going to see their version of Big Mac. Every public employee union, teachers' union, transit union, every worker who is dependent on city services, is going to be under pressure to give concessions.

In New York we had a situation where the AFSCME union leadership capitulated totally to the city. AFSCME leader Gotbaum accepted the layoffs, covered up for the city when it tore up the union contract, accepted a wage freeze and coupled this with a proposal that the jobs of civil service workers be saved by taking away jobs of the more oppressed workers in the federally-financed CETA program.

Within AFSCME opposition to the policies of Gotbaum had virtually no organized expression. In the delegate assemblies almost no voices except ours were raised against these policies. And there were few civil service employees who didn't go along with the proposal for civil service workers to take away the jobs of the CETA workers. There was also, as one might expect, tremendous confusion within the union about what kind of effective action could be taken against the cutbacks.

Our response to this situation was twofold: First, we went on a big educational campaign, through our newspaper, through public meetings, through forums, through our election campaign, to clarify the issues. We put the blame where the blame belonged: on the Democratic Party, on Beame, on the banks, and on the crisis of an economic system whose logic is to drive down the living standards of the workers.

We put forward a program for how to deal with the crisis, calling for a moratorium on interest payments to the rich, for an end to military spending and for using that money for massive public works, for a shorter work week with no reduction in pay to share the work. And we educated about the need for working people to break from the present union policy of support to the Democrats and Republicans and called for the formation of an independent labor party based on the unions.

Second, we along with other unionists made a modest

proposal for action. We suggested simply that all those who were victimized by the cutbacks should unite to fight back together. Such a theme of unity was a radical departure from what was the general response to the cutbacks. Frank Lovell told me there was even a story that circulated during the crisis that the union bureaucrats were all wearing buttons with the acronym, LOSE, which stood for "Lay off someone else."

The action we helped build was an attempt to begin the process of politically educating on the opposite approach. And in the course of building the action, despite its small size, we were able to discuss this important question of united action with many people and to make contacts in the union movement which will help us in the future.

One comrade commented that Gotbaum's strong opposition to the June 28th demonstration seemed somewhat like a giant going after a flea given that there is as yet little significant organizational opposition to Gotbaum in the union. But his response was not totally irrational. That demonstration represented a challenge to his whole class collaborationist approach.

The general strategy of the Gotbaums and the Meanys in this period is to help elect capitalist politicians they think will be favorable to the unions, to give concessions where necessary, and *mainly* to hope and pray that the economy will get better. The union bureaucrats don't see that we are going into a crisis of capitalism, as we do. They are not prepared for the problems. They are not confronting the problems; the problems are confronting them. This is still true also of the workers. But experience can teach them otherwise.

What are the lessons of the New York experience? It shows, as comrades have pointed out, the tremendous obstacle posed by the trade union bureaucracy. And it shows the correctness of our strategy of working toward building a left-wing alternative to the bureaucracy in the union movement, a left wing based on a class struggle orientation. And we can see more clearly that the program of such a left wing, if it is to have real solutions to the problems of the working class, will represent a radical departure from the practices of the current trade union leaders.

The solutions and demands put forward by a class struggle left wing must be tailored to deal with the problems stemming, not from a period of relative prosperity, but a period of crisis, when there is high unemployment, inflation, cutbacks and exacerbation of racism and sexism. The program of such a left wing must challenge the present needs, prerogatives, and orientation of the employing class. And this left wing must break with the policy of subordinating the interests of labor to the Democratic Party. This is a tall order given the present state of the unions. It will take time and further changes in the objective situation in order to create such a left wing, for what we are talking about is nothing less than breaking the working class from capitalist politics.

The events in New York and the modest challenge of some union militants to Gotbaum's sell-out represents only a first round in a fight which will continue. It will be a protracted process, the workers will have to go through more experiences before they lose their illusions in class collaborationist methods and the Democratic Party. But it is a process that has begun.

The significance of the New York experience and similar experiences around the country is that the conditions in

the unions are becoming more favorable for beginning the process of building a left-wing alternative to the union misleaders. Comrades report, for example, that it is a little easier now to talk with teachers in the UFT about the importance of supporting the parents in District 1. Some teachers are now more nervous about the opposition of the Black and Puerto Rican communities in the event of a teacher strike. The teachers also have seen that it is those very same parents they've been fighting who came out on demonstrations with them to end the cutbacks and layoffs.

