

Information, Education & Discussion

Bulletin

In Defense of Marxism

Published by expelled members of the Socialist Workers Party, Fourth Internationalist Tendency (F.I.T.)

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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 (quoted in Trotsky's The Challenge of the Left Opposition, 1926-27; for another translation see Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 32 pp. 43-44).

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

Denied the right, specified in the SWP constitution and by Leninist norms, of full and free discussion of all programmatic changes, we were subjected first to gag rules and slander, and finally to wholesale expulsions by the leadership in order to facilitate their imposition of a new, revisionist line, without approval by the membership.

We are now forced to carry on this discussion from outside the SWP. our intent is to foster discussion within the party by those sincerely seeking to defend a revolutionary Marxist program, as well as to bring about our own readmission.

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

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INTRODUCTION

By far the most important matter dealt with in Bulletin No. 7 is the 1984 plenum of the SWP National Committee which was supposed to issue the Call for the party's 32nd National Convention (see Bulletin No. 5) and open the preconvention discussion. This twice-postponed convention is finally scheduled for August, a full year beyond the constitutional requirement. It has been prepared in a highly irregular way and is in danger of being scuttled. The Barnes faction in control of the party apparatus has concocted a spy scare to distract attention from the profound political issues upon which the future of the SWP depends.

Steve Bloom has prepared a brief report on this latest development, based on official action from the plenum and documentation in the latest SWP Internal Information Bulletin titled "The Gerardo Nebbia Disruption Campaign." This preliminary report is published as a service to SWP members and sympathizers who may be misled by false danger signals and lose sight of Marxist principles.

The F.I.T. letter of May 7 to the SWP Political Committee is another step in our efforts to open up the preconvention discussion and salvage the traditional educational and decision-making character of SWP conventions.

Larry Stewart's discussion article on what is happening in NBIPP provides insight into the peculiar methods of the SWP leadership in practically all arenas of party work, focusing on its approach to Black activists and to the Black community.

As an example of how serious political discussion ought to be conducted we publish here for the first time the contribution of expelled members to the NY/NJ District Convention of the SWP. Because its authors had been expelled in order to preclude their participation in this convention, their contribution became a suppressed document at the moment it was submitted. It rounds out this series of reports and proposals that may help to explain the recent NC plenum and its perverse preparations for the party convention this summer.

The Mason-Gonzalez presidential campaign reveals in a distorted way the hesitations, duplicity, and uncertainty of the SWP leadership, and this is directly related to its problems with the coming convention of the party and the World Congress of the Fourth International. This is what accounts for the routinism of the campaign, its failure to take up any of the most pressing domestic issues, such as inflation and unemployment, and at least suggest some answers to these problems that working people can understand and begin to use in their own class interest. Likewise the campaign fails to offer any leadership in the struggle against the U.S. Government's criminal involvement in the colonial and semi-colonial world, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The discussion article by Frank Lovell on the 1984 elections is a continuation of his previous article in Bulletin No. 5 on working class radicalization as well as a contribution to the SWP discussion on what is missing in the Mason-Gonzalez campaign.

In contrast to the methods of the entrenched SWP officialdom (and the embattled image they seek to project) we are publishing Evelyn Sell's refreshing review of past election campaigns. The "Draft Resolution on Perspectives for the 1984 Election," submitted by Bloom/Lovell to the August 1983 plenum of the NC carries forward our traditional efforts to apply the Transitional Program of orthodox Trotskyism. It most properly belongs in the category of suppressed documents, where we have also placed the table of contents of the latest International Internal Information Bulletin (IIIB) in English, this one published by the Bureau of the FI and hidden from the SWP members by the leadership.

With this No. 7 of the Bulletin we have added a LETTERS department, partly because of demands from readers.

SWP NATIONAL COMMITTEE CALLS CONVENTION, OPENS DISCUSSION PERIOD,
REJECTS APPEALS OF EXPELLED MEMBERS

by Steve Bloom

After a year's delay, the April 21-26 meeting of the SWP National Committee has officially approved the call for a party convention and opened an internal discussion leading up to it. According to past practice and the SWP constitution, the convention should have been scheduled for August 1983--but it has been postponed twice and will now take place from August 4 to 11, 1984.

The party leadership has used the delay in beginning the debate in the party to complete its purge of oppositionists from the ranks. Up to the very eve of the National Committee meeting, expulsions of those who disagree with the new programmatic and theoretical positions--which have been progressively introduced by the central leadership since our 1981 convention--were still taking place.

The NC meeting upheld the actions of the Political Committee in carrying out the purge. Appeals by those who have been its victims were rejected. This means that only the August convention can reverse the disastrous policies which are now being implemented, and readmit the expelled. If this is not done it will have grave consequences for the future of the SWP.

In a letter to the NC before it met (see Bulletin IDOM #5), the Fourth Internationalist Tendency proposed that even if our appeals for reinstatement into the party were denied, steps should be taken to make sure that the organizational crisis not interfere with the essential process of political discussion and clarification:

"If you will not reinstate those of us who want to defend a revolutionary Marxist outlook within the SWP, then we propose a more modest step: open the internal discussion bulletin to us, along with the oral pre-convention discussion in the branches. This would, of course, be unusual, but it is warranted given the unusual step that preceded it--the expulsion of all known or suspected opponents of the majority leadership's positions before the political discussion in the party could take place. If you have confidence in yourselves and in your new perspectives, you surely have nothing to fear and everything to gain from this opportunity."

This would be an elementary question for a serious Bolshevik leadership. Political and programmatic clarity must always be primary. What kind of discussion can take place during the preconvention period when the vast majority of those who oppose the present course have been ousted, and the threat of disciplinary action hangs over anyone who might simply raise a question or a disagreement?

The preconvention discussion period formally began on May 5. It is customary for the party leadership to present the proposed convention resolutions to the membership by this time so that a full ninety days of discussion on them can take place. This was particularly important this year after the long delay in calling the convention. But as of mid-May these resolutions have not yet appeared.

Instead, party members have been offered a new bulletin as part of the ongoing effort by the Barnes leadership to bury the political discussion in a mountain of organizational charges. Entitled The Gerardo Nebbia Disruption Campaign, it is dated April 1984, though it wasn't actually available until May 12. The timing of its appearance is no accident.

We have not yet seen this bulletin, and cannot comment specifically on its contents. It is supposed to contain the evidence used to sustain the charge that Nebbia was a Healyite agent and a member of Socialist Action, which were the grounds for his expulsion from the party. If that is true, then the material in it is not new, but has been in the possession of the SWP leadership since at least early February. Members of the party were told then that none of the documents in the case could be revealed to them for reasons of "security." But now, we find, they can be disclosed--just in time to further distract the attention of party members when the political discussion is supposed to begin.

