

Information, Education, Discussion

# BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

Published by expelled members of the Socialist Workers Party, Fourth Internationalist Tendency

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The *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* is published by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, founded by members expelled from the Socialist Workers Party because we opposed abandoning the Trotskyist principles and methods on which the SWP was founded and built for more than a half century.

Denied the right, specified in the SWP constitution and by Leninist norms, of a full and free discussion of all programmatic changes, we were subjected first to gag rules and slander and finally to wholesale expulsions. The present leadership has resorted to these bureaucratic methods in order to impose their revisionist political line upon the party without discussion or approval by the membership.

We are now forced to organize and conduct this discussion outside the SWP. Our aim is to encourage discussion and debate within the party by those seeking to defend revolutionary Marxism and to bring about our reinstatement in the party.

We firmly believe that the present leaders of the SWP cannot avoid that discussion through organizational measures and expulsions. The relevant issues will increasingly appear on the agenda as their new course comes into conflict with the reality of the class struggle in the U.S. and around the world.

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*"All members of the party must begin to study, completely dispassionately and with utmost honesty, first the essence of the differences and second the course of the dispute in the party. . . . It is necessary to study both the one and the other, unfailingly demanding the most exact, printed documents, open to verification by all sides. Whoever believes things simply on someone else's say-so is a hopeless idiot, to be dismissed with a wave of the hand."*

—V.I. Lenin, "The Party Crisis," Jan. 19, 1921

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# BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THE U.S. TODAY

## Political Resolution Adopted by F.I.T. National Conference

May 27, 1985

### I. The General Political Situation in the United States

The present economic, social, and political situation in the U.S. results from the gradual breakdown of capitalist production and distribution worldwide. The erosion of the system in the post-World War II period brought on the demise of the Bretton Woods international monetary arrangements in 1971, signaling the end of U.S. economic hegemony. The world depression of 1974-1975 was a sure sign that the rebuilding and expansion of capitalist production, which followed in the wake of the terrible carnage and destruction of the second World War, had come to an end.

The system is again clogged with its overproduction of commodities and a lack of profitable markets for their distribution (the temporary upturn, fueled by massive deficit spending, notwithstanding). It now suffers from the same inherent contradiction that beset capitalism in the 1930s and that has plagued it since the start of the 20th century, creating the conditions for two devastating wars of capitalist rivalry for control of the world market.

The U.S. ruling class remains dominant in the capitalist world, but far from united within its own ranks and still further removed from its illusory goal of regulating and harmonizing capitalism on a world scale. Its military power was challenged in Vietnam. Its economic controls and political wisdom were questioned by its imperialist allies in Europe during the Johnson administration. Since 1971 each succeeding administration in Washington has tried to revitalize and stabilize the economy at home and abroad by austerity measures for the working class and military expansion for capital investment.

The result at the start of the second term of the Reagan administration is an impending economic crisis among the most severe that has been known in this country. The staggering weight of the unprecedented federal deficit with its huge interest burden threatens to shatter the monetary structure. At some point, as the debt continues its inexorable accumulation, interest rates will

climb again, business expansion will be choked off, and unemployment will rise drastically. Such was the sequence of events in the 1981-82 economic decline. At that time the collapse was postponed and the monetary system shored up by government loans.

Major bankruptcies of the Chrysler type were avoided under the Carter administration. Likewise the catastrophic ramifications of the debacle of the Continental Illinois bank were curtailed in early 1984 under Reagan; and the most recent crisis of the Ohio savings and loans was averted. Even so, more than 30 thousand business failures were recorded in the 1981-82 shakeout. A score of banks failed. Twelve million people were jobless.

The option of government bailouts for big business is no longer the same as three years ago because of the rapid rise in the federal deficit. Such loans aggravate the crisis. The reason is the bloated size of the federal budget and the refusal of the Reagan administration to cut military spending which is a major source of capital investment.

The economy seems to be in a holding pattern--having delivered stunning blows to organized industrial workers, to Blacks and other minorities, to women, to working farmers, and to others. There is an appearance of social stability, but this remains more of a ruling class hope than a reality. The gathering storm clouds on the social horizon are not yet sufficiently menacing to cause either panic in government or organized self-protection by the governed. Under these circumstances the employing class of this country is becoming less confident, the middle class more volatile, and sectors of the working class are beginning to think about what is happening to them and to challenge the ruling class's take-back offensive.

#### The working class movement

The labor and radical movements are in general disarray, striving to understand and overcome the 20-year heritage



of class collaboration in the expanding postwar economy from 1950 to 1970. During those years a class analysis and the socialist program for the reorganization of society by the working class found little sympathy. Stalinism and the brutal dictatorship in the Soviet Union were identified with socialism by bourgeois propagandists, and the uneven but continuous rise in the working class standard of living here and in Western Europe created illusions in "Western democracy." This provided a material basis for popular acceptance of the slander against the socialist ideal of an egalitarian society.

The trade union bureaucracy, preaching its doctrine of class collaboration, gained ascendancy within the working class movement at the close of World War II--and quickly diverted all vestiges of what mass sentiment still existed for independent political action into the Democratic Party. During the war the anti-Stalinist bureaucrats in the union movement shared control and accepted a division of labor with the CP-controlled unions in their joint support of the imperialist military effort. But after the war, when U.S. imperialism turned on the Soviet bureaucracy and instituted the Cold War (a hot war in Korea), and the witch-hunt at home under the Truman administration, the Stalinists were driven from the unions. From that time to the present the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucrats have controlled the unions and their particular variety of class collaborationist ideology has prevailed. Even so, class-struggle pressures create divisions within their ranks.

Stalinism as a working class political tendency lost credibility in the union movement and in the Black community during the 1950s and 1960s, maintaining a peripheral existence in intellectual circles and among some radical workers. It found new support in the student and antiwar movements of the 1960s, but not much.

Revolutionary socialism with its class analysis of society and its program for the working class overturn of capitalism gained new adherents (especially among radicalizing youth) beginning in 1955 with the development of the civil rights movement. It continued to grow through the 1960s with the student upsurge, antiwar demonstrations, women's liberation, and similar social protest movements.

During the past decade, from the world depression of 1974-75 to the present, the working class has been under attack and poorly prepared to defend its

economic interests and living standards. The union leadership has defaulted in this struggle, granting concessions, seeking compromises with the employers, hoping for economic recovery.

As a result, Stalinism has increased its influence at the present juncture, in relation to the trade union bureaucracy--even though both are essentially class collaborationist. The Stalinists have succeeded in regaining some credibility in the unions as oppositionists to the entrenched officialdom, and by painting up their "heroic" past in the CIO movement of the 1930s.

Revolutionary socialism as an organized political tendency and an ideological current in the labor and radical movements in this country has declined since 1978. This is due largely to the crisis of leadership in the SWP, combined with the general offensive of capitalism against the working class and the reemergence of Stalinism as a viable political current in the working class movement.

These are the main organizational and ideological forces within working class politics today. They must be understood and explained in order to see clearly the U.S. political picture at this moment of impending crisis. It is a crisis of capitalism. But this crisis, as Marx explained long ago, can be resolved only by the working class in struggle to establish the more just and rational system of socialism.

The most important political organizations within the working class movement of this country--each offering its own solution to the economic and social crisis--are Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the most active and viable branch of Social Democracy; the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA), identified with and a defender of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union; and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which despite its continuing programmatic and organizational crisis remains the political party that embodies the heritage of the Russian revolution.

### **The relationship of class forces**

On the other side of the U.S. political scene stands the ruling class. Its political organization is the U.S. government, with its democratic trappings and its repressive apparatus. The two-party system, maintained and controlled by the employing class, is in fact an integral part of the governmental structure. Through the medium of the two-party system the capitalist rulers



operate their monopoly of the electoral arena, and through their elected representatives in government they organize and regulate society to suit their changing needs.

Compared to this vast political machinery of the capitalists the working class political organizations seem puny. The only massive working class organizational structure is the unions, a potentially powerful but loosely affiliated social and political force. The employers have, however, through the years since the rise of the CIO movement which built the modern union structure, taken precautions to limit its uses by enacting a special body of law to control and regulate labor unions. This guarantees that the workers will not be able to

marshal their forces without their own political organizations.

The present political situation, including the existing relationship of class forces in U.S. society, is not likely to endure for long. Vast political changes are in store as the economic crisis deepens. The working class is driven by the employers to defend its share in the social division of wealth, and in so doing it will develop a new political consciousness. The major political currents indigenous to the modern international working class movement will increase in size and influence in this country and will compete here for mass support as in all other countries of the world.

## **II. The Key Role of the U.S. Working Class and the Crisis of the Fourth Internationalist Movement in the U.S.A.**

The political situation in the U.S. and throughout the world will be influenced decisively by present developments in the international working class political movement--especially in the Fourth International, which presents an uncompromisingly anticapitalist (i.e. revolutionary socialist) program. The ability of the working class to intervene effectively in the historic process depends upon how well the revolutionary socialist current organizes its forces.

In 1929, in a letter to the Bolshevik-Leninists in the United States, Trotsky wrote: "The work to be achieved by the American Opposition has international historic significance, for in the final analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided upon American soil." This observation about the centrality of the third American revolution remains valid. The present crisis of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the U.S., therefore, is of key importance--and not just for this country.

The Barnes faction in the U.S. Socialist Workers Party challenges the post-1917 organizational and theoretical acquisitions of Marxism, especially the concept of permanent revolution and the analysis of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union. The political resolution endorsed by delegates to the 1984 SWP convention with virtually no prior discussion, and adopted at the 1985 special convention, is a departure from the Marxist method of political analysis.

In addition to its implicit repudiation of the transitional program upon which the party was founded, and its explicit rewriting of party history to

suit its factionally motivated schematic projections, the 1985 resolution introduces an ambiguous treatment of crucial issues confronting the labor movement today--failing to state forthrightly where it stands. This makes it essential to summarize clearly the correct approach to some of the issues in debate:

### **1) Anti-imperialism and class struggle**

What is frequently referred to as the "anti-imperialist struggle" encompasses entrenched governments in colonial and semicolonial countries as well as revolutionary uprisings of workers and peasants in the colonial world. In the post-World War II period numerous "independent" national governments representing native capital and similar interests have come in conflict with U.S. imperialism. At the moment these include such regimes as the Syrian, Iranian, Libyan, etc.

Earlier, the governments of Egypt, Algeria, Indonesia, and Chile--part of a long list--came under attack by imperialism, or tried to establish some degree of independence from it. The workers' and farmers' government of Nicaragua is presently under economic and military attack by the U.S., as were the governments of Grenada, Cuba, Vietnam, and Korea earlier. Under the rubric of "anti-imperialist struggle," all those who come into conflict with imperialism are lumped together.

There is a basic difference, however, between those governments like the Cuban and Nicaraguan today, and the Chilean and Indonesian of yesterday. It is a class difference. The workers' and



farmers' government in Nicaragua represents the interests of the poor and exploited against the privileges of the local landowners and small capitalists. The governments of Allende in Chile and Sukarno in Indonesia tried to combine the interests of the poor with those of the rich in their countries -- in a "united" fight against imperialist domination. Their "anti-imperialism" paved the way for blood-drenched takeovers by the native capitalists in collaboration with foreign powers.

Revolutionary socialists cannot give political support to liberal capitalist or bourgeois nationalist governments, even though it is frequently necessary to defend them or to fight side-by-side with them against imperialist attacks. The revolutionary mobilization of the working class and the peasantry--with the goal of instituting their own government--is the only hope for successful struggles against imperialism.

The concept of "anti-imperialist struggle" cannot be counterposed to class struggle in the colonial world without leading to defeat of the oppressed masses. That is a lesson of the entire history of colonial uprisings and revolts in this century which continues to maintain all of its relevance today (as evidenced by the present situation in Iran).

Imperialism may be weakened and is often frustrated by the rebellion of those nations it oppresses, but it cannot be destroyed simply by the spreading colonial revolution. Imperialism can be destroyed finally only in its centers of power, in the industrial nations. Its ultimate demise will come at the hands of the modern industrial proletariat.

## **2) Revolutionary victories in Central America and the Caribbean**

The 1979 victories in Nicaragua and Grenada, and the continuing struggles of the revolutionary forces in those countries, as well as in El Salvador and Guatemala, are extensions of the 1959 victory in Cuba. Their future depends upon the material and ideological support of working people throughout the world. The extension of the revolution to other Latin American countries is an essential and inevitable part of this historic process, leading to the socialist united states of Central and South America.

The first five years of the victorious Nicaraguan revolution are now part of the unfolding history of the working class political movement, its lessons still to be mastered. It is true

that the revolutionary process in Central America is at the center of world politics in one sense--that the Reagan administration is using extraordinary means to destroy the Nicaraguan government and prevent the spread of revolution. It is also true that the U.S. financed counterrevolution in Central America is a threat to working people and to the labor movement throughout the world.

But it is not true that the immediate future of the colonial revolution, or for that matter of the present Nicaraguan government, will be decided exclusively in Central America. Other factors which will have a major, perhaps even decisive, impact include the course of revolutionary struggles in other parts of the world, and mobilizations of working people in the U.S. and other countries in solidarity with the right of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran peoples to self-determination. (Even the tactical considerations of the Soviet bureaucracy in its dealings with the U.S.A. can play a significant part in the actual unfolding of events.)

## **3) The working class revolution in Poland against the Stalinist bureaucracy**

The 1980 uprising of Polish workers and their self-organization in the Solidarity movement is a new factor in world politics. The Stalinist bureaucracy that usurped power in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and extended that power after World War II through its domination of the deformed workers' states of Eastern Europe recognized instinctively that the revolt in Poland threatened not only the bureaucratic structure in the East European states but in the USSR as well. It sought initially to contain the Polish upsurge and, having successfully thwarted sympathetic demonstrations and uprisings in adjacent states, it encouraged the December 13, 1981, military coup of General Jaruzelski, head of the Polish army. Thus the Soviet bureaucracy managed to create the superficial impression that it was not implicated in "the Polish Affair."