It is also a little easier now to explain why Democrats such as Beame and Badillo and Carey should not be supported. Shanker and Gotbaum try to make out that Beame is not responsible for the cutbacks, that it is all the fault of the banks. But that raises the question of who runs the city anyway? Wasn't Beame elected? And if he's being victimized by the banks, why doesn't he fight back?

We are also going to have more openings to explain what Trotsky was saying in the interview with the CIO organizer that appeared in Frank Lovell's recent column in the *Militant*. That is, once you grant the capitalists the right to make the workers pay for the crisis, there is no telling where it will end. As the experience with Big Mac shows, once you give him a finger, he wants the whole hand. First it's a few layoffs of provisional workers, then it's civil service workers, then it's wage freeze and breaking the union contract. Then Big Mac says he needs a higher subway fare. The question is, what do you gain by trying to pacify him? Where does it all stop?

Ultimately, as Trotsky explained, and we have to explain to fellow unionists, it only stops when we create a government which is based on the interests of the workers. But, the beginning of wisdom on the way to getting such a government is taking the stance that the employers, not the workers, must pay for the crisis.

In order to deal with the crisis created by their system, the ruling class is going to be compelled to make more and more direct attacks on the union movement. We cannot predict the speed with which these attacks will develop, but the trend will continue. And while we can't predict the pace of the response of the working class either, we can predict which layers are going to be most militant. And we do know that given the contradiction between the relative wealth of this country and the high economic expectations of the masses of workers and the low level of political organization, that at a certain point the response can be quite explosive and involve rapid changes in consciousness, and readiness for independent political action.

The work we do now, much of it educational work, is preparation for the future. By proposing solutions and class struggle approaches now in the unions, as we did in the New York crisis, we become known as people who tell the truth about what's going on and who knows what to do about it. Everything from fighting within the Coalition of Labor Union Women for a proposal opposing discriminatory layoffs, to fighting for the right of teachers to strike in Michigan is groundwork for building an alternative to present union policies.

I have concentrated a lot on New York, but there are other union activities around the country we have been involved in which can serve as examples of the type of openings we have. In Atlanta, for example, our comrades in AFSCME have been involved in a struggle to save their union from an effort on the part of the city administration

to destroy it. We have won some victories in this fight. In the Twin Cities we are involved in an organizing drive to unionize workers at the University of Minnesota. And there are many other examples.

Not every branch will be able to take on a project as ambitious as an organizing drive, and whenever a branch takes on such a project it will be important to think it out carefully and to involve the whole branch in the decision on whether to go ahead. But, what every branch should do is become familiar with the union movement in the area the branch is in, think out carefully where we want to have union fractions, and take deliberate steps to develop such fractions.

Union fractions, along with other mass organizations we belong to, play a role for the party similar to the role a campus base plays for the YSA. If we have fractions in the unions, if we are getting to know people in various mass organizations, and getting to know people on the job, it helps us with all the various campaigns the party is building. And, of course, it is a milieu from which we win new members.

One of the best examples of how we can take all the various campaigns the party is supporting into the unions was the National Education Association convention this summer. The NEA convention adopted a resolution supporting desegregation of Boston schools and urging teachers to attend the October NSCAR convention. Another resolution was introduced and narrowly defeated on CLUW. A motion to support the Political Rights Defense Fund was introduced by 50 delegates and lost due to a maneuver against it on the floor, but in a news release at the time of the convention the Executive Secretary of the NEA condemned FBI harassment of socialist teachers Evelyn Sell and Maude Wilkinson. Outside the convention hall SWP election campaigners were highly visible, talking with hundreds of delegates. Willie Mae Reid spoke to the Texas teachers' delegation of 400.

Another point on our work in the unions, something that was discussed in a number of contributions to the discussion bulletin, is the importance of talking with people on a day-to-day basis that we meet in our union activities or on the job; talking with them individually about various issues, about struggles going on, as well as about socialism, and selling subscriptions to the *Militant*. As the radicalization deepens, we can expect to find more militant unionists who will begin to understand that it is not enough to be a union militant; if you really want to be effective in fighting for the needs of workers, you have to be in the socialist movement. We can also expect to find more unionists we can count among our sympathizers, who will work with us, who will support our campaigns and be sympathetic to our approach in the unions, but who do not as yet want to join the SWP.