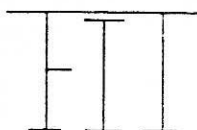
This campaign to substitute organizational charges for political debate has nothing in common with the Leninist concept of democratic centralism, but makes a mockery of it. It likewise makes a mockery of the pre-convention discussion for the party leadership to devote itself to publishing bulletins of this kind, rather than documents which discuss the political issues in dispute.

In addition, the F.I.T. letter requested an end to the policy of excluding expelled members from public SWP events. The alleged grounds for this exclusion has been the charge that we would be "disruptive," but there is no basis in fact for such an allegation. To date, we have received no reply to any of our requests, or even an acknowledgement of our letter.

The goal of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency is to defend the positions of the SWP and the Fourth International which are being overturned by the present majority leadership of the party. No party convention has yet sanctioned the repudiation of those traditional theoretical and programmatic perspectives. But as long as the party ranks are provided only one-sided "information" about our views, prohibited from hearing what we ourselves have to say, and presented with slanderous charges that we are "disruptors," "provocateurs," or "agents of enemy forces," how will it be possible for them to make an objective judgement on the political issues?

The ultimate loser in all of this will not be the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, or Trotskyism. It will be the Socialist Workers Party. If the present leadership really had the best interests of the organization itself at heart it would make an effort to organize the real political debate, and get around to answering us in print--with resolutions for the convention--instead of with slanders, organizational charges, and reprisals.

LETTER ON PRECONVENTION DISCUSSION
FROM FIT TO SWP POLITICAL COMMITTEE



Fourth Internationalist Tendency
c/o S. Bloom, 2186 E. 22 St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11229

May 7, 1984

SWP Political Committee

Dear Comrades,

On March 26, we sent a letter to the SWP National Committee which made several proposals to be considered at your recent plenum. Although the plenum has come to an end, this letter has not been answered or even acknowledged. Nevertheless, since members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency have been informed that our appeals were denied, we know that you rejected our main proposal--that all those who have been expelled from the SWP for political opposition to the changes in our Trotskyist program should be reinstated.

Because of this, it is now necessary for us to make our appeals directly to the membership of the party through the national convention. The scope of the purge of oppositionists which has been carried out over the past year and a half makes the decision on these appeals one of the most important which will face the convention. You have acknowledged the centrality of this matter by placing it first on the convention agenda.

There can be little doubt that the question of party norms and of the appeals will be an issue during the pre-convention discussion, and may well figure in the election of delegates by the branches. The whole party must be able to make an informed decision on this crucial issue.

For these reasons, we believe that the appeals of expelled oppositionists should be made available to the entire membership of the party. We request that you publish them in some form, either as part of the regular internal discussion bulletin or in a special internal information bulletin.

You should also make available to party members the "Platform of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency," which has obvious relevance to the appeals of all members of our tendency. We note that this has been formally included by Comrades Bloom and Lovell as part of their appeal.

In addition, we think it is necessary to make an exception this time to the usual way we have considered appeals at past conventions. The session which will take them up should be open to all party members--not only to delegates. Once again, the obvious importance of this situation for the entire party makes this the indicated course. Every comrade has a fundamental stake in the consideration and discussion of the delegates and should have the right to hear what is said.

Finally, relevant to the question of the appeals and of norms, the special International Internal Information Bulletin, dated February 1984 (published by the United Secretariat) contains a great deal of information. It is our understanding that this bulletin has not yet been made available to members of the SWP. This should be corrected immediately, and access to this document provided to comrades so that they can make informed judgments during the pre-convention period.

Please inform us of your response to these proposals. We are also awaiting a response to the additional proposals made in our March 26 letter--concerning the participation of expelled members in the pre-convention discussion even if our appeals were denied, and asking for a change in the policy of excluding us from participating in public events sponsored by the SWP.

Comradely,

Steve Bloom
For the FIT

TIMELY QUOTATION

James P. Cannon, "Concerning Our Expulsion," November 1928, The Left Opposition in the U.S. 1928-31, p. 41:

They expelled us, as they have expelled many good communists before, in order to deprive us of the possibility of speaking to the party as party members. Then they tell the party it has no right to listen to us because we are not members of the party. Such shallow trickery can be based only on the most profound contempt for the intelligence of the rank and file of the party. To allow such methods to succeed would be to give the power of self-perpetuation to any clique which might gain control of the apparatus and to reduce the principle of democratic centralism to a fiction.

According to such procedure the fact of expulsion settles the question. But in the absence of any preliminary discussion, the party can decide the question wisely and responsibly only if it knows why the expulsion took place and what the expelled members have to say. A party member who does not demand that right, who keeps quiet, or who votes to endorse this act of bureaucratic disruption for fear of expulsion, is not acting like an upstanding communist whose vote means understanding and conviction.

NATIONAL BLACK INDEPENDENT POLITICAL PARTY PURGES SWP MEMBERS
The Militant Is Silent; an Honest Balance Sheet Is Needed

by Larry Stewart

Newark, N.J.
May 4, 1984

According to information I received from a member of NBIPP on the West Coast the Central Committee of NBIPP, at a meeting in North Carolina March 2-4, voted to expel all SWP members, 10 for with only one against and one abstaining. The reason given for this purge was that SWP members necessarily have "divided loyalties." Co-chairperson Ron Daniels led the attack. The blatantly reactionary and discriminatory nature of this action is highlighted by the fact that NBIPP members who belong to the capitalist Democratic Party are not, of course, considered people with "divided loyalties." They are the main ones expelling SWPers who are against support to capitalist politicians.

The SWP has long known about NBIPP leadership's witchhunting. This virus erupted in the spring of 1982. It was seen developing soon after the first NBIPP chapter meeting in Jersey City where I was a member.

At our December 1981 meeting there were four SWPers present, one of whom was a member of the SWP National Committee. Thereafter only two SWP members regularly attended our NBIPP chapter meetings. The National Committee person had become an officer on the area or national structure level of NBIPP. This was resentfully cited by other NBIPP officials as proof of "radicals wanting to take over NBIPP."

It soon became clear that the NBIPP leadership was not about to implement the charter provisions for independent political action anytime in the foreseeable future. There was, however, a lot of talk about doing so. The main activities were public rallies, conferences, and at least one testimonial dinner for a "prominent" individual. Time was often taken from business meetings to rail against an unnamed "super organized" radical organization bent on trying to unduly influence NBIPP.