Despite the jailing of Walesa and several thousand other leaders and members of Solidarity, and the outlawing of the union movement, the Polish workers were not crushed. Their outlawed independent unions comprise an underground network, the necessary organizational structure for the continuing struggle against repression. In this way the leadership of a new mass uprising is being trained and assembled.



The Polish events during the past four years have inspired the labor movement in all countries with new hope. A revolutionary victory of the workers in one of the bureaucratically ruled workers' states of Eastern Europe would shake up the entire bureaucratic apparatus and release the revolutionary energy of the vast mass of humanity in that sector of the world where capitalism has been defeated and has never recovered. When the political revolution of the working class destroys the reactionary machinery of government in the deformed workers' states it will be the greatest blow to world imperialism that has ever yet been dealt, more damaging to the capitalist system than anything except the working class revolution in one of the industrial centers of imperialism.

This is why the revolutionary Marxist current in the world labor movement hailed the Polish events from the first day, and tried in every way to promote the success of the protest strikes and mass uprisings. The Fourth International seeks to prepare the political revolution and topple the governments in the bureaucratized workers' states. But the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and those in the FI who agree with them failed to endorse and promote the worldwide campaign in support of the embattled Polish workers. Not only has the SWP failed to promote this campaign, the Barnes faction in control of the party has prohibited party members from participating in it.

The political resolution adopted by the 1985 pre-World Congress convention of the SWP, "The Revolutionary Perspective and Leninist Continuity in the United States," despite its length and seeming comprehensiveness, makes no mention of the Polish events and their impact on the U.S. working class. Nor does it mention the political revolution that will overthrow the bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union and eradicate the pernicious influence of Stalinism.

Many radicals think of themselves as "Marxists" and see the world today as divided between Stalinist "socialism" and U.S. imperialism. They tend to look to the Soviet bureaucracy for support against the crimes of capitalism and close their eyes to the crimes of Stalinism, fearing that they will be accused of "falling into the imperialist camp."

Reagan and other bourgeois spokespeople seek to divert attention from the murderous brutality of U.S. imperialism by decrying the absence of democracy in the USSR, Poland, and other bureaucratized workers' states. They say such

things as, "the old cries of 'power to the state' are being replaced by cries of 'power to the people.'" Such demagoguery is easily exposed, but it will remain effective so long as working class opposition and open political debate is suppressed in the USSR, Eastern Europe, China, and other workers' states.

#### **4) The three sectors of the world revolution**

The 1963 reunification congress of the Fourth International adopted the resolution "Dynamics of World Revolution Today," which explains, "It is important to recognize that the three main forces of world revolution--the colonial revolution, the political revolution in the degenerated or deformed workers' states, and the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries--form a dialectical unity." This assessment remains true today, and is central to a correct assessment of the international political scene.

Our task in 1985 is to explain this dialectical unity and its workings--to show how the revolutions in Central America and in Poland are parts of a single, unified process of world revolution, at the same time as they are distinct entities requiring independent study and analysis. And we must also show how the ongoing struggles in the colonial world and the bureaucratized workers' states--of which Central America and Poland are the most important examples today--tie in with the third part of that whole: the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries.

Any attempt to deal with these three sectors in strict isolation from each other, any attempt to separate one part of the international socialist revolution from this totality, will severely undermine the ability of the revolutionary Marxist current to act effectively as a conscious instrument to advance the revolutionary process.

#### **5) The Castroist current**

The Cuban revolution produced genuine revolutionary leaders, men and women devoted to the liberation of workers and other oppressed people not only in Cuba but in all lands. Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were the two outstanding leaders, part of a generation that matured in the revolutionary struggles in Latin America.

In Cuba the revolution began as a national democratic revolution under the leadership of Castro and the others who fought in the mountains against Batis-



ta's army, in collaboration with a stratum of the Cuban bourgeoisie that wanted to rid itself of the dictatorship. The revolution very quickly developed into a thoroughgoing socialist revolution. Revolutionary socialists everywhere were inspired by these events, identified with the leaders of the Cuban revolution, and organized to support and defend it.

The defeat of Batista was, in many respects, closer to the beginning of the revolution than to its culmination. As the revolutionary process unfolded in Cuba and spread to other countries in the Caribbean and Central America, the middle class intellectuals who were the majority of the July 26 Movement, and who began as sincere national democrats, were transformed by the struggle into proletarian revolutionaries. Castro and the others around him became part of the revolutionary current in the working class political movement, but their further development was arrested by the pressures that bore down upon Cuba almost from the beginning.

The revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada have been fully endorsed and supported by Castro and by the Cuban government, which is greatly to their credit. The Castroist current derives its identity and reputation from the viability of the Cuban revolution and the extension of that revolution to other countries.

Cuba lives under constant threat from the U.S. colossus. It has had to depend heavily on the USSR for economic assistance and military protection. Despite this, Castro has never become a political puppet of the Stalinist regime in Moscow, nor a pawn in their diplomacy. He maintains a significant degree of independence, even though he adapts to Stalinism in ways that are harmful for the future of the Cuban revolution. His rationalization of the Soviet military invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and his unqualified endorsement of the Jaruzelski coup in Poland in 1981 are the clearest examples of this.

Like other revolutionists in the colonial world, Castro has espoused the "anti-imperialist struggle" theory, which has its origins in Stalinist ideology. The uncritical acceptance of this incorrect perspective for the colonial revolution combines with a neglect of the revolutionary movement in the centers of imperialism. Within Cuba, the influence of the Soviet bureaucracy and the ideological remnants of the pre-revolutionary Cuban Communist Party have contributed to the monolithic character of the present party, and to the absence

of workers' control over economic planning. One effect of Castro's adaptation to Stalinism is the refurbished image that the Stalinist current acquires through its association and identification with the Cuban revolution.

The Barnes faction in the SWP also tries to identify with Castroism, but it is not Castroist. It is a dangerous adaptation to what it perceives Castroism to be. It is in fact an adaptation to the negative features of Castroism, which in turn reflect the adaptations by Castro and the Cuban government to Stalinism.

## 6) The turn to industry

A campaign to orient the SWP toward the industrial workers and to put the majority of party members in industrial jobs was, and remains, a correct orientation for party-building. But this has to be coupled with a correct approach toward the political activity of these members, or else it can be transformed into its opposite--as it has been by the Barnes leadership.

The decision to turn the SWP's major attention to the industrial workers of this country was amended in 1978 to concentrate the existing membership in a few "key" unions. Henceforth this was known in the party as "the turn." It was accomplished by shifting members from wherever they may have been working, regardless of the kind of political activity they were engaged in or their union responsibilities, into the designated industrial unions. By 1981 the party leadership was urging a national concentration in the garment industry.

This narrow, and to a large extent arbitrary, selection of unions in which the "large majority" of SWP members is concentrated is part of the process of party reorganization called "political centralization" by the leadership. In this process the national fractions supplanted the branches as the basic organizational units of the party, thus contributing to the disorganization of the party as a political factor in areas where the branches were established. Members in the fractions are shifted from area to area as deemed necessary by the National Office, and this contributes to the disruption of serious and consistent work in the unions.

What happens in the labor movement generally--including the largest unions such as the National Education Association, Teamsters, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Service Employees International Union, United Food and Commercial Workers, and



over 100 more--completely escapes the attention of SWP members who are concentrated in a limited sector of the union movement where the party leadership has decided "the action will be." This contributes to the isolation of the SWP and to its degeneration. It does not contribute to the education or morale of the members, nor to the necessary political attention that the SWP ought to devote to the work of helping rebuild and reorient the union movement in this time of its decline. This is of great importance to the future, and ought to be the primary objective of the turn. The labor movement badly needs the revolutionary vanguard--to recruit and educate the radicalizing workers through close association and collaboration with them in the daily problems of the unions.

The false notion that a revolutionary socialist party with a predominantly petty-bourgeois (or at least non-industrial proletarian) membership and leadership can become proletarianized simply by subjecting its members to industrial work needs to be corrected. The experience of the SWP for six years has demonstrated that something is lacking. The membership has not changed in class composition, only in size. It has grown smaller. "The turn," as projected by Barnes, needs demystification. It is not a magic formula for proletarianization of the party. That can be accomplished only by recruiting proletarians, and one of the ways to do this is through the serious union-building activity of members assigned to work in industry.

## 7) The labor party

The labor party question has a long history in the Marxist movement in the United States, going back to the time of Engels. It was an issue in the debates and faction formations within the early Communist Party in the 1920s, and has held the attention of the Trotskyist movement since our formation.

There has hardly ever been full agreement on how, when, and under what circumstances to advance the slogan for a labor party. But there has been general agreement that the American workers need to break decisively with the capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans. They must organize their own mass party based on the unions to run their own candidates for public office. This has been recognized as a necessary first step in the independent political action of the working class as a class.

This was widely discussed in the SWP soon after its founding. General

agreement was reached in the party that the formation of a labor party would qualitatively change the union movement, and that all members of the SWP should work for the formation of such a party. We believed that the struggle for transitional demands in the unions would facilitate the formation of a labor party, and that the transitional program as adopted by the SWP could become the labor party program.

Prior to World War II and in the postwar strike wave, and subsequently until the reaction of the 1950s, one of the central slogans of the SWP was "Build a Labor Party Now." During the 1950s and 60s the SWP used the labor party idea to educate on the need for independent working class participation in the electoral arena.

In January 1976 in a report to the SWP National Committee, National Secretary Jack Barnes said, "The time for a labor party is now. Look at the facts of this American capitalist society as we have just outlined them, the facts that dictated the party's turn. It is unassailable that the time for independent political action is now. There is no discernible motion in that direction; we don't pretend there is. But objectively that is what is needed, and this way forward can be made clear to growing numbers of people."

The 1976 and 1980 presidential campaigns of the SWP were conducted around the need for a labor party in this country. The 1980 campaign committee issued a labor party pamphlet by Andrew Pulley, the SWP presidential candidate that year. Since then, the SWP has not said much about a labor party in this country.

The 1984 campaign committee included the need for a labor party in the literature it issued, but not much emphasis was given to this point. The latest political resolution, adopted at the 1985 special convention, predicts that a labor party "will emerge as a by-product of advances in class combat by the unions against the bosses and the policies of the bosses' government." It goes on to say, "The call for an independent labor party will be part of the program of any class-struggle left wing in the unions forged in the course of these battles." These references to the labor party are under the general heading "Stranglehold of Electoralism."

It is clear that the present SWP leadership has abandoned any notion that the campaign in the union movement for the formation of a labor party is a necessary and useful tool in the arsenal of revolutionary Marxists--part of the



education and radicalization of workers. It rejects the possibility that the fight for political independence may even be a stimulating factor in the formation of a class-struggle left wing in the unions, in which case the labor party campaign would call into existence the class-struggle left wing rather than the other way around. In any event, propaganda for a labor party is badly needed in the union movement today--for the education of the SWP as well as for the education of the unions.

### **8) The 1984 presidential campaign**

Two of the major political currents in the working class movement are long accustomed to lending support to the political parties of the employing class in national elections. The Social Democrats openly endorse and work for the candidates of the Democratic Party, and preach "lesser evilism." The Stalinists run their own candidates for propaganda purposes and campaign to defeat the greater evil at all costs. This time they campaigned to defeat Reagan and elect Mondale.

Most of the radical sects that tried to get on the ballot or otherwise participate in the electoral process came out openly in favor of the Democratic candidate or maneuvered themselves into the swamp of bourgeois politics by endorsing and working for the election of Jesse Jackson, the Black candidate in the Democratic Party primaries. The radical weekly with the widest circulation and most diverse readership, The Guardian, which has sometimes endorsed SWP candidates in the past, campaigned for Mondale in this election. The Marcyite Workers World Party campaigned for Jackson in the primaries and ran its own candidate in the general election.

Only the SWP ran a campaign against the politics and the parties of the employing class, and for the interests of the working class. This time, however, the SWP campaign suffered from the programmatic revisions of the Barnes leadership and failed to accomplish what was possible.

In reference to the campaign the SWP resolution says, "Above all, our candidates--true to the Comintern's 1920 resolution on electoral activity--explain revolutionary ideas." In some ways the SWP campaign was similar to the kind of campaign the Communists might have conducted in 1920, or the kind they did run in 1928. In 1984 the SWP candidates devoted themselves almost exclusively to explaining what the revolutionary work-

ers' and farmers' government in Nicaragua was doing, and did not pay much attention to what was happening here at home. Consequently, when opportunities to speak to striking workers opened up the SWP candidates were ill-prepared to discuss the problems of the strike or to offer a program of transitional demands to create jobs.

The failure of the party to participate in union-building work or strike activity contributed to the weakness of its election campaign. In addition to that, the party leadership is more interested in exposing the "stranglehold of electoralism" than explaining the opportunities of independent working class participation in the electoral arena. They do not give serious and appealing answers to such critical problems as unemployment, high prices, plant closings, housing shortages, declining wages, union-busting, and tax increases.

One of the purposes of a revolutionary Marxist election campaign must be to explain these evils of capitalism, how they are connected, and what working class organizations can do to combat them under present circumstances. It does nothing to mobilize the class to fight in its own defense if we limit our proposals for action to those that can be implemented only after a workers' and farmers' government is established.

The Trotskyist movement has accumulated a vast experience in electoral activity in this country. It is hardly necessary at this date to appeal to the 1920 resolutions of the Communist International to learn how a revolutionary working class party ought to run an election campaign. During the 1976 presidential campaign, which was conducted in accordance with the transitional program of the party, 700 new members were recruited. The number of new recruits in 1984 has not been reported.