CLUW

The Coalition of Labor Union Women—CLUW—continues to be an important area of union work. We have been among the most consistent builders of CLUW since its founding and have played a not inconsiderable role in keeping many of the chapters going. Over the past year, due to both the destructive policies of the sectarians and ultra-lefts and the footdragging of the women union officials, some CLUW chapters have become narrow and

relatively inactive. Nevertheless, CLUW as a whole is still very much alive and represents a pole of attraction for union women.

CLUW is having its second national convention this December in Detroit and we can expect that the convention will attract new women to CLUW. One of the things we want to do at this convention is to join with others in raising the need for CLUW to take a stand in opposition to discriminatory layoffs. The question of defending affirmative action and fighting for the right to equal employment for women goes right to the heart of what CLUW is all about. There are many women in CLUW who recognize this and who will join with us in an effort to educate on this question.

During the fall and at the convention we'll also want to participate in all the various activities that can help build CLUW. This means helping with the membership drive, getting CLUW involved in the campaign to pass the ERA, continuing to carry educational activities on women's issues, and relating to issues of concern to women unionists as they come up.

Women's Liberation

Next I want to talk about an area we should give more attention to than we have recently—the women's liberation movement. There are new openings for action in support of women's liberation issues. In particular, the Equal Rights Amendment is something we should focus on, since a national battle is shaping up over this issue. The fight between the forces that support the ERA and the reactionaries that oppose it will determine in the next four years whether the ERA is passed or defeated.

Already in some areas we have been active participants in the campaign to pass the ERA. In Atlanta we are helping to build a five-state campaign where women in five states in the South which have not passed the ERA can combine their efforts. The YSA in Bloomington helped build an action of 500 Hoosiers in support of the ERA. In Utah, YSAers have been active in Utahns for the ERA. And in Colorado we're working to prevent the reactionaries from reversing the legislature's previous passage of the ERA. Another battle we will be part of is shaping up in New York, where an equal rights amendment to the state constitution will be on the ballot as a referendum in November.

In addition to participating in the fight around the ERA in states where this is possible, we want to keep our eye out for other issues we can relate to such as the defense of Doctors Edelin and Morgentaler, who are being victimized by anti-abortion forces.

In most cities there continue to be quite large milieus of organized feminists. Some cities and campuses have women's centers. There are also Black women's groups, groups of Chicanas, gay women's groups, women's rights committees in unions, campus groups, various kinds of collectives and women's caucuses in broader organizations. The National Organization of Women (NOW) continues to be the largest feminist organization. Some of our members belong to NOW and we have found NOW to be an organization which we can often work with in broader coalitions around specific issues.

We should be familiar with the various women's groups in our areas. Some of them we will want to join. Others we can work with in coalitions. It will differ from city to city.

Women's liberation sentiment continues to grow in this country. Linda Jenness gave me a clipping of a recent poll which reported that some 63 percent of all people now say they support the goals of the women's liberation movement. Along with this increased support for women's rights, there is also a growing interest among women's liberationists in socialism. The clearest example of this was the socialism and feminism conference held in Yellow Springs, Ohio, this summer which attracted some 1600 women. There has also been the growth in some areas of socialist women's groups.

The relationship between socialism and feminism is something that we in the SWP are experts on. Since the beginning of the second wave of feminism the SWP has educated about the need for a socialist revolution if women's oppression is to be ended. And we have been the one socialist party which has consistently supported the building of broader feminist struggles.

Given the new interest in socialism and feminism, we should make a real effort to get our ideas out, to get out our literature on this, to sponsor classes, to hold forums on women's liberation. In this regard, many branches report that their largest forums are often the ones scheduled on women's liberation topics. We should also take part in discussions sponsored by other groups.

If we do these things, we'll not only help to build the feminist movement but we will also get in touch with more feminists who are interested in socialism, including those who don't even know about us now, but are looking for a movement such as ours to join.

Spreading socialist ideas

Next I want to take up another area where we have new opportunities. That's in getting out our socialist ideas through our election campaigns and our press.

In the 1972 election campaign of Jenness and Pulley, one of the points we made was that it was the biggest socialist election campaign since Debs. In announcing the Camejo-Reid campaign last December in St. Louis, we said, this will be the biggest socialist campaign since Jenness and Pulley. And unquestionably it is. We are reaching more people with our ideas and we are being taken more seriously by the press.