In the spring of 1982 the SWP press printed the charter which had been adopted at the NBIPP founding congress in 1981. This became the excuse for the NBIPP leadership to launch a vituperative red-baiting campaign.

In the Jersey City chapter the two SWPers vigorously protested and explained the destructiveness of this disease to the members. The chapter leadership denied that it was engaged in red-baiting, and claimed that it was instead protecting the party from "outside takeover."

Over the next few months there were reports from other chapters of SWPers being brought to trial on charges of "disruption" and "disloyalty," with some actually being expelled.

An article deploring the red-baiting appeared in the Militant at the time. The SWP met several times with NBIPP leaders in an effort to conciliate the disagreements over the charter printing and over the activities of SWP members in NBIPP.

Although the SWP leadership has known about this latest witchhunt since it occurred two months ago, not one word has been said about it in the SWP press. Why? Isn't it the duty of the revolutionary press to expose red-baiting attacks on the Black, labor and radical movements in order to alert their members and mobilize against the purges?

Instead of sounding the alarm in defense of workers' democracy, the Militant's only reference to NBIPP since March 4 has been an article in its April 6 issue containing quotations from the NBIPP charter. The charter has many progressive ideas, but why does the Militant reprint them in the midst of an anti-SWP purge and continue to hold its tongue about the reactionary things that have not changed in the organization that adopted the charter almost three years ago?

This example is but one of many errors committed in respect to NBIPP since the SWP convention in August 1981. To correct such errors and avoid them in the future the next SWP convention (August 1984) should draw up an honest balance sheet of our policy and practice in relation to NBIPP.

At the 1981 convention the SWP correctly took a positive and friendly attitude to NBIPP. It was seen to have the potential to develop into a significant current in the Black and radical movements, and we correctly resolved to try helping it move in that direction. But even at the convention all sorts of illusions and misconceptions about what NBIPP really was were expressed. Instead of trying to dispel these foolish notions the top leaders of the SWP, who were the only ones in our party fully informed of what was going on in NBIPP, actually encouraged them.

There were for example, several references to NBIPP by some delegates as our "sister party." Since the same people were calling the Cuban CP, the FSLN, and the New Jewel Movement our "sister parties" too, this obviously elevated NBIPP to a level not attained in reality. NBIPP was not yet a party, but a small group that hoped to become one. It was neither our "sister" nor a party in any real sense.

Both contentions were wrong. NBIPP was not only very small, but its members very inexperienced, and the leaders disparate and divided over perspectives. We thought the potential was there to overcome these weaknesses, but the potential should not have been confused with the reality of things. This is how the SWP leadership erred over the next two or more years.

When problems first arose in NBIPP in the early spring of 1982 our SWP leaders tended to wish them away, pretending they didn't exist or weren't worth mentioning beyond a bland admonition in our press. A definite tendency, there all along, of supporting Black Democrats emerged almost from the start in the NBIPP leadership. The Militant pretended it wasn't there for over a year.

Strong signs of sectarianism and abstentionism in the NBIPP leadership were also evident very soon after the organization was launched, but the Militant continued to speak for a long while as if NBIPP were the only organization in the country (in addition to the SWP, of course) that wasn't moving to the right. The only possible kernel of truth in such myth-making was that NBIPP wasn't moving at all, neither left nor right, but was stagnating and completely isolated from the Black community; the chief movement within it was by members who were voting with their feet and leaving what seemed to them a largely inactive sect.

The SWP cannot be blamed for NBIPP's failure to achieve its potential. It does, however, deserve criticism for failing to see the facts for so long, for not informing members and supporters about what was going on, and for magnifying the importance of NBIPP in such a way that we in the party were inattentive to other more important developments in the Black community. Why these mistakes of method were made should be threshed out and carefully examined. Otherwise they will be repeated not only in Black work but in other areas of mass activity as well.

When such a discussion takes place I hope it will be free of the kind of false argumentation I heard from SWP leaders toward the end of 1982 and 1983, when NBIPP's impasse could no longer be ignored. "The problem is that NBIPP's leadership isn't proletarian," said some comrades. But if that was a problem, or the main problem, why didn't we see and say that from the beginning? Everyone knew that the leadership first elected by NBIPP consisted of many academics and other petty-bourgeois types, so why did we have to wait two years to discover "the problem"?

I also hope that any balance sheet drawn up will have a more realistic appraisal than the party press has expressed up to now. Our leadership made the charter the beginning, the end, and the be-all of NBIPP. That was how it seemed to us, perhaps, but it didn't seem that way to most NBIPP members or leaders. They did not take it as seriously as most of us did. That's why, somehow, they never got around to printing or distributing it (and accused us of "divided loyalties" because we did print and draw attention to the charter). The truth is that this progressive document wasn't regarded as of much importance by most NBIPP members. Not that they disagreed with it necessarily, but they didn't attribute to it the overriding significance that we did. Such things happen rather frequently -- organizations adopt good documents but then pay little attention to them (like the early AFL did when it adopted its charter pledging itself to class struggle methods). We shouldn't be so formalistic. Much more important than what an organization writes is what it does. Right from the beginning, NBIPP did little to make its charter more than a pretentious, highfalutin piece of paper.

A lot of time and energy was wasted because of our wrong appraisal of NBIPP. But I, and I'm sure others, feel we can learn from these mistakes and do effective revolutionary work in the Black community, if we but take stock honestly and return to the time-tested, sober, realistic methods of work in the Black and other mass movements that we inherited from Lenin, Trotsky, and Cannon.

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CONTRIBUTION TO APRIL 1984 NY/NJ DISTRICT CONVENTION OF SWP

[note: The following article was submitted as a contribution to the discussion for the New York/Northern New Jersey District Convention of the SWP, which took place last April 7-8. A one-month preconvention period was opened on March 6. Because of the mass expulsion of oppositionists from the party--which had only recently taken place--those who wanted to present a counter-perspective to that of the "Draft Tasks and Perspectives Resolution" proposed by the District Committee were unable to participate in the regular discussion bulletin. Instead, they were forced to communicate by mail with other party members in New York City and Northern New Jersey.]

AN ALTERNATIVE FOR THE DISTRICT.

By Naomi Allen, Dorothea Breitman, and Larry Stewart
for the Fourth Internationalist Tendency

The "Call for the New York/Northern New Jersey District Convention" states: "Our traditional provisions and safeguards for the adequate and free presentation of all points of view shall govern all discussions." Such assurances ring hollow coming only a few weeks after the political purge of dozens of comrades in this district and around the country--comrades who spent years working with you to build the party, and whose personal integrity and loyalty to the revolutionary Marxist program and to the party you have experienced first hand.