### **9) Open the road to Blacks and other minorities, to women, and youth**

When the Fourth International was founded it proclaimed in its programmatic document, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (or transitional program), the need to pay particular attention to the young generation of workers, and those discriminated against because of race and sex. "All its policies strive to inspire the youth with belief in its own strength and in the future," it declared. "Only the fresh enthusiasm and aggressive spirit of the youth can guarantee the preliminary successes in the struggle; only these successes can



return the best elements of the older generation to the road of revolution. Thus it was, thus it will be."

"The decay of capitalism," it explained, "deals its heaviest blows to the woman as wage earner and as housewife."

On the question of race discrimination the transitional program declared: "An uncompromising disclosure of the roots of race prejudice and all forms and shades of national arrogance and chauvinism, particularly anti-semitism, should become part of the daily work of all sections of the Fourth International, as the most important part of the struggle against imperialism and war. Our basic slogan remains: Workers of the World Unite!"

During the radicalization of the 1960s, when significant mobilizations of students, women, Blacks and other minorities took place in this country, the SWP became an active component and supporter of these efforts. With the relative downturn that followed the end of the Vietnam war, the party gradually withdrew from such activity. In the name of "the turn" (i.e., in the name of "proletarianization") this abandonment became virtually absolute, and a process began of theoretically belittling the importance of such independent movements of the allies of the working class.

This has reached the stage where the present political resolution declares that, "A higher percentage of women than of men are susceptible to reactionary 'solutions' and right-wing demagoguery, which is aimed against the class interests of the proletariat." The Young Socialist Alliance has virtually abandoned activity on the high school and college campuses (which remain the largest concentrations of youth, including working class youth, in the country)--treating it as an afterthought at best; and this has led to a dramatic decline in numbers and increase in age level of the "youth." The influence of the party in the Black struggle, in the Puerto Rican, Chicano, and similar movements of the nationally oppressed has diminished.

Revolutionary Marxists in the United States must take an interest in, become part of, and champion the demands

of every group which suffers special discrimination under capitalism. The growth and development of such movements do not conflict with the development of working class radicalization, but are a part of it and help to advance it. They create political conditions which will stimulate the mobilization of the working class as a class and facilitate its victory over the capitalist system.

### 10) Build the Fourth International

The organizational conclusion which must be drawn from our ideological commitment to a revolutionary Marxist program -- including all of the points enumerated above -- is the need to build the world party of socialist revolution, the Fourth International. Only a firm, united, programmatically clear international movement can play the essential role of assembling and training the cadres who will be essential for the victory of the socialist revolution on a world scale.

There are no substitutes today for this difficult task of international party-building. The idea put forward by the SWP leadership -- of a "New Mass Leninist International" based on the Cuban and Nicaraguan leaderships--cannot have any practical reality.

We are in favor of the formation of Fourth Internationalist groups in every country. We agree with the SWP position on the Cuban CP as stated by Joseph Hansen in his 1978 introduction to the book, Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution: "For a Leninist-type party that guarantees internal democracy." This ought to be our slogan everywhere in the world.

This does not mean that in countries such as Cuba, Nicaragua, or El Salvador, where other revolutionary forces are in the leadership of the masses, that there is any need to counterpose our own movement. That would be wrong and sectarian. In such situations, the goal of Fourth Internationalists is to become integrated into the overall process, collaborate with the existing leaderships, and in that context raise whatever programmatic issues distinguish our current, or discuss tactical matters, in a comradely and collaborative spirit.

### III. Tasks of Revolutionary Marxists

None of these points represents any new thinking or change from what our movement has said in the past. It is the Barnes leadership which is trying to fundamentally transform the political program of the SWP--but it does so with-

out openly proclaiming its goals, and by quoting selectively from old documents to try to give its new positions an orthodox mask. The task of those who have been expelled from the party, and those who remain in it but who do not



agree with the present course of the leadership, is to conduct an uncompromising struggle against this process. It must be a struggle to win a majority of fraternal members of the Fourth International in the United States--which today remains inside the SWP--back to the perspective of building a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party on a correct programmatic basis. Such a party is the indispensable nucleus of the future leadership for the third American revolution.

The present objectives of the revolutionary Marxist movement in the United States are to prepare for the coming upsurge of American workers. This means above all paying attention to the essential party-building tasks of assembling and educating a cadre--constructing an organization of class-conscious vanguard fighters and leaders.

### **Orientation of the revolutionary party**

The primary work of such a party in the union movement, and in most other arenas of mass activity today, is as socialist propagandists. But this cannot be interpreted in any kind of sterile or mechanistic way. To revolutionaries, propaganda means patiently explaining the realities of life under capitalism--the reason why this social system is the fundamental cause of the problems faced by working people and the oppressed. But to have any meaning, such explanations must be formulated in a language which can be understood in terms of the day-to-day lives of workers. Revolutionary propaganda must include raising ideas about how working people can start to break out of our present predicament and move forward. This is the transitional method, the Leninist method, the Marxist method of propaganda.

The "Transitional Program," the founding document of the Fourth International, provides a basic guide to the kinds of slogans and demands which revolutionary Marxists must be raising today within the union movement: slogans for class independence and solidarity, against imperialist war, in defense of oppressed nationalities and women, to open the books of the corporations crying bankruptcy, for a shorter work week with no cut in pay, for escalator clauses in all union contracts to keep pace with inflation, for unemployment compensation at union wages, for a labor party.

Where our propaganda around these and similar proposals strikes a responsive chord among a layer of activists, we must be prepared to move from the

level of simple propaganda to the level of agitation--or even of action. We can expect some such opportunities today, though there won't be many; and even those initiatives which we do take are by no means guaranteed to result in significant gains. But as the crisis of capitalism deepens the opportunities for this kind of development will become more and more numerous, and the likelihood that they will lead to the motion of significant forces increases as well. The revolutionary party must be constantly on the lookout for even modest openings along these lines.

A similar situation exists in such areas of mass work as the women's movement and the Black struggle. Here too revolutionary Marxists will be active participants--explaining our analysis of events and raising our proposals for action. Here too we must be prepared to actively implement our ideas when others respond to them in a positive way.

### **The anti-intervention struggle**

In the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean the situation allows for a more agitational approach. The April 20 demonstrations in Washington D.C. and other cities show that there is a willingness on the part of the U.S. population to actively protest the war policies of their government. This is one arena of mass activity where the revolutionary party can today become actively and deeply involved.

The task in this sphere is to apply a united front approach toward unifying all who will actively oppose U.S. intervention against the revolutions in Central America. Our experiences with those forces which created and led the national April Actions coalition--both before and after the April 20 demonstrations--show that they are hesitant to follow through on the necessary tasks. They tried twice to cancel the mass action on April 20; despite the success of the actions themselves, they have proven hesitant to lead the movement forward toward building a new round of demonstrations in the fall--demonstrations which are objectively required.

In order to bring about the necessary unity of the movement as a whole--including the hesitant elements--we must attempt to build a mass-action, "U.S.-hands-off" wing that can be the stimulus to broader forces which are prepared to take action, and can keep those actions focused on an effective political course. The first Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Intervention in



Central America/the Caribbean held in Cleveland last September began this effort. The second ENC, scheduled for Minneapolis in June, promises to continue it.

While we must never make the error of believing that the forces which have come together around the ENC at this point can substitute themselves for the broader movement, we must also never lose sight of the crucial role that a conscious united force working to bring a correct strategic outlook and political focus to that broader movement can play--as the ENC did leading up to the April 20 demonstrations themselves.

**For the unity of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the U.S.A.**

We do not project the orientation outlined in this resolution as one simply to be applied by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. Adequately carrying out these tasks requires a party, and we have never thought of ourselves as a party, or tried to be one. We are an

expelled tendency--part of the nucleus of a future party--which would continue to belong to the Socialist Workers Party except for the bureaucratic purge carried out by the party leadership.

Until this status changes, we will continue to carry out activities in the mass movement along the lines projected in this resolution. But that by itself will not be adequate. A powerful, class struggle left wing within the U.S. working class can only come into being and maintain itself on an effective course as a result of the conscious and active intervention of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party. This underlines the overwhelming importance of the fight to reunify within the Socialist Workers Party those in the U.S. who maintain fraternal affiliation to the Fourth International. It is such a united revolutionary Marxist vanguard party in the United States which could most effectively carry out the necessary orientation presented in this resolution, and it is for such a party that we project these tasks. □

**United Secretariat of the Fourth International's Message to the George Lavan Weissman Memorial Meeting**

"The Fourth International will remember George Weissman as an outstanding representative of the founding generation of the world Trotskyist movement. His life is an illustration of how much can be done by devoted and conscious revolutionists acting in accordance with their understanding and their convictions, even when they are only a tiny handful in a world dominated by reaction and unreason. Very few in Weissman's time could have lived a more useful or fulfilled life, one more totally dedicated to defending and advancing human dignity.

"Weissman lived most of his life in a time when the desperate masses of humanity could find only false or largely false alternatives -- deceivers, hypocrites, political gangsters -- when even the great majority of the most enlightened and idealistic came to believe that in order to fight the evils of capitalism and reaction it was necessary to give up reason, to accept lies,

to surrender personal and political honor. A perverse notion grew up that power for good as well as for evil goes hand in hand with cynicism and ruthlessness.

"Despite everything, despite the lack of an enlightened leadership like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, the world revolution against capitalist exploitation made important and inspiring advances in George Weissman's lifetime. But all the experience of the decades has made it even clearer that humanity will never achieve liberation until it is led by revolutionists who understand the truth and fight for it in a principled way. That is why the example of revolutionary probity left by Comrade Weissman and others of his generation remains so important for young people joining the Fourth International and for its maturing cadres. Until there are millions like him, humanity will never be free."



# THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM VS. PRAGMATISM

## Political Report to F.I.T. National Conference

by Evelyn Sell

U.S. imperialism is in trouble here "in the belly of the beast" and it is in trouble around the world. The draft political resolution describes specific current crises arising out of the general contradictions of capitalism outlined by Engels in Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, and the further development of these contradictions as later described by Lenin in Imperialism -- The Highest Stage of Capitalism. The first section of our draft resolution notes these crises in a brief review of the general economic and political situation in the United States.

That is what Marxists begin with: an examination of the capitalist system as it exists. This kind of survey is only the beginning of our responsibilities as revolutionary socialists. We try to understand and explain what is happening in society in order to play a role in changing it. We look to the working class as the major force in the modern world with the power to transform the existing disorder and create a new social order on a planet-wide basis, to meet the needs of all humanity -- all, that is, except the tiny number who profit from the exploitation and oppression of the vast majority.

Because we see the working class as the force for fundamental change in society, we carefully observe what is happening to working people and how they respond to their conditions of life and labor. We see that the working class faces a crisis of leadership, that it lacks a leadership armed with a program and a strategy to answer both the day-to-day needs and the longer-range interests of working people.

We pay special attention to the role of leadership in the historic process because the changes we are seeking will not come about spontaneously or by chance. A socialist society with workers' democracy will be the result of conscious, organized, collective, and persistent action led by a revolutionary party. We don't agree with the idea that some kind of new force will emerge out of the present crisis or the idea that maybe a party will be needed at the

moment of revolution but is not necessary today. We reject the idea that we should bring people together right now on the basis of a minimal set of issues which may lead -- somehow, someday -- to a full revolutionary program and an organization. We disagree with those who say now, as others said in the 1960s, that the "old" ideologies and the "old" parties are no longer relevant to the new realities of today's world.

We reaffirm that a mass revolutionary party is required to challenge the most powerful ruling class in the world.

There are many parties in the United States today striving to be the party of the coming American revolution or claiming to represent the best interests of workers and oppressed groups. They are all competing with each other for influence in the working class and its allies. The draft resolution focuses on the three parties currently representing the main ideological currents which have dominated all others during this century: the Democratic Socialists of America representing the ideology of Social Democracy, the Communist Party representing Stalinism, and the Socialist Workers Party representing revolutionary socialism.

Despite splits and resplits, despite past betrayals, despite changes in influence over the years, these are the three main ideological currents in American radical political life.

We are not neutrals in relation to these three ideologies and the parties which express their viewpoints. We are revolutionary socialists and we state our allegiance to the Socialist Workers Party which has represented revolutionary socialism for over fifty years in the United States. We state: The SWP "despite its continuing programmatic and organizational crisis remains the political party that embodies the heritage of the Russian revolution."

We are especially concerned with the crisis affecting the SWP. We are trying to help resolve that crisis. Unlike others who have been expelled or forced out of the SWP, we have neither denied the need for a revolutionary



party nor have we aimed to be a revolutionary party. We have not proposed any steps to form a replacement for the SWP. We have fought for and will continue to fight for the reintegration of Fourth Internationalists within the SWP. The political positions we present in the draft resolution are ones that should be included in a political resolution of the SWP. We describe political responsibilities which can only be carried out by a revolutionary party -- not by a tendency which was established with the goal of reforming the SWP. We are not competing with the party -- as other groups are -- but we are competing with the current party misleadership. It's appropriate, therefore, that most of our draft political resolution is devoted to our alternative to the theoretical fallacies, programmatic revisions, and strategic errors of the Barnes faction which has monopolized all leadership positions in the SWP.

If we had been in the party for the preconvention discussion in 1984, we would have submitted a counterresolution to the Political Committee's resolution. Of course, a major reason we were purged was so that we would not have any voice in the preconvention discussion. The political resolution adopted at the 1984 national convention was edited and resubmitted to the special convention in January of this year -- and will be resubmitted to the SWP for a third time to the national convention coming up this summer. That's a rather extraordinary procedure for a political resolution! It reminds me of the apparitions in Dickens's "A Christmas Carol." The Ghost of Conventions Past and the Ghost of Conventions Future.