The economic crisis has affected the way our campaigns are seen. People realize that during a period of economic difficulties, socialist parties tend to grow. And they recognize that there is now unprecedented disillusionment with the Republicans and Democrats. Many workers who were not interested in socialism at all a few years ago are now ready to at least give us a hearing.

One of the most encouraging signs of the openness to our ideas is the response we've gotten to the basic political program we're running on, the Bill of Rights for Working People. This has struck a real chord. Already, 374,000 copies have been distributed, 30,910 of these in Spanish, and this is just at the beginning of the campaign. The response to the Bill of Rights is quite significant because it means that our basic ideas, the demands we are raising, are making more sense to people in the context of the present situation.

The national campaign committee reports that we've gotten many requests from people who are not members of the YSA or SWP to hand out the Bill of Rights. We've also

gotten many more letters in this campaign than the last from people asking how they can help with the campaign. In preparing this report, I picked out excerpts of a few of these letters to read to you to give you a feel for some of the people who are writing in.

For example, a person from Santa Maria, California, wrote, "Dear Camejo-Reid Supporters: The Socialist Workers Party is becoming quite attractive to me. I'm interested in supporting Mr. Camejo and Ms. Reid in their bid for office. Could you please send me several copies of literature, pamphlets, and even a few posters, buttons and bumper stickers if you can spare any? I may be interested in opening a headquarters later on. Please send me information on how to do so . . ."

A postal worker wrote: "I received the Bill of Rights and your letter. I distributed most of them in about the first week. The types of people I distributed them to varied. Blacks, workers, and housewives mostly. Needless to say the response among Black people was excellent . . . Also something of interest to you might be the fact that a postal employee has his own set of political restrictions . . . What it boils down to is that I am not supposed to be passing out the Bill of Rights on or off my job. To me this is a violation of my rights. I am enclosing \$20.00 as a contribution and \$5.00 for another 165 Bill of Rights."

From Norfolk, Virginia, a group called People Incorporated wrote in. They said, "Dear comrades, We recently received a copy of A Bill of Rights for Working People and find it an excellent publication and very timely. . . . Active in the struggle in the Tidewater area, we would like to have about 1,000 copies of this publication and would like to know the bulk order price."

A man wrote in from Shingle Springs, California. After listing a large order of literature, buttons and posters, he asked, "Could you tell me how I can get personally and substantially involved in the Socialist movement?"

A school teacher wrote from San Antonio, Texas. He said, "When I attended a statewide teacher rally in Austin last month, I was handed a pamphlet, 'A Bill of Rights for Working People,' by some brave and heckled soul. . . . Presently, education in Texas is suffering severely due to manipulative underfunding. We teachers have worked very hard to implement fair funding for improved schools, but it seems our efforts are flatly in vain. Obviously, we have been defeated by manufacturing lobbyists. Today I walked into my classroom and saw 180 victims of state greed in my room alone. . . . Frankly I don't agree with many of the platforms outlined in the "Bill of Rights" you propose, but I can no longer deny that our present system, dominated by capitalist interests, cannot guarantee basic rights. We've 'worked within the system' in Texas and it's failed. . . . I feel your answers come the closest to providing equitable solutions."

Another letter came from a woman in Union, Mississippi. She says, "After hearing of your party, and what it stands for, I would like very much to know more about it, and how I might become involved. . . . After thirty six years of being under the leadership of the two major political parties, they have become reprehensible. The economic situation in this country is a disaster. I am convinced that socialism is the only answer to this economic disaster."

Another person writes from Green Bay, Wisconsin, "Dear Socialist Workers Party: Watching the TODAY

show the other morning, I happened to see two of your people interviewed about government harassment of the party. I was much struck when one of them said that your party is distinguished by the fact that it puts human needs above profit. This seems to me something our country needs to do as a whole; therefore, I would appreciate receiving any information you may have about the party and about membership."

And from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, a woman writes, "Please send what information you offer on Peter Camejo. I will also post a sign on my front lawn which is near the downtown area, if you have them available. Also, can you inform me that I am correct that Houston is the nearest SWP and YSA headquarters, and that there are no socialist headquarters of any kind in Oklahoma."

One of the things you notice about these letters is that these people not only want to find out more about the campaign, they want to get involved. And this is a challenge we have in this campaign. How not only to reach people like this, but once we get in touch with them, how to involve them in the campaign.