We are taking this unconventional way of participating in the pre-district convention discussion because we have been undemocratically barred from exercising our rights as party members. We have appealed our expulsions; in the meantime, we do not want to miss this brief opportunity to speak to party members. After our expulsion in January, we participated in the formation of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, which 18 party members had tried to form in May 1982 for the pre-world congress discussion. We were barred at that time by the Political Bureau.

Character of the period.

Election years always take a toll on the mass movements, and 1984 promises to be set in that same mold, as the leaderships of the trade unions, the women's movement, the Black struggle, etc., all line up behind Democratic Party candidates and vigorously oppose any independent political activity that might disrupt their electoral schemes. Nevertheless, this remains a period of radicalization in which we see periodic struggles by workers to regain benefits and conditions lost through "givebacks" in the past few years (Chrysler, Steel), and to defeat efforts of the employers to extort new givebacks (Greyhound) or to weaken or destroy the unions through other methods such as bankruptcy (Continental Airlines).

As the reformist leaderships become more involved with the capitalist candidates and even less responsive to the needs and moods of the workers, these struggles are increasingly carried out over the heads of the officialdom, often without any real leadership at all. Thus, the developing militancy of working people and their allies, on the one hand, and the failure of the traditional leaderships to organize and lead their struggles, on the other, give revolutionaries more openings to explain and fight for independent political action and greater relative weight than in the recent past. Even sectarian groups can gain a disproportionate influence, simply because the crisis of leadership is so severe. For example, the Spartacists, despite their small numbers, ultraleft line, and history of irresponsibility, received a thousand votes in their election campaign against the corrupt Lawe leadership in the Transport Workers Union, Local 100.

Role of the party.

The Socialist Workers Party embodies the heritage of revolutionary Marxism in this country. Party members have an important role to play in the unions and in the mass movements because they can bring our program of class struggle to the new young leaders as they emerge from the largely spontaneous battles, and can help direct them toward a strategy for victory. Without the contribution of revolutionary Marxism--which in the United States can come from nowhere but the Trotskyist movement--these struggles may flare up and burn brightly, but they will exhaust themselves in one impasse or another. That is why it is important to reaffirm the crucial role of the SWP in American politics today against all liquidationist moods of hopelessness about how much impact we can have, as well as against the currently popular agnosticism that denies that the party has any answers to the questions raised by radicalizing workers and others.

It is not elitism or egotism to recognize that the party has answers to those questions. The party is the historic memory of the working class. Our answers are provided by the entire history of the workers' movement.

Central America.

Especially after the U.S. attack on Grenada, the new war danger in the Caribbean and Central America cannot be treated as an idle threat. The united front defense of the Central American revolution must be primary in our activity. We should ally ourselves with all groups and individuals that stand in support of the revolutions in that part of the world, or simply against U.S. intervention, in order to try to educate people about the danger and mobilize them against it.

The revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and the defense of the revolution in Nicaragua are vitally important to U.S. workers. The district should continue propagating the truth about these revolutions through Militant sales and forums, as well as fighting in the unions for the right to asylum of all those fleeing from those areas and against AFL-CIO support for the U.S. war moves in the region.

Socialist election campaign.

Within the trade unions, we should campaign vigorously for a labor party in answer to the bureaucrats' drive to line the workers up behind Mondale and other Democratic candidates. The candidacies of Mel Mason and Andrea Gonzalez can be indispensable both in reaching workers with our full socialist program and in counterposing the labor party perspective to the bureaucracy's class collaborationism. Instead of suffocating in the political vacuum produced by the bourgeois elections, we can rally people around our ideas and recruit them to the party. To do this it is necessary to run an active campaign, not just in words but in deeds. The draft Tasks and Perspectives resolution for the district offers no projection for campaign activity except sales of the Militant and PM. While circulation of the press is an important component of our election campaign, it cannot replace all other campaign activity.

We should set up meetings for our candidates or their spokespersons in all the arenas that are open to us in the mass movements and in our workplaces. We should try to arrange debates wherever possible because they stimulate interest. We should remember that every comrade is a campaign representative when opportunities occur on the spur of the moment. We should use posters, leaflets, and buttons to make the socialist campaign visible and to give potential campaign supporters an immediate way of identifying with the candidates. We should hold outdoor meetings and rallies to bring the candidates to the attention of the communities we live and work in, and assign press liaisons to take advantage of heightened newspaper, radio, and television attention to electoral developments. Above all, we should petition to put our candidates on the ballot in order to maximize the effect of all our other efforts. Although the YSA will be, as always, a vital component of the campaign, the importance of this effort requires the party to take political responsibility and throw its experience, authority, and resources into making the election campaign the center of all our activity until the fall elections.

The turn.

The role of the party in industry has to change. We sorely need consistency, but not, as the draft Tasks and Perspectives resolution suggests, only in our plant gate sales. We need to have a long-term perspective when we enter an industry and not be

looking to get rich quick. We need to achieve a permanent base in the unions, put down roots and begin to gain some experience and earn some authority. We should put an end to the system of inaugurating a trade union fraction amid ambitious hopes and dissolving it a few months later when the overblown schemes have failed to materialize. Our comrades, many of whom come from backgrounds without industrial work experience, need the education that comes from sharing the reality of daily life in the workplaces and in the unions. We should become deeply involved in struggles around safety and health issues, which are of great concern to all workers.

We have a lot we want to say about the course of contract negotiations, the vigilance of the union in enforcing the contract and in defending the workers against the daily tyranny of management--all these questions make our efforts to transform the unions into instruments of class struggle more concrete. Through our willingness to take responsibility and become actively involved in the daily struggles of our fellow workers we demonstrate that we are not just bags of hot air or politicians out for a quick kill, but a legitimate and serious tendency in the working class. We should also encourage the unions to participate in the party's campaigns and to involve themselves in all the social issues facing working people today.

Face to the youth.

Everywhere we hear of the economic recovery and drop in unemployment. However, the youth has been left behind. Black youth unemployment is still over the 50% mark in New York. Reagan's budget cuts and calls for more discipline (i.e., police) in schools are a serious attack on the right to education. American war policies in Central America and the Middle East have killed hundreds of youth in the last year. The antiwar movement concerns the youth most of all. In addition to our industrial co-workers, the YSA should direct itself to the youth in struggle in the high schools and college campuses. We propose that the YSA and the party should begin to probe in these areas with sales of the press and leafleting for antiwar, civil rights, women's rights, and other activities that can begin to win us contacts and the possibility of consistent youth work. We should be alert to any openings this spring on the high school and college campuses that the YSA can use to initiate serious campus work that can lead to recruitment.

Women.