The analysis and perspective in our draft political resolution takes up eight issues in the debate we have been carrying out with the Barnes faction both here in the United States and internationally. These eight issues are: anti-imperialism and the class struggle; the revolutionary victories in Central America and the Caribbean; the vital importance of political revolution in the deformed workers' states of Eastern Europe and the degenerated workers' state in the USSR -- in particular, the continuing revolt in Poland; the development of the Cuban revolution and the Castroist current; the turn to industry as originally projected by the SWP in 1975 and then reshaped by the Barnes faction in 1978; the labor party question in the United States and how revolutionary socialists work for this needed political formation; the kind of election campaign which should be pur-

sued by the SWP; and, how the SWP should be involved and should be presenting the transitional program within the struggles of oppressed minorities, women, and youth.

As stated in our draft: "None of these points represent any new thinking or change from what our movement has said in the past." It's also true that none of these points represent any new thinking or change from what the Fourth Internationalist Caucus of the SWP National Committee said in the past nor what the Fourth Internationalist Tendency has said since we were formed in February 1984.

These points were first raised because comrades saw the danger signs, these points were reraised because the Barnes faction pressed forward on its disastrous course, and we now raise these points again because they remain pertinent to the significant openings and opportunities for revolutionary socialists in the United States right now.

The anti-intervention/antiwar movement successfully held the first national day of mobilizations since the time of the Vietnam war. The April 20 marches and rallies were large, broad, spirited, and effectively demonstrated the massive opposition to U.S. government intervention in Central America. The anti-apartheid movement has swelled in size and breadth. It involves Blacks, Latinos, sections of the organized labor movement, and students. The women's movement is once again taking the initiative to defend abortion rights in the streets, spurred on by the attacks on clinics across the country. Various unions are resisting the employers' efforts to housebreak the working class. This resistance is uneven, sporadic, isolated in most cases -- but it is taking place. It's more apparent on the local level than on the national. Probably all of us could cite some local examples of fight-backs.

We are not the only ones noting and participating in these developments. All the political groups -- including the Socialist Workers Party -- are competing for influence among these activists. There are marches, rallies, picket lines, sit-ins, demonstrations, meetings, discussions. A lot of political activity is going on right now. What we see, however, is that there is a crisis of leadership in all of these movements at this time.

One of the comrades in Los Angeles made some cogent and interesting remarks about this at our last LOC meeting. She is a leading person in the January 22nd Coalition for Reproductive Rights; it



was formed in response to the attacks against abortion clinics. She told us that when this group was first set up, it was expected that a few actions would be organized and that would be it. What has happened, however, is that the coalition is continuing to function, the meetings have gotten a little larger, all the radical groups are showing up now, new people are getting involved, more actions are being planned. There was obviously a vacuum of leadership in the women's movement. NOW was not filling the role. CLUW was not filling the role. This ad hoc formation has taken on a life and breadth that surprised its founders.

A similar situation could be seen in the students' anti-apartheid actions that have taken place on almost all Los Angeles campuses after the initiatives taken on the East Coast. The student group that originally called for and organized the sit-in at UCLA, for example, suddenly announced one night that it had made an agreement with the administration that the sit-in would end after so many days and the moment had now come to pack up and depart. A heated debate erupted on the spot and about half of the students decided to continue the sit-in. The original leaders walked out. Almost all of the students who remained were completely inexperienced. They didn't know what to do at that point. One of them, however, had a little political background and dashed out and made some phone calls, trying to reach someone who could give them advice, help them organize their protest, provide them with literature, and so on.

I was contacted because of my work around the Emergency National Conference and in the April 20 coalition. I talked with this student, found out what was needed, and I made some phone calls which resulted in people going to UCLA to join the sit-in.

My little brush with the student demonstrators is an example of an important feature of what is happening today: the various activists are reaching out, joining together in common efforts, making connections. A dramatic example of this was the linking up of two demonstrations on May 7. The UCLA students, protesting South African apartheid, held a mock funeral on campus. They carried coffins in a procession around campus, went to the chancellor's office to make a statement, and then marched over to the Westwood Federal Building to join a couple of hundred people demonstrating against the embargo of Nicaragua. The combined forces held a very spirited picket line and rally.

The developments I have just described don't conform with the scenario presented in the political resolution written and edited by the SWP leadership. We explain in our draft resolution, "The political resolution endorsed by delegates to the 1984 SWP convention with virtually no prior discussion, and adopted at the 1985 special convention, is a departure from the Marxist method of political analysis."

The methodology employed by the Barnes leadership is pragmatism. This methodology is described by George Novack in his book Pragmatism versus Marxism. Novack didn't mean to apply this description to the Barnes faction but, as the saying goes: if the shoe fits, wear it.

"What is pragmatism? First, pragmatism is what pragmatism does. It is the habit of acting in disregard of solidly-based scientific rules and tested principles. In everyday life, pragmatism is activity which proceeds from the premise (either explicit or unexpressed) that nature and society are essentially indeterminate. Pragmatic people rely not upon laws, rules, and principles which reflect the determinate features and determining factors of objective reality, but principally upon makeshifts, rule-of-thumb methods, and improvisations based on what they believe might be immediately advantageous. Such is the kind of practice out of which the theorizing of pragmatic philosophy has grown." (p. 17)

Pragmatism has been summed up very briefly in the question, "Does it work?" If it works, the pragmatist plunges ahead. If it doesn't work, the pragmatist tries something else. As Novack explains: "makeshifts, rule-of-thumb methods, and improvisations based on what they believe might be immediately advantageous."

The Barnes faction drowns the membership in quotations about Bolshevik principles. A waterfall of Marxist phrases about the laws of history pours out of their mouths, typewriters, and word processors. But that's all superficial. What the SWP leadership says and publishes is not necessarily what it practices. They can write something one day, get it adopted the next week, and then do the opposite a month later -- and then rewrite history in the hopes that no one will remember that they haven't practiced what they preached. That's how pragmatists function.

The Barnes leadership is impressionistic, intellectual grasshoppers leaping from one scheme to another. They rely on selected quotations and recite



formulas instead of applying the materialist method to history. They ignore facts which don't fit into their preconceived notions of the way things should happen, and they play up facts which seem to bolster their pronouncements about the course of history.

Here are some examples from the final version of the political resolution published in New International magazine (Spring 1985).

"The turn to the industrial unions has been equally decisive to placing the party in a position to act effectively in the class battle in the United States over the deepening imperialist war against the workers and peasants of Central America and the Caribbean." (p. 27)

"Basing the party in the industrial unions is essential to meet the political challenge posed by the need to draw the labor movement into a fight against the war U.S. imperialism is waging today." (p. 28)

These statements are made by people who employ formal logic, not Marxist logic. According to formal logic: the working class is the force which will transform society; the industrial unions are the most powerful organized section of the working class; it will take a very powerful force to halt U.S. imperialism's war drive against Central America; therefore, if we are in the industrial unions, we will be able to "draw the labor movement into a fight against the war U.S. imperialism is waging today."

Actually, you don't necessarily have to be a Marxist to see the fallacy of this kind of thinking. A poet could do it; to modify the famous line by Gertrude Stein: a fact is a fact is a fact.

The fact is there was a very impressive involvement of labor in the April 20 demonstrations. There were labor endorsers, labor chairpersons of committees and coalitions, financial contributions from unions, labor contingents in the marches, labor banners and signs, labor speakers at the rallies. In comparison with the movement against the war in Vietnam, this was a very substantial and significant new element in the anti-intervention/antiwar movement.

The fact is the SWP was not responsible for all this labor involvement -- not even responsible for most of it or a large part of it. Having nine national industrial fractions -- in and of itself -- did not make a significant difference. Of course, the reasons for this could be listed and explained but this is not the place to do that. I only want to draw your attention to the simple

fact that the logic given for the turn to the industrial unions in terms of fighting against imperialist war does not correspond with the realities of what actually happened within the April 20 coalitions and, before them, last September's Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Military Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean. In addition to having comrades in industrial unions, it's necessary to have the correct strategy and tactics. It's impossible to figure these things out when you are proceeding from formalistic and false premises. The SWP leadership eclectically picks up a fact here and a fact there, an assumption here and a contradictory assumption there, a conclusion here and an opposite conclusion there.

On one page, therefore, we read, "Over the past decade the employers' antilabor offensive has escalated from selective assaults on particular unions ...into a sustained, generalized attack on the largest and strongest industrial unions." (p. 48)

The resolution doesn't list actual attacks on "the largest and strongest industrial unions" but it does note -- on the same page -- important strike battles: Greyhound, General Motors in Canada, Phelps Dodge copper mines in southern Arizona, AP Parts in Toledo, Ohio. This is hardly proof of a "sustained, generalized attack on the largest and strongest industrial unions."

You don't have to be a Marxist to know which unions are being hit by the employers' antilabor offensive. All you have to do is read the newspapers or watch the television news programs to find out that the employers are attacking any union they can. The SWP pragmatists, however, need to assert some profound-sounding analysis in order to justify the fetish they have made of their rigid scheme of NINE-NATIONAL-INDUSTRIAL-FRACTIONS.

**NEW**

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The party leadership doesn't apply the method of the transitional program but they sprinkle their political resolution with the language of the transitional program. "Our candidates explain various immediate, democratic, and transitional demands, presenting these in such a way as to respond to the pressing immediate needs of the exploited and oppressed in this country, while pointing toward a revolution to establish a workers' and farmers' government in the United States." (p. 73)

When it comes to actually applying demands put forward in the transitional program, the Barnes faction has an attack of amnesia. For example, here's what the transitional program advocates for ballot propositions dealing with questions of imperialist war: "...the Fourth International supports every, even if insufficient demand, if it can draw the masses to a certain extent into active politics, awaken their criticism and strengthen their control over the machinations of the bourgeoisie.

"From this point of view, our American section, for example, critically supports the proposal for establishing a referendum on the question of declaring war. No democratic reform, it is understood, can by itself prevent the rulers from provoking war when they wish it. It is necessary to give frank warning of this. But notwithstanding the illusions of the masses in regard to the proposed referendum, their support of it reflects the distrust felt by the workers and farmers for bourgeois government and Congress. Without supporting and without sparing illusions, it is necessary to support with all possible strength the progressive distrust of the exploited toward the exploiters. The more widespread the movement for the referendum becomes, the sooner will the bourgeois pacifists move away from it; the more completely will the betrayers of the Comintern be compromised; the more acute will distrust of the imperialists become." (The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, by Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, p. 90)

A completely different attitude is taken by the writers of the SWP political resolution. In their effort to expose and combat the evils of "electoralism," they state: "Even the radicals who refuse on principle to vote for a candidate of the Democratic or Republican parties are often quick to jump head over heels into bourgeois politics in the form of electoralist campaigns around initiatives and referenda, which are on the ballot in state and local elections year in and year out. These

measures are touted as examples of 'direct democracy' by many radicals, who sometimes even present them as vehicles for independent working-class political action.

"But initiatives, referenda, and recall campaigns are part of the bourgeois electoral setup, from which they cannot be separated and within which they have to be approached." (p. 68)

I won't comment on this; you can read my answer in the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism [No.16] which published my article on the Los Angeles Jobs with Peace initiative.

So far, I've discussed Marxist methodology in relation to producing political resolutions. Of course, the Marxist method is applicable to other aspects of the SWP -- including the central leadership of the party.

We can employ Marxist methodology to understand how and why the Barnes faction developed inside the SWP, how and why this faction became the dominant leadership in the SWP. Frank [Lovell] raises a thought-provoking point about this in his preconference discussion article. He wrote, "Our broader task, in conjunction with our struggle against the Barnesites in the SWP, is to assemble the forces for a revitalized Marxist vanguard. This requires an explanation of what has happened to American radicalism. We will show that our analysis of the Barnesite syndrome is applicable to the radical movement generally."

All of us have had informal discussions about, "Why did it happen?" We need to deal with this question more seriously. It will take many of us to put the pieces of the puzzle on the table so they can be linked together to give us a fuller picture. No one person has all the facts. We've all had different experiences inside the party. We all have pieces of information which must be collected and presented in a way that will help us figure out this question. In the past, comrades have analyzed and explained the genesis and development of groupings in the party which led to splits such as the one in 1940 and the one in 1953. We need to do the same in regard to the emergence and dominance of the Barnes faction.

We have written about what this faction has done and is doing. We have noted its many errors. We really haven't explained it, however. Frank has begun this task by writing a two-part article entitled "Behind the Crisis of Leadership in the SWP" which will be published in the June and July issues of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism (issues No. 19 and 20). The first part takes up the



historical and political roots of this leadership crisis in the SWP, and the second part covers the party leadership's loss of confidence and abandonment of Marxism. I've started writing an article about the YSA, about its history and the role played inside the youth organization by Barnes, Sheppard, Stone, Waters, Jenness, Seigle, and the many others who are now central and secondary leaders of the SWP. Other comrades should start adding their contributions.

It's through our collective efforts that we end up with the clearest, fullest, most balanced, and most accurate analyses and perspectives. The contributions made by comrades in preconference discussion articles -- and the comments which will be made here at this conference -- will improve this draft resolution.

The national coordinators agree

that the final resolution should be edited according to the suggestions made by Frank on the first page of his discussion article. Jean [Tussey] has proposed some good amendments and formulations which will remove ambiguities and clarify important points. The political resolution which comes out of this conference should leave no doubts or misunderstandings about our view, our direction, our aims.

We stated in our founding platform and we reaffirm now: "Our purpose is to defend, maintain, enrich, and apply the programmatic foundations of the party -- the scientific acquisitions of the working class."