Already, we've taken a turn with our campaigns in terms of activities which can reach out to broad numbers of working people. We are doing more street campaigning, distributions of literature at work places, setting up tables at shopping centers. We also are trying to take our campaign into the various neighborhoods of the cities where we live by setting up meetings in people's homes and speaking at community meetings.

Now we should take another step and think out how we can get those we meet in such activities directly involved in campaign activity.

One thing that will help us do this is the new volunteer's card which has replaced the endorser's card we used to use. On this card, there is a whole list of things people can check, indicating how they would like to help with the campaign, things like media work or literature distribution. Or they can just sign the card and indicate they want more information. The idea is to get this card out far and wide. To have it on literature tables, pass it out at campaign meetings, take it with us when we're street campaigning.

We also need to assign comrades to help organize campaign volunteers. There should be one or two individuals on the campaign committee whose task should be to get in touch with and work on campaign projects with volunteers. We'll find that some volunteers will want to take considerable responsibility. They can organize coffee hours in their homes to meet the candidate, or help fix food for a campaign barbecue or banquet, they can help canvass the neighborhood, sit at a literature table, help with decorations, petition to get on the ballot, or speak in behalf of the campaign. In short, they can do all the things SWP members do to help build the campaign.

Fred Halstead made a remark at this spring's National Committee plenum which I think captures what this work with the campaign should be. He said we should organize our campaign committee offices, and our campaign work, more like we do work in the mass movement. That is, we should work together with others who are not members of the party, making no big distinctions about who is a member or not, seeing ourselves as all the same thing—campaign supporters.

One thing which starts to happen when we do this is these campaign supporters begin to consider themselves

members of our party, just as someone who votes Democrat or works for the Democrats would consider themselves a member of the Democratic Party. And we want such supporters to join the party.

Another thing which relates to this is the question of our headquarters. These must be real campaign headquarters, places where campaign volunteers can work and where non-members feel at home. We can make these headquarters look more like what they are by putting up plenty of campaign posters. And we should make sure there is someone in the headquarters to greet people when they come in.

There is another side to striving to make our party headquarters real campaign headquarters. And this has to do with the defense of the party. For, if the Klan threatens us, or when government agencies bug or spy on us, people see it as just that much more outrageous if this is done against a headquarters of a party which is contending in the election. It is part of deepening the contradiction they are in when on the one hand they admit we are a legal party and put us on the ballot, and on the other hand they spy on us as though we were illegal.

There has been a tendency in the party in recent years to move toward having larger headquarters. This hasn't always been best suited to our needs. In many instances it's meant that in order to afford a large place, with lots of offices, we've moved to a bad location, or into a dilapidated building. People judge our seriousness by the way our headquarters look, so we can't afford to be in buildings which are so broken down or filled with old wine bottles and other similar items that people actually fear to go into them.

The locale of the headquarters is also important. In choosing locations for a headquarters we should consider the turn we are making, who we are trying to reach. For example, the Lower Manhattan branch found out through the experience of opening up a storefront campaign headquarters in the Lower East Side that by doing this, we were able to bring around many more people from that community. Our other headquarters was not that far away from the Lower East Side, just a few blocks, but the psychological distance was very great.

Ballot status is another way people measure how serious our campaigns are. In 1972 we were on the ballot in 23 states. The campaign committee tells me they think it's realistic this year to try to get on the ballot in 30 states.

We want to establish the SWP as a serious political contender in this country, and everything we do—all the way from ballot work, to the organization of volunteers, to the organization of poll watchers—should reflect the professionalism and approach of a party which intends to become a mass party.

One example of the approach we want to convey was the article which appeared on the front page of the *Hyde Park Herald*, a community newspaper in Chicago, announcing the setting up of a new SWP headquarters on Chicago's South Side. This article, not written by us, but by a young reporter, catches the spirit of what we are trying to convey.

The article begins, "The Socialist Workers Party, heartened by the local showing of its candidate in April's mayoral election, will soon open a south side headquarters in Hyde Park.

"The headquarters, which will be located at 1754 East 55th Street, will serve as a radical bookstore, meeting hall,

and storefront for upcoming political campaigns, according to party representatives.

"Willie Reid, our candidate for mayor did quite well on the south side, and particularly in Hyde Park," said Suzanne Haig, a party spokesman. "She won 5 percent of the vote in the black wards, and 15 percent in Hyde Park."