The National Organization for Women is entirely submerged in bourgeois electoral politics in the New York-New Jersey area and probably will be impossible to involve in any independent actions in defense of women's rights until after the elections. The abandonment of the fight for abortion rights in an election year exposes the NOW leadership to sharp criticism from women and their allies, and we should be vocal in demanding that NOW

fulfill its responsibility in this respect. Nevertheless, we should maintain a friendly, if critical, presence in NOW and be alert to openings for action in arenas we are interested in, such as abortion rights, affirmative action, etc. The New York-New Jersey area has a multiplicity of women's organizations and coalitions of organizations to which we should begin to pay more serious attention. We should become involved in struggles for equal pay for work of comparable value, affirmative action, reproductive rights for teenagers, and so on, wherever they arise, and we should encourage these groups to seek support for their struggles from the unions.

The Black struggle.

SWP leadership and influence within the Black community today are at a low ebb, most notably in NBIPP. A critical reassessment of Black work in our district, as well as in the party nationally, would not only be productive, it is absolutely critical. An essential aspect of that reassessment must be a renewed awareness and application of the Transitional Program for Black Liberation, which grew out of our experiences in the Black struggle during the 1960s. While applying the approach embodied in this document, which stands in marked contrast to our recent activity, the party expanded its Black cadre as well as its prestige in the Black community.

Polish solidarity.

Recent events in Poland show that the Polish people are still struggling against the Stalinist bureaucracy. The struggle of Polish Solidarity exposes the nature of Stalinism and gives us a prime opportunity to explain why it exists and what can be done about it.

The effort to overthrow Stalinist oppression in Poland should not be counterposed to the struggles against imperialism--Stalinism is a product of imperialist pressure on the workers' states, and its demise can only improve the prospects for anti-imperialist struggles all over the world. This is the reason that the political revolution in the workers' states is a component part of the world revolution and not separate from it.

Today in Poland the struggle for workers' democracy is taking the form of a religious upheaval, championed by leaders of the Catholic Church. But we have seen popular movements throughout history following similar routes--taking advantage of any institution that is not bound hand and foot by the repressive regime. Our duty as proletarian revolutionaries is to do everything in our power to defend and support the Polish workers. We can do this while taking our distance from the Church, just as we support the Iranian revolution without endorsing Islam or any of its excesses. We must organize a vigorous defense of Polish political prisoners, in particular of our KOR comrades and of

Solidarity leaders. We should also try to promote teach-ins, interviews, relief campaigns, demonstrations, tours, etc., In all of this we will fight for a clear line in defense of the workers' states against imperialism.

Party organization.

The recent retrenchment in party organization was largely a result of the undemocratic expulsions of over one hundred loyal comrades around the country who held political differences with the leadership over many issues. In addition to those expelled, many other comrades have become disoriented or demoralized by the party crisis and simply dropped out. These losses have hurt the party's ability to carry out its campaigns. All comrades expelled for their political views must be reintegrated. In the meantime, the party should allow expelled members to participate in all areas of party work including building the election campaign, sales of the press, forums, and other public activities. The policy of excluding expelled members who have never been involved in any disruption of public events from Militant Labor Forums must be reversed at once. There is no other reason for excluding anyone from public meetings at which nonmembers and opponents have always been welcome. The Fourth Internationalist Tendency has encouraged all its supporters to build the Socialist Workers Party, support and participate in the Mason-Gonzales campaign and other party activities. We do not recognize the unjust expulsions and we call upon the district conference to ask the National Committee to declare them null and void in accord with the decisions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at its January 1984 meeting.

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ON THE 1984 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

by Frank Lovell

The 1984 primaries have revealed that this presidential election year is different in at least three respects. First, the candidacy of Jesse Jackson has broken open the festering sore of racism in U.S. society generally and in electoral politics particularly. Secondly, the jingoistic military attacks of the Reagan administration on Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador and other Central American and Caribbean countries have forced a more candid debate on U.S. foreign policy than ever before. A third difference is the unprecedented response to voter registration drives. These related changes in the bourgeois electoral arena are indicative of the unannounced difficulties of ruling class politics, at home and abroad.

The basic underlying reason for this muddled situation is the world crisis of capitalist economy and the failure of U.S. foreign policy as the leading imperialist nation. This has brought disillusionment and discontent to millions of exploited, oppressed, and unemployed. A new political awareness has developed among organized sectors of the working class, young people, Blacks, women, Hispanics, and other minorities. This is expressed in increased voter registration, the shifting pattern of voting in the Democratic primaries, and in the clumsy efforts of the white-endorsed candidates (Mondale and Hart) to adjust to the new moods.

An increase in voters in 1982 for the first time in 20 years marked the rise of this new mood, a product of economic depression and war preparation. A government survey found that 48.5 percent of eligible voters had gone to the polls in that off-year election, an increase of 2.6 percent over 1978. More revealing of the tenor of the mood and marking the beginning of class polarization was increases of 5.8 percent more Blacks, 4.5 percent more industrial workers, 6.7 percent more unemployed, and a surprising jump of 2.5 percent among those listed as not seeking work (the "discouraged workers" who are usually uninterested in voting).

Organized voter registration drives in Chicago in 1982 and 1983 convinced Harold Washington that a Black man could be elected mayor. He agreed to run if 50,000 new voters could be registered. One hundred thousand signed up, mostly Blacks. Washington won the mayoral election in April 1983 by 40,000 votes.

Elsewhere voter registration drives in Black and minority communities produced similar results. Frederico Pena was elected mayor in Denver, and William Goode in Philadelphia. Mel King, sometimes dubbed a "socialist" by his supporters, came close to being elected mayor of Boston. He was backed by a coalition of women's groups, Blacks and other minorities, and lost to a liberal who took votes that might otherwise have gone to King.

These developments prompted Jesse Jackson to enter the Democratic presidential primaries. His showing has confirmed that broad support for social and economic change exists and is growing. But he has clearly indicated that he does not seek any fundamental change in the capitalist system of production, only a redistribution of available jobs at all levels of the productive process.

Jackson demonstrated early in the campaign that he had something different to offer when he went to Syria and pleaded successfully for the release of a Black pilot shot down in a military mission over Lebanon. Since then a new perception of Black America has gradually found expression in the news and advertising

media. Bourgeois commentators have discovered that Black people in this country have a different relation to colonial and semi-colonial people than the white-dominated U.S. government, and the growing acceptance of this fact has encouraged Jackson and his Black supporters to demand greater recognition of their special problems and redress of their neglected status, as well as their potential value as elected representatives of this country in diplomatic relations with the rest of the world.