That's what we were trying to do with this resolution submitted to you: defending, maintaining, enriching, and applying the programmatic foundations of revolutionary socialism. □

### Ernest Mandel's Tribute to George Lavan Weissman

"Dear Muriel, dear Comrades,

"George Weissman embodied some of the best qualities of American Trotskyism: the capacity of revolutionary intellectuals to put themselves totally and completely at the devotion of the working class and of building the revolutionary party, without losing their theoretical ability and their personal integrity. That's what Marx, Lenin, Trotsky taught us. That's what Jim Cannon tried to put into practice following their guidance: that building the party is building a vast team, in which you don't break personalities but let them flower, each according to his capacities. The revolutionary party needs theory. The proletariat needs theory. You can't have adequate revolutionary practice without adequate revolutionary theory. That's why we need capable revolutionary intellectuals -- not dilettantes -- like we need worker Bolsheviks. The essence of the party is of course the worker Bolshevik. But experience has shown again and again that without a sufficient number of cadres trained in revolutionary theory, you won't have enough worker Bolsheviks, you won't have politically efficient worker Bolsheviks, and you won't keep the worker Bolsheviks you have won to your organization.

"George Weissman was a revolutionary intellectual in the full sense of the word. He had adequate scientific training. He had a powerful, dialectically trained capacity of analysis. He

had deep knowledge of Marxism. He knew the history of his country and of his class. He put all these qualities at the service of building the party. He maintained the Trotskyist continuity in the U.S.A. by functioning as the editor of the Militant during some of the darkest years of isolation for Marxists in the U.S.A. He sacrificed his eagerness and capacity of writing several books about subjects which he would have loved to devote himself to for the sake of maintaining and broadening the cadre. This didn't make him unhappy; on the contrary. He had a great capacity of happiness and contentness with the life he lived. For he had chosen that road out of his own free will, understanding that you get the maximum satisfaction on this sad but beautiful planet of ours by putting your life totally and unconditionally at the service of the greatest of all causes: the struggle to make exploitation, oppression, and violence of one human being against another one vanish from Earth, the struggle for world socialism, for a classless and stateless society.

"As every revolutionary, George was impassioned with revolutions past and present. We all know how eagerly he reacted to the unfolding of the Cuban, and later of the Nicaraguan revolution. But the first memory I have of George is of him wandering through the streets of Paris, looking for all the landmarks -- well-known ones and less-known ones --

(continued on page 35)



# EMERGENCY NATIONAL CONFERENCE URGES MASS ACTIONS IN THE FALL

by Adam Shils

Every day the newspapers carry reports on the escalation of the war against Nicaragua. The situation has become an urgent one. There is a critical need for mass demonstrations to show the Reagan administration the strength of the opposition to intervention in Central America.

This was the context in which the Second Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Military Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean met. The conference, which took place in Minneapolis from June 21 to 23, faced an important challenge. Nationally coordinated local demonstrations in the fall are the obvious next step for the antiwar movement. Such demonstrations would be the best way of showing the depth of opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America. Coordinating them so that they all occur on the same day would increase their impact. Holding them in the fall gives activists enough time to build these actions. It also allows a linkup with the burgeoning anti-apartheid movement on the campuses, which will clearly get going again once school starts in the fall. The intensity of the crisis in Central America is such that demonstrations should be held in the fall and not postponed until the spring of next year. These are the reasons why nationally coordinated local demonstrations in the fall are the best way to continue the momentum of the highly successful April 20th demonstrations which brought out over 125,000 people across the country.

Unfortunately, the calling of these fall demonstrations is not a foregone conclusion. The plan of action drawn up by the members of the Administrative Committee of the April Actions Coalition, the official organizer of the April 20th demonstrations which has the needed authority to call fall actions, does not include such demonstrations among its perspectives. Instead, the plan calls for participating in a variety of different activities proposed by others: the October 11 National Anti-Apartheid Protest Day, the October 19-25 Peace with Justice Week called by Clergy and Laity Concerned and the United Church of Christ, the fall activities of

the Pledge of Resistance, and the November 23-25 Grassroots Action Days called by the African Peoples' Christian Organization and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Finally, the plan supports the calling of a national demonstration in the spring of 1986.

This diffuse group of activities, while of value in and of themselves, neither highlight the Central American crisis nor provide a centralized focus to unite the entire antiwar movement.

The April Actions Coalition leadership has no real commitment to mass action (they attempted twice to call off the April 20th demonstrations and had to be restrained by a groundswell of protest from local coalition activists). The national Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador conference, held in Washington over the Memorial Day weekend, also did not call for mass demonstrations. Lobbying and civil disobedience, as opposed to mass protests, are seen as the way forward by many antiwar activists.

Given this situation, the task of the Second ENC was to put forward an action plan that could attempt to unite the entire movement in building fall demonstrations. The Second ENC understood that it alone could not call authoritative fall actions. It is necessary to also involve the large, established peace and solidarity organizations along with others. This goal is clearly expressed in the final section of the action proposal that was overwhelmingly adopted by the conference:

"Therefore, it is proposed that the Second Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Military Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean, meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on June 21-23, 1985:

"1. Appeals to all opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America/the Caribbean to support a call for united, simultaneous local demonstrations to be held nationwide on Saturday, October 26, 1985, around demands including the following:

"--End U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean

"--End U.S. Support to the Racist Apartheid Government in South Africa



"2. In this connection, we earnestly urge the April Actions Coalition, at its meeting in New York City on June 29, 1985, to adopt this appeal to issue the call for nationwide demonstrations on October 26, and to issue a call for simultaneous international demonstrations. The hundreds of thousands of European, Canadian and other protesters who expressed their opposition to U.S. Central America policies and deployment of missiles indicate the basis for such simultaneous actions.

"3. Mandates a continuations body to be elected by this conference to do everything necessary and possible to ensure that fall actions take place, working with the April Actions Coalition and all others able and willing to build such actions.

"4. Directs the continuations body of this conference to meet as quickly as possible with representatives of other national and local anti-intervention, solidarity, and other organizations in order to insure maximum mobilization in opposition to the escalating U.S. war in Central America/the Caribbean."

Adopting this action proposal was the high point of the three-day conference. 479 people registered for the conference, with about 150 participating in the work of the plenary sessions. Conference participants came from 19 states and were members of 20 unions and 26 antiwar organizations. A good number of conference participants were from antiwar groups in smaller cities who do not usually participate in national discussions in the movement. Unfortunately, important antiwar organizations such as CISPES and the Mobilization for Survival did not actively participate in the conference.

The conference's work started on Friday night with a lively rally, addressed by local activists and labor leaders. Bob Killeen, sub-regional director of UAW District 10, received strong applause when he called for putting laid-off John Deere workers back to work in order to make the spare parts for Nicaraguan tractors that Reagan has embargoed. Prominent American Indian leader Vernon Bellecourt also addressed the crowd. He made the connection between the fight of the Nicaraguan people -- including Indian people -- to defend themselves against U.S. aggression, and the struggles of North American Indians against the same enemy. Featured speaker Roberto Vargas from the Nicaraguan Embassy was unable to attend due to a terrorist attack on the embassy in Washington the previous day. Other speakers on Friday evening included Bobbi Pol-

zine, of Groundswell, and Joe Lindemuth, past president of USWA Local 2265.

On Saturday morning, the conference heard from Rev. Philip Wheaton, director of the Ecumenical Program for Interamerican Communication and Action; Nomazizi Sokudela, representative of the Women's Section, African National Congress; San Francisco labor leader Ignacio De La Fuente; Debbie Reuben, national coordinator, National Network in Solidarity with the People of Nicaragua; and conference coordinator Jerry Gordon. During the Saturday lunch break, 50 trade unionists met to exchange their experiences in antiwar organizing in the labor movement. Saturday afternoon was given over to 33 workshops on topics ranging from trade union democracy in Nicaragua to the role of women in the antiwar movement.

On Saturday evening, there was a panel discussion on the lessons of the anti-Vietnam war movement and the presentation of different action proposals to the conference. Sunday morning the entire conference considered action proposals. Here, discussion centered around whether the antiwar movement should concentrate on organizing against U.S. intervention in Central America and against U.S. support for apartheid, or should the movement instead become a multi-issue, anticapitalist political organization?

The conference established the "Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean" and elected a Coordinating Committee to continue the fight for a mass action perspective in the anti-intervention movement.

The Second ENC was an important step towards building a conscious force fighting for united mass action in this country to stop the criminal intervention of the United States in Central America.

June 26, 1985

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# ADVANCING UNITY IN THE U.S. ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT

by Jerry Gordon

On January 11 of this year, the Wall Street Journal carried an article which said: "The U.S. government must decide this year whether to move more forcefully against the government of Nicaragua." Otherwise, the article says, the Sandinistas will consolidate their power and it will be much harder to overthrow them.

Everything that has happened these last months confirms that the U.S. government is operating with this time frame in mind. So today Nicaragua is on an emergency war footing, waiting for a U.S. invasion that could occur at any time.

Whether or not such an invasion takes place depends on the level of opposition in the United States. What we do here can play a significant and perhaps decisive role in raising that level of opposition. But a maximum mobilization of anti-intervention sentiment will require a unified anti-intervention movement.

If we draw up a balance sheet for the past year, we can record significant progress toward unifying the movement. For the first time--on April 20--the entire anti-intervention movement marched together in a demonstration sponsored by the entire movement. And many of the major anti-intervention groups are together in April Actions for Peace, Jobs and Justice, the coalition that sponsored the action.

The purpose of this conference, as the call states, is to maintain the unity that was developed in the course of building for April 20. But the call also talks about another purpose: to deepen that unity. Today there are a thousand organizations in the United States with a program demanding that the U.S. government end its intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. These include unions, independent labor committees, the solidarity networks, religious, Indian, faculty, minority, wom-

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This is the text of the speech delivered by Jerry Gordon at the Second Emergency National Conference held in Minneapolis, June 21-23. At the conference, Gordon was elected national coordinator of the newly formed Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean.

en's, senior citizens, material aid, community, embattled farmers, and traditional peace groups.

The urgent need now -- in the face of the sharply increasing war danger -- is to bring all of these forces together and unite them in ongoing massive actions in the streets of this country.

A united anti-intervention movement could be an integral part of April Actions for Peace, Jobs and Justice, which was conceived as a coalition of a number of social movements: anti-apartheid, disarmament, jobs and justice -- all related to each other and to the anti-intervention struggle.

The stronger any of these constituent movements is built, the stronger the overall coalition. In this connection, the holding of a national anti-apartheid conference scheduled for later this year is encouraging news because such a conference could help unite the many groups and committees that have sprung up in opposition to the U.S. government's support for the brutally repressive South African government.

The need for a similar conference bringing together opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean is clear and compelling. Consider what has happened in the last two months. Reagan declared a national emergency and imposed a trade embargo against Nicaragua. Congress is on its way to finalizing approval for contra aid. Two sharp escalations in a row from a government operating with bipartisan support.

There were numerous demonstrations around the country in response to these escalations. Some were of impressive size, particularly in Boston and here in the Twin Cities. But no one in the movement denies that if we had a higher degree of unity and coordination, more effective, massive, and powerful demonstrations could have been mounted on a nationwide scale.

In addition to generating the largest turnout possible in periodic mobilizations, and organizing emergency responses in the streets, a more united anti-intervention movement could provide authoritative spokespersons who would be the movement's voice to answer the gov-



ernment's war moves. Right now every time Reagan escalates the intervention, the media goes to some Congressional figure and asks, "What do you think?" The answer generally runs something like this: "Well, yes, we have to do something about the Sandinistas. But Reagan is moving a little too fast." None of them says what the U.S. anti-intervention movement says: that the U.S. has no right in Central America or the Caribbean; that the people of these countries have the right to shape their own destiny; that Reagan's claimed concern about democracy in Nicaragua is pure hypocrisy, as witness his support for the world's most racist regime in South Africa; that the U.S. should boycott South Africa, not Nicaragua; that the U.S. must end the criminal air war against the people of El Salvador and get out of Central America and the Caribbean. That is what our spokespersons would say!

During the past year, I've had occasion to speak to a number of leaders of the U.S. anti-intervention movement. I've put this question to them: "Do you think that establishing a united anti-intervention formation in this country -- with all the movement's constituencies participating and having input -- would strengthen the movement?" Without exception, the answer has been "Yes!" Today we have to ask: "What's holding us back? Why haven't we attained that kind of unity? And what can we do about it now to meet the acute crisis we face?"

I want to examine some of the questions that come up when we talk about unity. Perhaps if we can find answers to them, progress toward unity can be accelerated.

There are these six important issues:

- 1) The importance of mass demonstrations, especially organizing them for this fall.
- 2) The effect of political campaigns on the anti-intervention movement.
- 3) Non-exclusion within the movement.
- 4) Democracy within the movement.
- 5) What demands the movement should develop.
- 6) How the movement relates to those who lead national liberation struggles in other countries.

Now, first on mass demonstrations. The labor movement was built in this country because of its ability to mobilize masses in action. The same has been true of the civil rights, anti-Vietnam war, women's rights, and gay and lesbian rights movements. In fact, all the important social movements in our times

have been distinguished by their success in bringing substantial numbers of people out into the streets.

Mass demonstrations provide a focus where the whole movement can come together and show the power of its support. The preparation for such demonstrations gives us the opportunity to take our message to the population, to educate and raise the consciousness of an ever widening sector of that population.

The whole anti-intervention movement took heart with the big turnout on April 20 -- over 125,000 in the streets -- a turnout which brought together all the diverse wings of the movement. The need today -- especially with the very real possibility of a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua staring us in the face -- is to maintain the momentum of April 20 and build even more massive demonstrations in the weeks and months ahead.

There are two matters at issue facing the movement today concerning such a perspective. The first is whether fall demonstrations will be called by the April Actions coalition that sponsored the April 20 actions. The second is whether April Actions will remain a coalition or become a "network." These issues are to be settled at a June 29 meeting in New York City.

Given what is taking place now -- the fact that the U.S. is in a pre-invasion state in Nicaragua, the air war is raging in El Salvador, the bloodbath is mounting in South Africa -- it's absolutely unthinkable that the movement is not going to maintain its unity and call fall actions. By the same token, the coalition that has been forged over the past year -- a coalition to which we all belong -- must be maintained. Converting it to a decentralized network would be an inexcusable step backward.