"And in general, we've found an openness to socialist ideas in Hyde Park and the south side, so we felt it would be a good idea to have a headquarters down here."

"Haig attributes the relative responsiveness of south siders to the Socialist Workers position to the fact that south siders feel the problems that plague society most acutely."

When we run for office, we're telling people that we have an alternative to the Republicans and Democrats, that we want to do nothing less than replace the present rulers in this country. And if we do it right, not only with a political program that is correct, and that speaks to the needs of the masses, but also with an organization of the campaign which is professional, we will convey our seriousness to increasing numbers of people. This is all the more true when workers see that we are not only building our election campaigns but that we are also active in broader movements such as the union movement and struggles such as that in Boston now; and when they also see that we have a strategy which can make these struggles effective.

The Militant

Along with our campaigns, we have another vehicle for reaching out to broad numbers of people and that's our socialist newsweekly. The *Militant* is gaining more of a reputation nationally as a paper that is a champion of the oppressed due to its truthful and consistent coverage of such things as the Boston desegregation fight, the Joanne Little trial, the frame-up of American Indian Movement activists and the farmworkers' struggle. More and more people are also looking to the *Militant* for answers to questions raised by the economic crisis, the attacks of the racists, and the continuing attacks on our democratic rights.

As part of our ongoing effort to get out the *Militant*, the Political Committee is proposing a sales drive for the fall. Already in connection with our drives this past year we've had successful sales which go right along with the turn we're making. We've been selling at shopping centers, at workplaces and in the Black community. In this fall campaign, we want to continue these activities. In doing this we will try to make sales more integrated with the needs of our overall work.

Because we are thinking more about making sales fit in with our overall political needs, we don't plan to have a target week in this campaign, but to have the idea that when a special event occurs, like happened with the racist attacks in Boston last week, the whole party will make a special effort to get that issue out. Branches may also want to pick out certain issues which are particularly relevant to their city for a special sales campaign. For example, when the "budget crisis" hit in New York, the branches there made a special effort to sell where AFSCME workers and others affected by the cutbacks congregated. In order to have the flexibility to raise the bundles when we want to go on a campaign around a

special event, we should be sure that our weekly campaign goals are not set so high that we don't have the flexibility to do this.

In addition to the sales drive, the Political Committee proposes having a subscription drive for the fall. We also want to make this drive fit in better with our day-to-day political needs. This means an emphasis on getting subscriptions on the campuses, where we work, in Black and Chicano communities, and most importantly, through our day-to-day contact with people.

Another thing we want to do is make more use of the impressive international Trotskyist newsweekly, *Intercontinental Press*. IP costs a lot for a subscription and this makes it hard to get it out widely, but there are many people whose interest in international affairs or socialist politics is such that, if we approached them to do so, they would be interested in subscribing to IP. And certainly, all members of our movement should try to subscribe to the IP.

The Fight for Democratic Rights

Mary-Alice Waters spoke yesterday about the importance of our suit against the government, about how it represents an historic first. It is a first because we are going on the *offensive* against the government. By our action we are showing that it is the government—not us—which is undemocratic, which is violent, which is continually flouting the Bill of Rights.

There is no other party that understands the importance of defending democratic rights as we do and no other party with the tradition and know-how to fight back as effectively as we. In Los Angeles, for example, there are many groups which have been bombed by right-wing forces, but it is the SWP which is taking the initiative to unite the various victims to go on a campaign to put a stop to the bombing. And this example has been repeated many times. We are getting a reputation as a party that doesn't let people deny us our rights without a fight. And growing numbers of people are taking an interest in our suit and are beginning to realize that the outcome will affect the democratic rights of all those struggling to change this society.

Our suit will probably come to trial in the next year and we can expect that at that time it will attract even more attention than it has up to now. It will most likely set precedents. The central question posed by the trial will be does the government have the right to harass us, to bug us, to victimize us, simply on the basis that they disagree with our political ideas. And in the course of this trial we will no doubt be discussing what are these ideas which they consider so dangerous.

Will we win this case? The answer is we've already won some victories. We've already put the government on the defensive. One reflection of the position the government is now in was the announcement by the Attorney General several days ago that they are no longer going to use *agents provocateurs* in the radical movement, that is provocateurs that urge people to commit crimes. We don't believe them when they say they'll cease doing this, but the fact that they had to admit that this was a general policy before is certainly of significance. Our legal offensive, our success in obtaining the release of incriminating documents, our campaign to get out the facts on what the repressive agencies of the government have done,

has already played a role in pushing the government back. So, our suit is helping push the government back on this important question of democratic rights and in the process of doing this it is educating people about the real anti-democratic nature of this government.