Jackson's campaign, however, is seen by Black voters as more than a personal effort on his part. They identify with the campaign and accept Jackson as their representative. The reason is the demands he makes on the Democratic Party, the union bureaucracy, various agencies of government, and indirectly on the giant corporations. He insists that the veiled Jim Crow practice in Southern states of conducting runoffs between the two top vote getters in Democratic primaries must stop, and that the Democratic Party convention this year must take action to stop it. In the runoffs the white vote almost invariably combines to defeat Blacks at this final stage before the general election, thus providing a conduit for race prejudice and effectively excluding Blacks from public office.

In his "preliminary meeting" with AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland on May 1 Jackson made clear his support of unions, the right of workers to join unions, and his opposition to all laws that prohibit union contracts that require workers to join unions. He insisted, at the same time, that unions take some responsibility for training unemployed youth in apprenticeship programs, that more women and Blacks be represented in the decision-making bodies of the unions, and that union registration and election practices be revised to eliminate discrimination.

The record is clear that most government agencies are remiss in the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and regulations. A central issue of the Jackson campaign is the eradication of discrimination, especially in education, housing, and employment. As for the State Department, the CIA, and other government departments and agencies engaged in the seizure of Grenada, the war against the Central American countries, especially Nicaragua and El Salvador, Jackson has more clearly stated his position than any other candidate in the Democratic primaries. He does this repeatedly because it is popular. His announcement that he will head a delegation of ministers and other concerned citizens to investigate the covert U.S. war in Nicaragua is an example. This cuts across the standard double-talk of Hart and Mondale, forcing them to be still more cautious in their guarded statements on foreign policy.

Jackson's campaign has put the corporations on notice that continued trade with South Africa is fast becoming a public issue, and should be a matter of public policy instead of corporate investment. His criticism of the war drive also marks him as questionable in their books, but publicly they maintain an "impartial" stance on electoral politics. Some have endorsed and contributed to voter registration efforts, such as BankAmerica's donation of \$25,000 to help double the number of Latino voters in California. But for all their studied aloofness the corporations are uneasy about the forces that they fear may be unleashed if Jackson and other capitalist politicians fail to control them.

On the surface Jackson's demands seem clearly designed to benefit Black politicians, educators, other professionals, and petty bourgeois elements generally. He seeks to make more room for them and gain more justified recognition for the talented and well-to-do, while at the same time assuring the ruling class that an established Black bourgeoisie can be valuable in the capitalist structure. In theory the upward social mobility of rich Blacks is supposed

to redound to the benefit of all Black people, including the poorest and most oppressed.

Nowhere is the unease and uncertainty of the ruling class more surely portrayed than in the fumbling efforts of their trusted political servitors to adjust and respond to this unfamiliar situation. Mondale and his backers, especially the union bureaucracy, thought early this year that the organizational structure of the Democratic Party guaranteed his nomination, that his victory in the primaries was assured, that these primaries were hardly more than a formality to give the Democratic candidate public exposure before the big contest against Reagan in the fall. This year's road show has produced surprises all around.

For the political managers and manipulators the popular response to Jackson was a big surprise, directly related to the shocking discovery that Mondale's politics-as-usual approach had been rejected by many newly registered voters before the campaign began. Law suits by Reagan supporters in several states to prevent voter registration of poor people at social service agencies have not stopped or noticeably checked the increase of new voters.

Mondale's tried-and-tested image of the candidate with the most experience, a man of proven capability, implies a value judgment not shared any longer by these millions of voters who for the first time are becoming politically conscious. Opposition to the old politics, it was discovered, is not confined to Blacks and other minorities. It is shared by union members, youth, and women.

Gary Hart benefited in the early primaries by projecting himself as the champion of change, a politician who has rejected the past and intends to break new ground. But the more he campaigned as a top contender for the nomination the more clear it became that he opposed organized labor, favored continuing the military buildup, and planned to consolidate and subsidize big business as a sure cure for all economic ills. This is not what the new voters are looking for. They spotted it as more of the same old snake oil.

As the Mondale-Hart-Jackson debates continued Jackson gained. He was the most consistent. His responses to questions about the danger of war and the failing economy were more candid. His support grew. A New York Times/CBS poll in April showed that most white voters who expressed an opinion said Jackson is more honest than most politicians, 38 percent of those questioned over 32 percent who thought him less honest. More white voters said he made them hopeful than said he made them angry, 31 percent to 25 percent.

Another New York Times/CBS poll taken in April showed that 67 percent opposed the U.S. war threat in Central America. Such strong anti-war sentiment swells the ranks of Jackson supporters because he is less equivocal on that issue than his rivals. By the time of the primary in Washington, D.C., on May 1, Jackson had solid support in the Black community and was making inroads among white and Hispanic voters. He won with more than 66 percent of the total vote. Blacks of all ages interviewed on TV said they were voting for the first time and intended to become active in the political process to change the system. Jackson went on to win in Louisiana with 43 percent of the vote. He got nearly as many votes as Mondale and Hart combined.

Campaign workers for Jackson are stepping up their drive for support from more white voters among the newly registered. The chairperson of the Jackson California campaign, Assemblywoman Maxine Waters in Los Angeles, told reporters

that "some of the people who are obviously supporting Mondale" ought to be supporting Jackson on the issue of jobs for unemployed workers. Jackson's plan to create jobs and cut war spending will benefit all workers, she said, not only Blacks. This is the idea of the "rainbow coalition."

Radicals from most ultraleft sectarian groups to the Communist Party to left-wing social democrats to the Guardian have given tacit or outright endorsement to the Jackson campaign and are cheering him on to victory, as if Jackson can transform the Democratic Party and make it into a party for poor people instead of a party for the rich. They will end up supporting Mondale against Reagan, most of them. Others are banking on the highly improbable event of an independent Jackson campaign for the presidency after he loses in the primaries and fails to get the concessions he is demanding from the Democratic apparatus.

Unlike Jackson and others who are bidding mainly for working class and minorities' support, the Socialist Workers Party has fielded a presidential ticket and is challenging the Democratic and Republican parties on a clear socialist program. The SWP candidates -- Mel Mason for president and Andrea Gonzalez for vice president -- are campaigning for a Workers' and Farmers' Government, for the transformation of society from capitalism to socialism. They call for the immediate dismantling of all U.S. military bases, the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from foreign soil, and an end to the armed invasion of Nicaragua and El Salvador.

What distinguishes the SWP campaign may be called a "correct policy"; that is, it stands for independent working class political action and against the political institutions of the employing class, including its political parties. But such a campaign to be effective as a way of strengthening working class organizations and building the working class party for future struggles (which is the only meaningful purpose it can have at this juncture) must relate to the radicalization that is presently fueling the Jackson campaign.