United action in the streets, and a united coalition to sponsor such actions -- that is what the anti-intervention movement needs and must have at this critical hour.

Secondly, on the effect of political campaigns on the anti-war movement.

If we took a poll of everyone in this hall on the question of who opposes U.S. intervention in Central America, I assume the response would be unanimous. That's what unites us. That's why we're here this weekend: because of our common support for the anti-intervention demand.

Now suppose we started polling all of you on the question of your political beliefs and affiliations. What would happen then? We'd find many differing



and opposing views. There wouldn't be any unity at all.

The point is self-evident. If we want to have a unified movement, we should stick to the issue. Let people do their political campaigning on their own, as they have every right to do.

This may seem obvious. But remember what happened last year during the presidential elections. It was a year of major escalations, with the U.S. mining the harbors of Nicaragua. Many in the movement organized protest actions. The first Emergency National Conference was held in Cleveland and called for united mass demonstrations.

But others in the anti-intervention movement said, "No, that's the wrong thing to do." They said this was not the time for demonstrations or conferences. They urged us to go the political route, to join the "Dump Reagan" campaign.

So what happened? The anti-intervention movement was split. "Dump Reagan" meant "Elect Mondale," and sections of the movement threw themselves into his campaign. Then Mondale endorsed the invasion and conquest of Grenada; he said the U.S. must be tough in foreign affairs; he refused to rule out the use of troops in Central America; he said the U.S. might have to quarantine Nicaragua and he favored bombing attacks against Nicaragua if they purchased MIGs. Barricada, the Nicaraguan paper, ran an article titled, "Reagan, Mondale, What's the Difference?"

The rest is history. In some respects, Mondale tried to out-Reagan Reagan. Well, nobody out-Reagans Ronald Reagan. Mondale went down to a crushing defeat.

The lesson for the anti-intervention movement could not be clearer. We've got to be an independent and non-partisan movement if we want to be united and effective. And we can't depend on politicians to end U.S. intervention of their own free will. We've got to build a powerful movement to stop the intervention, regardless of who sits in the White House.

Today there are again voices in the movement who want us to support this or that candidate, this or that political formation, as an alternative to building the independent mass movement. It invariably ends up in an attempt to reform the Democratic Party around a particular political figure. Is this the way to strengthen the anti-intervention movement? Let's put it to the test. Right now 70 percent of the U.S. population opposes U.S. intervention policies in Central America. This 70 percent is made up of Republicans, Democrats, inde-

pendents, Citizens Party, Libertarians, socialists, communists, anarchists, and a hundred different varieties of political thought. You're not going to get that 70 percent to support any single politician or group. If we were to attempt to take this movement into somebody's political orbit, we wouldn't broaden the movement, we'd narrow it. We'd cut ourselves off from whole sections of the anti-intervention population. And that's something we don't want to do.

So let's not forget 1984. Let's not make the same mistake all over again. The formula for unity is to keep the anti-intervention movement independent of all political groups while respecting everyone's right to pursue their own political preferences as they see fit.

Third is the question of non-exclusion in the anti-intervention movement. Non-exclusion means that all groups and individuals who support the anti-intervention demand have a place in the movement, regardless of their beliefs on other questions. And a place in the movement means being in the streets when the demonstrations take place and being in the movement's councils when the decision-making takes place.

Anytime we start denying any anti-interventionist group a voice in determining the movement's course, we sow the seeds of division, discord, and disunity. The excluded group wants to know why it's out and the other groups are in. So there's a snarl in the movement and the atmosphere is charged with internal friction and tension. Instead of fighting Reagan's war policies, we're fighting each other.

There's another thing we do if we keep groups out. We deny the movement the resources, talents, and numbers they may be able to contribute to the struggle. Given the urgency of the situation today, we can't afford to exclude anybody from being part of a united struggle.

The April Actions coalition evolved into an increasingly representative formation where both national organizations and local coalitions can have voice and vote. To have constructed such a national coalition was an important achievement for the movement. To dismantle this framework now, to reduce it to a network, would weaken the anti-intervention struggle and deal a damaging blow to those in other countries who look to us to stay the U.S. government's interventionist hand.

The question of non-exclusion also comes up with regard to whether political parties should be listed as spon-



sors or endorsers of mass demonstrations. The April Actions coalition and some of the local coalitions did not list political parties in publicizing April 20. Other local coalitions did list every group that endorsed, with no exceptions. Whatever your view on this matter, one thing is crystal clear: It is patently exclusionary to list some political parties that endorse demonstrations while omitting others which have also endorsed. That kind of picking and choosing as to which political group qualifies to be listed is a surefire prescription for divisiveness.

To state the matter in a positive way, the anti-intervention movement must be built solidly and broadly by including everybody who agrees with the program. That's the only way we'll have a unified movement.

Fourth is the question of democracy in the movement. It's not enough to bring all anti-interventionist groups together. We also have to guarantee they have a meaningful say in what goes on.

Those of us involved in organizing both the first and second emergency national conferences are committed to the idea of periodic, open, well-publicized, and democratic national conferences where the movement's activists can meet, introduce proposals, debate them, and decide on a plan of action. And the key to it all is one person, one vote.

But whatever the form of organization in the movement, the content of democracy must be present if the movement is to be unified. Democracy within the movement was put to the test in the course of building the April 20 actions. On two occasions, in early January and again in late February -- when it was already known that the contra aid vote would be held in late April -- some forces in the April Actions coalition sought to postpone the April 20 demonstrations. They argued there was insufficient support for the demonstrations and they predicted that the turnout would be embarrassingly small. Fortunately, the movement's rank-and-file activists had an opportunity to express their views before a final decision was made. Their sentiment was virtually unanimous in insisting that the demonstrations take place on April 20. They were confident that the movement could mobilize a substantial turnout on that date. And they were right! By everybody's assessment the demonstrations were a big success and played a role in the first defeat of contra aid the following week.

This was an example of how the movement's activists can affect the

course of events. We need the same kind of grass roots input now to ensure that there are nationally coordinated united actions in the fall.

Fifth is the question of which demands the anti-intervention movement should advance.

We're meeting in emergency session this weekend trying to prevent a massive U.S. invasion of Nicaragua and to stop the inhuman bombing of El Salvador. Our demands are clearcut: U.S. Out of Central America! Let the Peoples There Decide Their Own Destiny!

We relate these demands in a special way to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Both Central America and South Africa involve oppressed peoples fighting for the right of self-determination. Both regions are special targets of the U.S. government. Both are emergency situations. Both are at the center of U.S. politics today. Both have evoked tremendous public concern and activity.

Today it's possible to build a very powerful movement in opposition to U.S. policies in Central America and South Africa. A big majority of the American people oppose what the U.S. government is doing in Nicaragua. The apartheid system is universally condemned. Increasing numbers of people in this country are demonstrating a willingness to unite and act on these issues and the student upsurge on campuses across the country is a case in point.

By linking Central America and South Africa, we reinforce and strengthen both the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements, and advance the cause of uniting Blacks and whites in developing these struggles.

What about the other areas throughout the world where the U.S. intervenes? What about the Philippines, Chile and the rest of South America, the Mid-East, Asia, Europe, the Pacific, and so on?

The anti-intervention struggle around Central America, where the immediate danger of a major U.S. war is greatest, is linked to all of these. Nicaragua is key to U.S. interventionist strategies around the globe. If the U.S. government can be stopped from overthrowing the Nicaraguan government today, it will be much harder to intervene to save the Marcos dictatorship tomorrow.

The struggle waged around Central America/the Caribbean and South Africa is not strengthened by adding a host of demands when demonstrations are held. A grab-bag of demands dilutes the Central America/South Africa focus and weakens the impact of our message. It is a myth



to think that the more demands you have, the greater the turnout. In fact, the opposite is usually the case. The unity that may exist around one demand does not necessarily apply to other demands.

But there is a way to link up what we're doing around Central America and South Africa with what other progressive social movements are doing on a number of other fronts. That's to have speakers at our rallies from these movements who can help educate, deepen consciousness, and point out the relationship between what the U.S. government is doing in Central America and what it's doing in other parts of the world. It is also essential to underscore the relationship between an interventionist foreign policy abroad and oppressive conditions at home. Vernon Bellecourt's eloquent message last night certainly drove home this connection.

Some people ask: "What if the situation changes next week or next month? What if some other country becomes the emergency that Nicaragua is today?" Our answer is that's why it's necessary to have periodic national conferences, so that we can assess what's going on in the world and determine how most effectively to link the issues together while maintaining our unifying demands around Central America and the Caribbean.

Sixth and finally: Among the invited speakers at our Cleveland conference last year and at this Second Emergency National Conference have been representatives of the FDR-FMLN, the Nicaraguan government, and the African National Congress. A representative from the Nicaraguan Embassy, Roberto Vargas, was scheduled and would have addressed this conference last night had it not been for the criminal arson attack against the Nicaraguan Embassy.

The question has arisen in the U.S. anti-intervention movement: "How do we define our relationship to representatives of these liberation movements?" There are two aspects to this question. The first is that we're working to build a broad, united, independent, indigenous movement in this country that stands squarely for the right of self-determination. Within this movement there are active supporters of the FDR-FMLN, the Nicaraguan government, the other national liberation forces in the Central American countries, and of the African National Congress. There are also others who support only the single proposition that the U.S. government should get out of Central America and end its support for apartheid.

To be part of the anti-intervention movement, all that's necessary is to

agree with the anti-intervention demand. It's on that basis that we try to reach that 70 percent opposition in this country and get them out into the streets. That's what's meant by building a broad national anti-intervention movement.

The other aspect of the situation is this: While we're trying to build this national movement, we welcome the emergence of international protests against U.S. interventionism, such as occurred during Reagan's recent trip to Europe. This opens up the possibility of a tremendous international movement where people in many countries march simultaneously against U.S. intervention in Central America/the Caribbean. At rallies, demonstrations, and conferences of the U.S. anti-intervention movement, it's valuable to have that international ingredient, to have anti-intervention fighters from other countries share their experiences and information with us.

Moreover, it is especially appropriate to invite to our platform the designated representatives of the liberation movements in Central America and South Africa, and the representatives of the government of Nicaragua. They represent the people who have the most at stake today -- the people on the front lines fighting for the right to shape their own destinies, to build their societies as they see fit, and to secure their national sovereignty. They've paid a terrible price for that struggle with the loss of tens of thousands of lives as a result of U.S. policies.

So it's in the spirit of support for their right to self-determination and an expression of our desire to hear firsthand how their struggle is being waged that we extended an invitation to Roberto Vargas of the Nicaraguan Embassy and to Nomazizi Sokudela of the African National Congress to address this Second Emergency National Conference.

By our discussions and actions this weekend, we can assure that our anti-intervention and anti-apartheid demands are going to be heard. And that unity of the anti-intervention movement will be advanced.

Just as the first Emergency National Conference held in Cleveland last September played a significant role in uniting the anti-intervention movement for the successful April 20 actions, so this conference can make a major contribution to strengthening and deepening that unity. This will help pave the way for raising the whole movement to a new level for timely, effective, and urgently needed demonstrations in the fall. □



## SWP WITHDRAWS SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL FALL DEMONSTRATIONS

by Stuart Brown

"After April 20: more antiwar actions needed." That was the headline over the front-page editorial in the April 26 issue of the Militant newspaper, which was sold at the April 20 demonstrations in Washington D.C. and other cities. The text of the editorial continued the same theme: "This fall we can build on what we've been able to accomplish so far by organizing nationally coordinated local protest actions to involve and actively draw in even more unionists, farmers, Blacks, Latinos, women, and youth in the fight against war, racism, and union-busting."

For weeks after the April 20 demonstrations the Militant spoke out sharply about this need to continue the momentum of the movement with another round of demonstrations in the fall. In the June 14 issue another front-page article, this one reporting on the 24th national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, quotes from the report to the convention by Peter Thierjung, YSA national secretary: "The biggest challenge is to follow up [April 20] with local actions across the country this fall."

Thierjung's statement was, and remains, correct. Unfortunately, the June 14 issue of the Militant is the last one which says a word about the need for fall demonstrations. Sometime shortly after the YSA convention, the SWP leadership changed its line. At a June 19 meeting of the coalition in New York City that mobilized people for Washington on April 20, it was a representative of the SWP who put a motion on the floor to concur in the proposal of the national April Actions Coalition Administrative Committee. This proposal rejects fall actions and puts off any future national demonstrations until the spring of 1986.

Then, at a meeting of the National Steering Committee of the April Actions Coalition on June 29, members of the SWP failed to support a proposal for the coalition to sponsor nationally coordinated local demonstrations on October 26, 1985. This failure was a factor in bringing about the defeat of that proposal.

Why this shift? Has anything changed in the objective situation? Have

Reagan and the Congress perhaps taken some steps back from their assault on the right to self-determination of the Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, and other peoples of Central America and the Caribbean? Has apartheid lost its grip over the oppressed South African masses? Has a wave of conservatism suddenly swept the American people which makes mobilizations like April 20 more difficult to organize? Of course not. If anything, the problems have grown more acute, and the willingness of significant numbers in this country to act against the policies of the U.S. government has increased.

There is, however, one thing which is different since April 20--most of the main organizations that created and sustained the national April Actions Coalition are no longer willing to pursue the same course, to live up to their responsibilities, and to call for united demonstrations in the fall. The reaction by the SWP leaders to this retreat has been to abandon their own perspectives. The retreat of the SWP in this situation demonstrates the complete and utter bankruptcy of the present policy of the party: In the face of a severe crisis of leadership within the American anti-interventionist movement, the SWP is incapable of following an independent course based on the objective needs of the class struggle and on the consciousness of the working class and its allies. It is reduced to chasing after the reluctant leaders of the April Actions Coalition, and adjusting its own perspectives to fit their agenda. When these leaders reject calling fall actions, the SWP simply follows suit.