Another area where the party has taken an initiative in the fight for democratic rights is through our campaign to be exempted from the new campaign disclosure laws. This fight has not been an easy one, since these laws have been demagogically pushed by the ruling class as reforms. Nevertheless, it's an important fight because it has to do with the question of whether the capitalist parties will be able to maintain their political monopoly in this country. Contrary to what those who support these laws say, they are designed to keep any new parties, parties such as the Raza Unida parties, or a Black party or labor party, or ourselves, from challenging the major parties. They are also designed to help minimize the role of the labor movement in the political arena.

The disclosure laws also legalize government snooping into people's individual political lives and are blatantly unconstitutional for this reason. We can expect that as the implications of this become more clear, and as the disillusionment with the Republicans and Democrats deepens, that more people will wake up to the threat these laws pose. We've already seen this begin to happen. Not only the ACLU, but also other civil libertarians, representatives of smaller parties, lawyers, professors and figures in the labor movement and Black movement have joined us in our fight to be exempted from these laws.

While I'm on the subject of democratic rights, I want to mention one new example of a denial of rights by the government. We have word that the government is considering denying a visa to Hugo Blanco for his tour of the U.S. in defense of Latin American political prisoners. According to the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, which is sponsoring the tour, they haven't gotten an official word on this from the government yet, but they do know that the government is wavering. And they believe that if a big enough hue and cry can be raised about the outrageous and undemocratic nature of this move by the government, that Hugo will be able to come. So this campaign of USLA's will be supported wholeheartedly by the SWP in the next month or so and we are sure that other supporters of USLA and many other groups and individuals will feel the same way we do and join in this effort.

Expansion

Next I want to take up an especially exciting part of the turn we're making, the expansion of the party into six new areas. This is part of an attempt to create more branches, smaller branches, and to extend the influence of the party into whole new regions so we can move further along the road of creating a truly national party. It's a move that is in consonance with our whole view of this period as a time when we're going to find more people from places like Shingle Springs, California, and Union, Mississippi, who are looking for the nearest SWP headquarters.

Going hand in hand with this expansion is the perspective of cutting down the size of some of the larger branches, so that comrades can be released to go pioneering in new areas. It's important to understand that

these moves will benefit both the larger branches and the new areas.

The SWP constitution states that when a branch gets to be 50 members or more, it is supposed to divide into two branches. And we've learned of late that those who decided to write this into the constitution knew what they were talking about. When branches get too big, when they have 60, 70, 80 and more members, all kinds of problems arise. For one thing, it's impossible to organize a branch that size. There are too many people. And this problem becomes especially acute in a period such as we are going into now, where the kind of activity we'll be involved in—union work, participation in all kinds of mass struggles—will take close attention of branch leaderships.

Another problem of large branches is that it is simply harder for members to participate in the decision making process of the branch. Branch meeting agendas become too long. And comrades begin to feel inhibited about raising ideas or questions, since they don't want to prolong an already lengthy meeting.

Another problem is that it is harder in such branches for new members and less experienced comrades to take on responsibilities. There are always more experienced people around to do the job. So we aren't able to fully tap the talents and abilities of all the comrades. This is terrible, especially given the fact that the party is not big enough to take advantage of all the openings we have. We need to challenge all our members to contribute whatever they are able to give. And the more our opportunities increase, the more this will be the case.

So what we should look forward to in the future is more branches, smaller branches, and more probes into new areas. There are many big important cities where the SWP doesn't have branches where we will want to expand in the future, cities like Kansas City, Cincinnati, Toledo, Buffalo, Birmingham, Dallas, and so on. To help lay the basis for this we want to keep reaching into the regions with our election campaigns, and through the support we give to the YSA regional work. We want to continue working on projects such as the five-state ERA campaign, and we should help build SCAR chapters in the regions.

Our understanding of the general period of capitalist crisis we are going into is what's behind our bold approach to the party's expansion. What we are saying is that we must prepare for the kind of period when opportunities will exist for our movement to grow rapidly. It's parallel in many ways to the prospects which existed for the growth of the small Communist Party at the beginning of the 1930's depression. It's not an exact parallel, because this crisis is developing in a different way, and as has been pointed out, if we are looking for things to happen just as they did in the 1930's we will miss the reality of what's going on today.