It is not enough to say that Jackson misleads his followers by fostering illusions in the Democratic Party. It is true that the union movement must break with capitalist politics and organize a labor party, but how this can be done must be explained and the organizational process begun.

A propaganda campaign of the working class vanguard party, the SWP, must explain to working people how they can organize their own forces through the proper use of the electoral arena. It must explain how the union movement can mobilize the working class and its allies, in opposition to the employers and independent of the political parties of the employers, in support of a public works program to create jobs for all who are now denied work. It must explain how to win all the entitlements of working people: the right to a job, the right to decent housing, the right to health care, the right to education, the right to a share of leisure time and the opportunity of artistic expression and intellectual growth. All this is possible with the reorganization of society by working people.

The SWP campaign thus far has helped only to satisfy the desires of its narrow band of supporters for an alternative choice at the polls in the fall election. What it lacks is connecting links to those newly radicalizing sectors of the working class. If it could succeed in establishing such connections both the SWP and the awakening workers who would be attracted to it would benefit, and

in the long run the radical and labor movements would be better off. Otherwise the momentary excitement generated by the election this year will die down and the opportunities it offers will be lost. Nothing can be gained without a party that knows how to identify with the existing radical sentiment, and mobilize the radicalizing union members and their allies to create an independent electoral bloc without ties or obligations to the political parties and institutions of the employing class.

In plain political language this means the organization of a labor party based on the union movement. The sentiment for a break with capitalist politics exists, but it can flare up in the heat of election fever and burn itself out in a short time unless a logical, convincing, meaningful alternative to the Jacksons in the Democratic Party is offered.

Last year the SWP leadership was slow in launching the 1984 campaign, losing many valuable months. Its approach has been oriented too much to those radical circles already convinced that U.S. imperialism is a mortal threat in Central America and the Caribbean, and not enough to those sectors of the working class suffering from the depression, cutbacks and giveaways. There are many potential campaigners for socialism (many times the present size of the SWP and YSA) among the newly awakened voters -- including young workers, students, Blacks and other minorities, women and other oppressed groups. But they must be inspired by a party and its candidates that campaign in the spirit of socialism, embracing all those who seek a higher social order in which freedom of thought and expression is assured.

Efforts to mobilize such non-party forces around the Mason-Gonzalez ticket are hampered by the SWP leadership's irrational hostility to all tendencies in the radical movement (including present and former SWP members) who may express opinions different from those of the SWP leadership. Its siege mentality is a major obstacle to the kind of effective campaign the Mason-Gonzalez ticket can become.

We former SWP members who are now organized in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (F.I.T.), and who support the SWP's 1984 ticket unconditionally, tried last year to project a more correct orientation for the 1984 campaign (see page 25 for "Draft Resolution on Perspectives for the 1984 Election," which we submitted to the National Committee in August 1983).

Instead of giving objective consideration to this and other party-building proposals, the SWP leadership expelled us and many other members with minority views. When we volunteer to support and work for the SWP's presidential ticket, the leadership directs the membership to bar us from attending even public election rallies. This blind, self-defeating exclusionary policy can only alienate revolutionary elements who can be won to the support of our candidates. In the interests of the campaign, in the interests of the revolutionary party and the chances of strengthening it in 1984, we urge that this exclusionary policy be reversed immediately.

Our 1983 resolution was one contribution to the 1984 campaign -- we want to make others. Significant new forces cannot be won in an atmosphere which demands total agreement with the SWP leadership on every point as a condition for participating in the Mason-Gonzalez campaign.

MEMOIRS OF A VETERAN SWP ELECTION CAMPAIGNER

by Evelyn Sell

When I vote for Mel Mason and Andrea Gonzalez in November, it will mark the ninth straight time I've cast a ballot for the presidential ticket of the Socialist Workers Party. Although I was recruited to the SWP during its first presidential campaign in 1948, I was only 18 and not old enough to vote according to the law at that time. That didn't stop me from campaigning for Farrell Dobbs and Grace Carlson, however. My first public activity as a revolutionary socialist was standing on a street in Detroit handing out election leaflets for the SWP's presidential ticket.

Four years later I was old enough to vote for the 1952 ticket of Farrell Dobbs and Myra Tanner Weiss (the team continued to head up the 1956 and 1960 tickets). By 1952, the witchhunt was going strong and the Michigan SWP was fighting the worst anti-red law in the country: the Trucks Act (the state's version of the national Smith Act). It was not easy being an SWP campaigner during the 1950s — but it was not as grim and limiting as pictured in the myth that has grown up about those years. Over the past few years I've read and heard about an alleged "retreat" of the party, about our "semi-sectarian existence" and "isolation" from the working class. The truth is not so negative — as the facts about our election campaigns prove.

In addition to activities promoting our presidential ticket, we ran local candidates during the 50s -- in spite of reactionary legislation and visitations from the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). In his introduction to James P. Cannon's Speeches to the Party, Al Hansen explains that the Trucks Act labelled the SWP "subversive" and threatened us with severe penalties, so severe that the party decided to take the precaution of reorganizing into cells for a period of months while we fought the law through the courts. Most Detroit party members didn't think we could field a candidate under such conditions but Frank Lovell volunteered to run for Mayor and carried out a pretty successful campaign -- much to the surprise of the faint-hearted and the capitalist media. "We were news," Hansen wrote, "we were the reds campaigning for office at the height of the witchhunt."

We did a lot of petitioning during those witchhunt years and had many of the same experiences SWP members and supporters are having today as they petition to place Mason-Gonzalez and local candidates on the ballot. I recently read in the April 20 Militant what petitioners in West Virginia have discovered: "One fact the campaigners here all agree on," it said, "is that age, race, or appearance are no indication of who will sign a petition to place socialists on the ballot." We learned the same thing as we stood on downtown streets in Detroit and small Michigan cities asking passersby to sign our petitions 30 years ago.

In 1952 we filled up our sheets by asking everybody. Every now and then someone made a nasty remark ("Why don't you go back to Russia!" was the usual anti-red jibe). But those experiences were remarkably few considering the tremendous amount of anti-Soviet capitalist propaganda and the freezing weather; we had to petition during bitterly cold winter months so it took some effort for a signer to hold a pen in numb fingers and fill in all the required information while the wind whipped their faces.

Another thing we found: our percentage of signatures was always higher when we went door-to-door in a Black housing project. Then as now, Blacks were more receptive to critics of the system and more sympathetic to a minority party independent of the two political machines of the ruling class.