The refusal of the forces that created the April Actions Coalition to call a new round of demonstrations is actually quite consistent with their behavior before April 20. Twice during the period leading up to the action, these same leaders tried to call it off. They claimed that there was not enough support, and the actions would be small and a sign of weakness. They pleaded financial woes. Both times, loud and vigorous protests from local coalitions forced the April Actions organizers to proceed as originally planned; and all



of their dire predictions proved to be ill-founded. April 20 was a resounding success. The only thing that kept the action in Washington D.C. from being even bigger was the pessimism of its organizers, and the consequent failure to do many of the things that could have been done to build it.

An article by Margaret Jayko in the July 12 Militant tries to cover over the SWP's retreat with the headline:

"Antiwar coalition backs fall actions." This is completely misleading. None of the fall actions, called by other groups and formally endorsed by the June 29 meeting, will constitute a mass action against U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. And none of them provide a basis for continuing the work that was done leading up to April 20 -- of constructing a national coalition which can unite the entire movement around the call for mass mobilizations.

Jayko's article about the June 29 meeting also gives a false picture by reporting that the proposal at the meeting to call fall demonstrations was a "counter proposal" to the calendar put forward by the administrative committee. In fact, however, supporters of nationally coordinated fall actions did not counterpose this idea to the administrative committee's motion and voted to support both nationally coordinated demonstrations called by the April Actions Coalition and the calendar of events initiated by other groups.

Some of the same forces--around local coalitions and others--which fought to maintain the mass action perspective on April 20 asked the April Actions Coalition to call for coordinated local demonstrations this fall. In fact, at a meeting of the National Steering Committee of the national coalition on May 30, the overwhelming majority of the representatives of local coalitions voted for a motion to call such actions. (The sole exception was the delegate from New York City.) The overwhelming majority of representatives of national organizations, on the other hand, opposed this, and voted for the Administrative Committee motion to put off any national demonstrations until next spring. (The two exceptions voting for nationwide fall actions were the Emergency National Conference and the Young Socialist Alliance, since this was before the SWP leadership's change of policy. It is interesting to note that

at that meeting, with the support of the YSA, the proposal for national fall demonstrations was adopted by a slim majority.)

It is true that support by the major national organizations which have opposed calling another round of actions in the April Actions steering committee is extremely important to the success of fall demonstrations. It will be qualitatively more difficult to organize effective mobilizations without their support. But that simply underscores the necessity of doing everything we can to try to convince them that they should participate in the effort to lead and build a new round of protests. The only way to do this is to show that there is a wing of the movement which doesn't believe the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran people can afford to wait another year before the U.S. population again mobilizes in opposition to our government's policies. We must try to impress on those who are reluctant to call fall actions that united mass mobilizations are the best way to stop U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, and to end U.S. complicity with apartheid.

Of course, we cannot be guaranteed success in this effort; but it is an effort which must be made, and which will be made. The June 21-23 Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean was one step in the process. That conference did not represent the movement as a whole, and could not set the date for fall actions on its own. Nevertheless, the conference did constitute a gathering of some of those within the Central America solidarity movement who are most conscious about the need to continue mobilizing the American people around the basic demand of "U.S. Hands Off." The action resolution which was adopted at the ENC set the perspective of working with broader forces to bring about nationally coordinated local and regional demonstrations on or around October 26, 1985.

Local efforts to call demonstrations, involve the widest possible coalition in building them, and press for national coordination will be another part of this process. Showing that support does exist around the country for continued mass action can help bring about the involvement of those who currently lead the April Actions Coalition, but who are reluctant to initiate the process. It seems likely that some protests, initiated locally, will take place this fall. But we can be sure that without national coordination these ac-



tions will be weaker and less effective.

It is extremely unfortunate that the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party has chosen this moment to abandon its support for united fall mobilizations. With the party participating in the fight for such demonstrations--throwing its resources and talents into the effort--we would significantly improve our chances of success. The task of the revolutionary party is to lead, not to follow after others. The fight for fall anti-intervention actions is an objective necessity, as the SWP itself correctly declared until recently. That has not changed just because some who have been in the leadership of the movement up to now have decided that they have other things they would rather be doing.

The Minneapolis ENC was a modest success despite the non-participation of the SWP. With the party's support both in building it and at the conference itself--with the participation of party members and those they could have influenced to come--it would have been much more successful. The fight for demonstrations in the fall will go on,

even if the SWP stands opposed. Think how much more successful that fight might be if the party joins in. And the battle to forge a national anti-intervention coalition which will continue to press the fight against U.S. intervention in Central America/the Caribbean and an end to U.S. complicity with apartheid will occur as well. Consider the increased chance of success if the SWP participates.

There is a choice facing the Socialist Workers Party at this critical juncture: Be part of the leadership; follow an independent policy, a correct policy, a policy that corresponds to the needs of the Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, and South African masses as well as of the U.S. class struggle; or cave in to the retreat of others who were reluctant to call and build April 20 in the first place, and have now decided to turn their attention elsewhere. Making the right decision will have an important impact not only for the future of the anti-intervention struggle, but for the future of the SWP as a revolutionary party in this country.

July 7, 1985

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### SOCIALIST UNITY FORMED

Meeting on June 1-2 in Chicago, a group of former members of the minority current within Socialist Action decided to leave that organization and form a new one--Socialist Unity. Socialist Action was one of two organizations formed in late 1983 and early 1984 as a result of the political purge in the SWP. The Fourth Internationalist Tendency is the other. The two groups were established by expelled party members whose objective was to defend the program of the Fourth International in the United States.

The decision to form S.U. was the culmination of a prolonged dispute between the majority and minority currents in S.A. over a number of political and organizational problems, which included 1) disagreements over the proper assessment of the Nicaraguan FSLN and Salvadoran FMLN as well as the character of the revolutionary processes in Central America; 2) how to approach the problem of regroupment with other forces on the

left in the United States; and 3) what kinds of internal organizational practices were appropriate.

The formation of S.U. means that there are now three organizations of expelled SWP members--S.A. and F.I.T. as well as S.U.--which remain part of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States, along with the SWP itself. This situation underlines the importance of action by the SWP to reverse the expulsions, readmit the expelled as full members, and allow for a democratic discussion. Such a discussion inside a reunited SWP will permit the input of every point of view and can be followed by an authoritative vote on the disputed issues. Only if all components of the Fourth Internationalist movement in this country are able to participate in this kind of discussion and decision-making process will it be possible for the present political disagreements to be resolved within the context of a common Leninist party.



# REVERSE THE EXPULSIONS! STRENGTHEN THE PARTY!

## Statement of F.I.T. National Coordinators

July 5, 1985

To the August 1985 SWP National Convention:

There is a crying need on the part of the U.S. working class: for a united effectively organized workers' movement to combat the onslaught of the bosses' attack at home and their imperialist offensive overseas.

There is a crying need on the part of the revolutionary masses in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and the Black majority of South Africa: for massive mobilizations of the U.S. population to stop this government's counterrevolutionary war in Central America and its complicity with apartheid.

There is a crying need for a proletarian party in this country with an international revolutionary program and perspective, which is able to help mobilize the working class and its allies in defense of their own interests, in defense of the right of self-determination of those oppressed by imperialism, and in the struggle for a world socialist society.

We believe a united Socialist Workers Party, which combines the efforts of those who remain members at the present time with the energies, experience, and skills of those who have been expelled, can begin to fill this need. It is no accident that around the April 20 actions and in the local coalitions to build them we frequently found members of the SWP in a de facto bloc with those of us who have been expelled--despite the party leadership's decree of no association or contact. In some cases our joint effort was instrumental in moving those actions forward and making April 20 the success that it was. Consider how much more could be accomplished by an effective, united Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States today.

We all have the obligation of seeking ways to heal the split and reverse the decline of the SWP as an effective force in the U.S. class struggle. Recent years have seen not only the purge of over 100 members from the party, but also the disillusionment and demoralization of many more, who simply dropped out. All of this is a symptom of a deep-

going crisis which requires the strongest measures if it is to be effectively overcome.

The 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International made a clear decision--that there be but one party in the USA, the SWP, uniting all those who are part of our world movement. That is a decision with which we in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency strongly agree. Those purged should be reintegrated as full members, so that a thoroughgoing democratic discussion and definitive vote can resolve the issues in dispute. We call once again on you, the delegates to the party convention, to carry out the decision of the highest body of our world movement. You should do this not primarily because it is asked of you by those of us who have been expelled; nor because it was demanded of you by the World Congress delegates. The main reason for taking this action is that it is vital for strengthening and building our party, the Socialist Workers Party, the revolutionary party in the United States. □

### Statement on George Lavan Weissman by Robert F. Williams,

former head of the Monroe (NC) NAACP, who worked with Weissman on several civil rights and defense committees:

"I remember him as a dedicated revolutionary and a person who really was a friend to all people struggling for liberation. He was instrumental in mobilizing a lot of support for our struggle in Monroe.... He also was friendly to people even though he might not have been of the same political persuasion. I think it would be good for young people today to study his life."

--Reprinted from  
Workers Vanguard  
June 28, 1985



# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM?

by Steve Bloom

The U.S. trade union movement is in a crisis. That's obvious to any conscious worker in this country today. The current crop of "leaders" don't have any solutions to offer. That's obvious too. It isn't even necessary to be a revolutionary to understand these two facts of political life.

If workers understand these basic problems, it might be asked, what is the role of revolutionaries in the unions today? To suggest some answers to the problems--answers that the trade union bureaucracy cannot and will not offer, and which will not arise spontaneously in the consciousness of rank and file members:

Reduce the workweek with no cut in weekly pay to create more jobs and end unemployment. Build a labor party which can represent and defend the interests of working people, not the rich. Establish unemployment insurance at full union wages for all unemployed, including first-time job seekers. Open the books of corporations that claim they are unable to pay decent wages. Support the struggles of Blacks, Latinos, and other oppressed nationalities, and women. Let the majority of the U.S. population decide questions of war and peace.

Most readers of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism will probably recognize these ideas. Anyone who belonged to the Socialist Workers Party through the 1960s and 70s certainly will. They aren't the result of any new or remarkable innovation, but have been around for a long time--and were codified in the founding program of the Fourth International in 1938. That program makes up a pamphlet called The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, reprinted in the book still being sold by Pathfinder Press, The Transitional Program.

## A STRANGE DEPARTURE

Anyone with some knowledge of the history of the SWP would consider it elementary that the ideas contained in the transitional program would play a central role in any discussion by the party of the problems of the union movement in the U.S. today. But when we read

the report given by Joel Britton and approved by the May 1985 plenum of the SWP National Committee, "State of the Unions and Party Tasks" (Information Bulletin No. 1 in 1985, May 1985), we find no mention of these basic concepts.

This report is being presented to the next SWP national convention for ratification by the delegates. Its dominant feature is a discussion of the points which are already fairly obvious to conscious workers: that there is a crisis in the union movement and that the present crop of "leaders" have little to offer. Unfortunately, the Britton report also has little to offer from the point of view of a concrete program for the unions today, or a method to fight for that program.

The absence of the transitional program from the Britton report is a striking departure from the entire past of the SWP. It is certainly something that thinking members of the party will take note of. Particularly in this period when there are increased opportunities for rank and file movements in the unions seeking some way out of the crisis, the trade union orientation of the revolutionary party must focus on the programmatic problem. We must raise the kinds of ideas which can help newly radicalizing workers to fight effectively for a union movement that will defend them, along with all layers of the oppressed, against the increasingly savage attacks of the capitalist class.

## VALUE OF THE TRANSITIONAL METHOD

In a broader sense, the transitional program is more than the specific slogans put forward in 1938, though these maintain all their vitality today. It is a method of approaching the class struggle that attempts to address the present consciousness of working people, through demands and slogans that they can understand in terms of their day to day experiences under capitalism, but which simultaneously help raise consciousness about the need to overthrow the capitalist system and create one which is not based on the exploitation of one human being by another.

It is this duality which makes the



transitional program of such great value for the revolutionary proletarian current within the working class. It is far superior to the programmatic approach previously used by the Marxist movement --before the Russian revolution of 1917--and still practiced today by some who call themselves "socialists." This was the concept of the "minimum" and "maximum" program; the minimum being those immediate reforms which can be won under the present conditions of capitalist oppression, while the maximum is the ultimate objective of a socialist society. Unfortunately, with this approach, there is little possibility for the two parts of the program to come together.

One of the striking things about the Britton report is not simply that it ignores the kinds of transitional demands which revolutionary Marxists in the unions should be raising and trying to popularize, but that it seems to take several strides backward, to the notion of minimum and maximum program. Here is how Britton describes the tasks of SWP members in the unions at this time: "As the political resolution notes, our comrades function on three different levels in the unions: 1) as members of the revolutionary party, who promote the party's press and activities, seek to recruit, and build our branch institutions; 2) as workers, who seek to involve other workers in political activity; and 3) as union activists with ideas for immediate action and a revolutionary perspective for the union movement."

Britton and the SWP leaders should be asked to explain precisely why they see these as three "different levels" of activity, separate and distinct from one another. Is there really no connection between the party's press and branch institutions, and the effort to "involve other workers in political activity," or the role of SWPers as "union activists with ideas for immediate action"? Can we really make any sort of Chinese wall between our "ideas for immediate action and a revolutionary perspective for the union movement," and our efforts to "promote the party's press and activities" and to recruit? (A dozen or so combinations of the various factors mentioned in Britton's "three levels" could be made, but the point should be obvious.)

The fact is that the party has

proceeded in the last five years or so from the point of view that there is little connection between these various areas. This is one of the reasons for the large decline in membership and influence of the SWP during that time.