We should think not just in terms of what new opportunities we'll see during the coming year, but of preparing ourselves for a whole new stage of the radicalization which will have quite different characteristics from the one we've just been through. It's quite apropos in this regard that Jim Cannon's new book, *The Socialist Workers Party During World War II*, is about the period 1940 to 1943, a time when the party was planning for new opportunities which opened up at the end of the war and after. That book, along with Cannon's *Letters From Prison*, provides an example of how to prepare the party

for new openings. They are sequels on the organizational level to what the transitional program book [*Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder, \$2.45] tells us about preparing the party politically.

Winning New Members

Capping off the changes we are making with this turn will be a new attitude toward winning new members to our party. Over the past few months, recruitment to the party has begun to pick up and there is every reason to believe that this will not only continue, but will increase.

We must take a new approach to recruitment. Put very simply, we must make it easier for people to join. Comrades may have noticed that on the volunteers card there was a place to check "I want to join the Socialist Workers Party." And when Jack Barnes welcomed people to this convention, he made a special welcome to all those who are here who don't belong to the party, and he said he hoped many of them will join. This is the approach we should take, to make it easier for people to see we want them to join and to remove any unnecessary barriers to this.

As we begin to recruit more people directly to the party, we'll find that many of those joining will not have gone through the same experiences as those who join from the YSA. They will have to get this experience inside the Socialist Workers Party. It also means that there will be a higher percentage of those who join who may decide to drop out after a while.

We will also have to take into consideration the fact that many of our new members will have personal obligations, difficult work schedules, children to take care of, etc., which will make it impossible for them to be as active as other comrades. This should not be a barrier to their belonging to our movement. Nor do we want financial problems to be a barrier. Because of the depression or other economic problems there are new members who cannot financially afford some of the activities of the party, and we will take steps to overcome this problem. We, of course, will continue to educate every new member on the importance of contributing to the movement financially, but we don't want lack of money to prevent anyone from joining or participating in the party's activities.

Along with the increasing numbers who will want to join our movement we can expect that there will also be more people who will become sympathetic with us, who will want to work with us on one or another activity, but who feel they would be better sympathizers than members. These people can be a big help in building our movement and in the various campaigns we're involved in.

Along with a new attitude toward winning new members must come better organization of our recruitment work.

Each branch should have a recruitment director. Most branches will also probably find they will want a recruitment committee. The job of the recruitment committee is not only to keep lists of people interested in our movement and get to know them, but also to make sure that the activities of the branch—all the way from forums, classes, and picnics to educational conferences—are organized in a way that will maximize recruitment.

Many of those who will want to join will be attracted to us because they are involved with us in mass struggles, because they see we are in the front lines of the fight against racism, because they see we are effective fighters for women's liberation and that we are the people who have a strategy for how to transform the union movement. These militants will be interested in discussing with us our strategy for the various movements in which we are active. They will be interested in our resolutions on the Black struggle and women's liberation and they will want to learn about our trade union policy. They will be interested, for example, in studying with us Farrell Dobbs's books on the Teamsters.

We approach recruitment with the firm understanding that there is nothing more important than building our movement. We have to be constantly talking socialism with people. And we have to convey to perspective members what Jim Cannon always talked about, that is the importance of the contribution each individual can make to the struggle to change this society, a struggle which has become all the more urgent with the threat of nuclear war.

In the coming months and years the party is going to be faced with new challenges. We go into this period with a cadre which has the political understanding and programmatic agreement that will allow us to take advantage of the new openings. The events of the past year have not surprised us or caught us off guard. They confirm the fundamental analysis of the radicalization we have hammered out.

We also go into this period with the knowledge that we still have much to learn. We have no detailed predictions to make about exactly how fast the crisis will unfold or what forms it will take. Nor do we have blueprints for what actions the party should make in response.

What we can do, and what we are doing with this turn, is to make adjustments in our functioning which will prepare us better for events as they unfold. And I want to end with a final point on this turn. I don't think we need to be afraid of being too adventurist or of overdoing this turn. Our party is politically mature and there's not much danger that we'll go flying off the track. What we must do is be sure that we make the turn; that we make all the necessary adjustments in our functioning, so that we can be prepared for the new challenges we are going to see in the period ahead.