The purpose of the transitional approach has always been to break down the barriers between Britton's "three different levels" as well as other artificial divisions between revolutionary activity and more immediate goals and objectives. In abandoning the transitional method, the SWP leaders find themselves erecting these barriers once again. But this will make it more difficult to correctly undertake any of the three tasks outlined by Britton--party building, political work, or union struggles.

#### ANOTHER 'SECTARIAN SCHEMA'?

It's impossible to say at this point which, if any, of the SWP leaders have consciously rejected the transitional approach. Perhaps they consider it to be another of Trotsky's "sectarian schemas" which have been disorienting the SWP and the Fourth International for years--similar to the effect they assert that the theory of permanent revolution has had. If that is true, then they are on a campaign similar to the one they undertook before openly repudiating permanent revolution--of trying to undermine the idea they disagree with piecemeal, failing to apply it in practice, using ad hoc justifications in any individual case, before taking on the theoretical problems per se. Perhaps we will see an open and public renunciation of the transitional program, or of key aspects of it, before long.

But it's also possible that the party leaders are simply disoriented, not aware of how far they have gone in rejecting and undermining the transitional approach to the party's work. The end result, however, will be the same, unless a radical reorientation and correction is made. Whether the rejection of the transitional method is conscious or not, it will take a conscious and concerted effort by the party rank and file to reverse the schematic approach to the U.S. class struggle which is typified by the Britton report. This is one part of the broad initiative needed to reverse the theoretical degeneration and overall decline of the SWP. □



# MY APPEAL FOR REINSTATEMENT IN THE SWP

by Jean Y. Tussey

January 23, 1984

National Committee  
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades:

On January 10, 1984, I received a letter dated January 5, 1984, informing me that the Political Committee had voted to expel me from the Socialist Workers Party, and calling my attention to the provisions for appeal of such disciplinary actions in Article VIII, Section 5 of the SWP Constitution.

Accordingly, I am hereby appealing my expulsion to you, as members of "the next higher body" of the party, to reverse the decision of the Political Committee.

Enclosed for your information are copies of: 1) the charges against me dated 1/1/84 signed by Mac Warren and handed to me by him; 2) my 1/3/84 Mailgram to the Political Committee requesting dismissal of the charges; and 3) the 1/5/84 letter from Craig Gannon, National Organization Secretary, informing me of my expulsion.

In addition, since I do not know and can only speculate as to what considerations led to the change in the basis for my expulsion from Mac Warren's original charges, I propose to give you a brief report of the conditions under which I was charged with disloyalty, and why I believe the action of the Political Committee was incorrect.

On Sunday, January 1, I received a phone call from Comrade Omari Musa from St. Louis asking whether I could meet his plane that evening and give him a

---

[The author was a prominent builder and leader of the SWP from 1942 to 1984, when the Political Committee expelled her under circumstances described in this letter. Her appeal for reinstatement was rejected by the National Committee and the SWP's 32nd national convention in August 1984. She and other expellees then appealed to the World Congress of the Fourth International which voted, in February 1985, to demand that the SWP reinstate the members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and Socialist Action. Five months later, the SWP leadership has still failed to comply with the World Congress decision, or to even put this point on the agenda of its next convention, in August 1985.]

ride from the airport. This was not an unusual personal request and I readily agreed to do so.

When I picked him up at the airport, Comrades Mac Warren and Pedro Vasquez were with him and he asked that I drive to the branch headquarters rather than to his home, since they wanted to meet with me. I had no indication of the purpose of the meeting and only learned on our arrival at the hall that Mac and Pedro were a subcommittee of the PC delegated to meet with me.

On the basis of a summary account by Comrade Warren of a California State Convention, which I heard for the first time, and his report of the actions of nameless minority delegates and of their subsequent expulsion by the State Committee for failing to repudiate remarks of a reporter concerning relations with Socialist Action, I was asked to repudiate their failure to repudiate.

Never in my 44 years in the socialist and labor movement have I been asked to make such a political judgment under such peculiar circumstances. I explained that one thing I have learned in the Socialist Workers Party is the importance of making serious political decisions as objectively as possible, on the basis of documented factual information and time to think about it. I could not repudiate something I did not know enough about.

I asked why I, in Ohio, should be asked to repudiate the actions, whatever they were, of a minority delegation in California. I could just as well be asked to repudiate actions of any comrade in any branch in the country, of which I have no knowledge.

Mac explained that the Political Committee had decided to ask all supporters of the Weinstein-Bloom-Lovell minorities to repudiate the actions of the California minority delegates. I asked whether that included me because I had supported the Breitman amendments in the 1981 convention. Mac said yes, supporters in the past three years.

He repeatedly asked whether I was clear about what I was being asked to



repudiate -- the actions of the minority delegates to the California State Convention in failing to repudiate the comments of their reporter.

I replied that I could not repudiate something I don't know enough about and I could not understand the reason for this extraordinary procedure, which was the opposite of the views of the National Committee as described by Comrade Barry Sheppard in his November 28 plenum report to the Cleveland Branch about the political differences which exist in the party.

(Comrade Sheppard had said that no general reregistration of the party was proposed; that those who boycott party finances or activities would be brought up on charges; and cautioned the comrades against falling into factional stances. He also indicated that discussion of political differences would be opened not later than April in preparation for our August convention. Comrade Warren was present as the reporter on the discussion on the set-back in Grenada, and heard the report and discussion at the Nov. 28 meeting in Cleveland.)

As I explained to Comrade Vasquez, I have been on different sides of many discussions in the party in the past 42 years, sometimes voting with the majority and sometimes with a minority. I consider it my obligation to vote honestly on the basis of my judgment at the time; to let further experience demonstrate whether I was right or wrong; and to change my position if convinced by additional facts or reasoning that I had been incorrect. My loyalty had never been questioned on the basis of my political opinions or my actions.

When Comrade Warren declared the

meeting ended, and handed me the piece of paper charging me with disloyalty, nothing in our previous discussion had indicated any basis for the second charge. I asked, "Are you charging me with 'violation of the National Committee decision concerning relations of party members with Socialist Action'?" He replied that the meeting was over and if I wanted to make any further statements I could do so to the Political Committee which would be considering the charges on Wednesday, January 4.

As you can see by the January 4, 1984, motion, the Political Committee revised the failure-to-repudiate charge from the one with which Comrade Warren presented me, and dropped the totally unexplained and unexplainable charge of "violation of the National Committee decision concerning relations of party members with Socialist Action."

In view of all this, it appears to me that the action of the Political Committee is an incorrect application of the decision of the National Committee, and a serious infringement of the rights that go with the obligations of membership and responsible leadership in the Socialist Workers Party.

I request that you reverse the decision of the Political Committee to expel me, and that you restore my membership in the Socialist Workers Party.

I also urge that you reject the entire procedure of the Political Committee for finding me or any other comrade disloyal, as a dangerous innovation and incorrect method for dealing with political differences in a Leninist party.

Comradely,  
Jean Y. Tussey



## LETTER TO THE MAYOR OF SAN JOSE



Fourth Internationalist Tendency  
c/o S. Bloom, 526 E. 9 St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11218

June 12, 1985

Mayor Thomas McEnery  
801 N. 1st St.  
San Jose, Ca. 95110

Dear Mayor McEnery,

Published reports of outrageous attacks on the bookstore and offices of the Socialist Workers Party by Vietnamese hoodlums in your city reflect on the character of your administration.

The presence and reactionary political aims of these organized gangs are well known to you and to others in your administration. Their attacks on the socialists continued unabated for three weeks, beginning April 27 and culminating on the night of May 16 in vandalism and extensive property damage to the building that houses the socialist bookstore and meeting hall.

On April 28 a gang of about 200 of these Vietnamese, armed with stones and clubs, trapped 17 in the socialist bookstore. They were eventually evacuated under protection of the San Jose police. No arrests were made of those who laid siege to the bookstore and threatened its occupants, nor of those who later vandalized the building.

The attacks were resumed on the afternoon and evening of May 18 with the express purpose of disrupting a legal public meeting. The announced intention of the Vietnamese ultra-rightists is to drive socialists out of San Jose.

The record shows that these gangs in your city attack and try to intimidate all people who oppose endorsement of and identification with the murderous Nguyen Cao Ky regime that was driven out of Vietnam ten years ago. Prior to the attacks on the socialists in San Jose, they tried to disrupt a meeting where U.S. Congressman Don Edwards spoke about his visit to Vietnam.

Our purpose in reminding you of these matters is to add our voice to those of the citizens in your city who are now protesting these outrages against our cherished civil liberties. It is the duty of every conscientious citizen to help defend our freedoms of speech and assembly wherever they come under attack, and this is a special obligation of elected public officials.

Sincerely,

Steve Bloom  
National Administrative  
Secretary



## QUESTIONS ABOUT BLACK NATIONALISM

I read the two articles by Larry Stewart in the April and May issues (Bulletin Nos. 17 and 18) and learned a great deal from them. But a number of questions about Black nationalism--some of which were prompted by the Stewart articles -- remain for me unanswered.

When Malcolm X appeared on the U.S. political scene in the early 1960s American Trotskyists were the only unbending and consistent supporters of self-determination for American Blacks. But this programmatic support grew out of the SWP's frequent consultations with Trotsky in the late 1930s (codified in the SWP's 1939 convention resolutions) and represented a development over earlier thinking on the subject. In the 1930s, when the American Communist Party called for the separate organization of a Black nation in the "black belt" that cut across the South, Cannon and the others who were the original organizers of the Trotskyist movement did not endorse the CP slogan, nor did they contribute anything that I know of to a better understanding of the 1920s Garvey movement.

The platform of the Communist Opposition in 1929 contained the following statement on the Black struggle: "It must be the main task of the party in this field (of Black organization) to mobilize the white workers to fight for the rights of the Negro masses to full social, economic and political equality and to unite them in their struggles. Not an attitude of liberal paternalism but an attitude of comradely support in a common battle, will give an impetus to the movement of struggle and resistance among the Negroes and will pave the way for the expansion of party influence among them. The organization of the Negro masses for struggle goes hand in hand with the mobilization of the white workers for the defense of the Negroes against persecution and discrimination."

While this is a correct and proper statement for the time it doesn't go much beyond the early CP's "unite and fight" slogan. When and under what circumstances did the Trotskyist movement endorse Black nationalism in the U.S.? Is there literature available on this particular subject?

I also have questions regarding the current position of the SWP on the Black struggle in this country. In 1969 the SWP adopted "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation," which seems to me a useful guide even today. It is certainly a far cry from the SWP's 1985 resolution

(published in the Spring 1985 New Internationalist). The 1969 guidelines are almost entirely gone. All that remains is a whimper about the dismal prospects of the little-known and seldom-heard National Black Independent Political Party. The 1985 resolution says, "The NBIPP itself is a small vanguard grouping, feeling the full weight of the pressures from the employers' offensive and the pervasiveness of electoral illusions. Some have abandoned the NBIPP altogether to return to Democratic Party politics, including the 'Rainbow' variety. Others have remained active in the NBIPP but are trying to drive out of the organization those who resist their attempts to steer it away from attracting young workers and engaging in independent political action. At the same time, however, a small layer of fighters are determined to maintain the NBIPP on the course laid out in its charter."

Can you tell me what has happened to the Black nationalist movement which in Malcolm's time seemed so very promising? And what has happened to the SWP which in Malcolm's time also seemed to have a promising future? Is there any connection between the decline of Black nationalism and the rather pathetic decline of the SWP?

New York Reader

[Literature on this subject -- including the resolutions of the 1939 SWP convention endorsing self-determination -- are printed in Leon Trotsky on Self-Determination and Black Nationalism (Pathfinder Press, 1978) and Freedom Now, the 1963 SWP convention resolution which endorsed Black nationalism (Pioneer Publishers, 1963).

The questions raised by the writer regarding the present stage of the Black struggle and the decline of the SWP should be more amply revealed by the upcoming SWP convention and a promised discussion within the party on the Black movement today. We expect to participate in this discussion through the pages of the Bulletin -- having been denied our right to participate at the convention.]

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of the revolution of 1789, of the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and of the Paris Commune. How he loved these landmarks, and the pictures, documents, archives of these great revolutions. How proudly he repeated, against the background of the surviving realities of revolutions, Rosa Luxemburg's cry about revolutions present and future: I was, I am, and I shall be!

"But the strongest impression I received from meeting George was that additional quality added to all his others: that of a generous and warm human being. It might sound strange for a Marxist to make such a statement, but the whole history of the labor movement, and especially the history of revolutionary socialism and communism, confirms this rule again and again. In the long run, you can't build an adequate revolutionary cadre, a strong team of cooperating revolutionists, if you don't add to revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice revolutionary warmth and compassion. Workers have an infal-

libile instinct for distinguishing the faker from the honest militant, the careerist from the real leader, the hypocrite from the devoted socialist. They are rarely mistaken. Those revolutionary workers who came to know George immediately understood his honesty, his generosity, his human warmth, rare gifts indeed in a labor movement forced to grow amidst the egoism, the grasping and rasping of bourgeois society.

"Dear Muriel, dear Comrades,

"We are sad that George isn't among us any more. But we are happy to have known and loved him. And we know that the best way to honor his memory is to continue to devote our lives to the great cause to which he has devoted his: the cause of Trotskyism, of revolutionary Marxism, the cause of the international working class and of world revolution. Nothing can shake our conviction that that cause is the cause of the future, for it embodies the only hope of emancipation, nay of survival, of humankind."

### READERS CONTRIBUTE TO WEISSMAN MEMORIAL FUND

No. 20 of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism reported that the Fourth Internationalist Tendency had launched a \$10,000 George Lavan Weissman Memorial Publishing Fund to continue the Bulletin IDOM and other F.I.T. literature. That notice unfortunately failed to mention that this fund campaign will end on Labor Day, 1985. Please use the coupon below to send your contribution. As of July 7 we had received contributions of \$4,990 and pledges of \$1,170, for a total of \$6,160.

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