A big difference between our campaigning in the 1950s and early 60s compared to following years: most of our candidates' speaking engagements were at union meetings. When Sarah Lovell ran for Mayor in 1957, she often spent a whole day at the Ford Local 600 hall, going from one unit meeting to another to speak to rank-and-file members (with a membership of 60,000 the local met by unit). Our standard-operating-procedure was to send letters to all union executive boards in the Detroit area requesting speaking time, follow up with a phone call to confirm and then show up at a membership meeting -- whether we were invited to speak or not! We got a lot of invitations.

My first speaking experience as an SWP candidate was by invitation from the Tool and Die Unit of Ford Local 600 (Rouge Plant). On other occasions and with other unions, I simply showed up and told the local president, "You received our letter and here I am." I always got at least five minutes to speak to the membership. Our socialist ideas always contrasted sharply -- and favorably -- to the speeches by Democratic and Republican candidates who rambled on about their children and "what a good guy I am." Many times workers followed me out of the hall and talked to me about our program or how they had worked with socialists to form the union.

Most SWP candidates today are workers and union members -- as we were during the 1950s and 60s. Frank Lovell, a member of UAW Local 160, told GM management he wanted a leave of absence to run for public office on the SWP ticket; he got his leave. Rita Shaw was a member of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union when she campaigned on the SWP ticket. Sarah Lovell belonged then (as now) to the International Typographical Union. I was an office worker (like millions of other women).

We presented basic socialist ideas as well as taking up every issue working people were concerned about at that time. We used our imaginations in promoting our campaigns.

Fundamental socialist ideas and Marxist analyses were presented in Frank Lovell's campaign leaflet "What Socialists Want" and in our small mimeographed newspaper, The Michigan Socialist, with articles on "Why Are We Unemployed?" and "Depression Or War?"

Current issues were pursued through challenges to the capitalist government and politicians. In a widely distributed open letter to President Eisenhower, Frank Lovell wrote, "The landing of American troops at Beirut, Lebanon, threatens the peace of the world . . . The Arab people are now attempting to rid themselves of an age-old feudal tyranny . . ." He demanded that "all U.S. troops be recalled." (Michigan Socialist 7-17-58). The Sept. 22 issue carried an article by me as candidate for U.S. Senator calling for immediate integration of schools, an end to police brutality against minority groups, and urging Alabama Governor Folsom to stay the execution and commute the life sentence of Jimmy Wilson, a Black convicted of the alleged theft of \$1.95. (One dollar and ninety-five cents.)

We weren't hiding or skulking around during the 1950s and 60s "isolated," "in retreat" or living a "semi-sectarian existence." We were in the shopping centers petitioning and handing out campaign materials. We held rallies in parks and on street corners. We had a special campaign car, brightly painted with slogans and carrying signs announcing our candidates, and equipped with sound. We cruised through working class neighborhoods playing labor songs and giving campaign speeches with this sound equipment.

In the mid-1950s, Detroit was a major center of youth activity for the SWP. We established the Young Socialist Club on Wayne State University campus and published a lively magazine, The Wayne Socialist, which carried articles by SWP candidates, political cartoons and poetry, explanations of basic socialist ideas, and statements about current events and issues. With this as a solid foundation, in 1959 we ran a student for the university's Board of Governors -- an unprecedented move at that time. Our election campaigns during the 1960s featured many young candidates some of whom were students and some were workers.

By the time of Farrell Dobbs' last presidential campaign in 1960, the situation in the U.S. had become more favorable for socialist electioneering and political activity. The civil rights movement had leaped forward with the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and the Cuban Revolution inspired a new generation of youth to join the fight for socialism. When Farrell toured Detroit, I arranged for him to speak at UAW Locals 127 and 157 where he called for "Hands Off Cuba!" and spoke about independent labor political action. Our Michigan campaign newspaper featured a participant's account by me about picketing the Woolworth stores in support of the Black students' sit-ins in the South. I was the SWP candidate for Lt.-Governor that year.

When John F. Kennedy came to Detroit on Labor Day to address a huge union audience in Cadillac Square, Frank Lovell (our candidate for U.S. Senator) posed prickly questions to him in leaflets distributed throughout the crowd. Rita Shaw, our candidate for state Attorney-General, blasted her Republican opponent as "one of the loudest inciters of hatred against Cuba, whose people are rebelling against the domination of U.S. big business. Anti-labor at home and anti-labor abroad . . . "

My memories of our election campaigns in the late 1960s and the 1970s are shared by many members still in the SWP. (My personal experiences shifted to Texas starting in 1969 and then to California from 1973 to the present.) After the 1960 campaign, the SWP ran different candidates each presidential election year: Clifton De Berry and Ed Shaw in 1964 (the first time the Young Socialist Alliance directed the campaign); Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle in 1968 (a groundbreaking campaign that recruited many new YSA chapters and SWP members); Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley in 1972 (the biggest and best campaign up to that time); Peter Camejo and Willie Mae Reid in 1976 (started earlier than any other due to Nixon's resignation and unusual opportunities for fielding candidates); Andrew Pulley and Matilde Zimmermann in 1980 (launched in August 1979, at the conclusion of the SWP's national convention).

In contrast to most of these national campaigns, the Mason-Gonzalez ticket was launched December 30, 1983. Jenness and Pulley carried out a 15-month campaign. Camejo and Reid campaigned for almost two years.

Our presidential campaigns were marked by innovations and record-breaking statistics from 1968 on. In 1968 we received 3008 endorsement cards by the end of the campaign but in 1972, as of the first week in May, we had already piled up almost 10,000 from all 50 states. During the 1968 campaign, 1.1 million brochures, stickers, buttons and other materials were distributed. Terrific as that was -- mid-way through the 1972 campaign over two million items had already been distributed! In 1968 we gathered 117,000 signatures on petitions, but by the end of the first week in May we had already collected 122,000 signatures in only 10 states for the 1972 ticket. As the tri-state petition director (Texas/Oklahoma/Louisiana), I was especially pleased when we got on the 1972 Louisiana Ballot as the first socialist ticket to qualify since 1916.

Spanish-language materials became a regular feature of our election campaigns. In August 1975, the report on the Camejo-Reid campaign noted that 374,000 copies of "Bill of Rights for Working People" had been distributed -- 30,910 in Spanish. One year later the S.W.P. convention report noted a total of 3/4 of a million with 90,000 in Spanish. That was compared with a total of 350,000 platforms distributed in 1972 and 108,000 in 1968. The media coverage of the 1976 campaign was "the most extensive and serious ever received by an SWP presidential campaign . . . The candidates' summer campaigning included a diverse range of activities from street campaigning to campus meetings to campaigning among striking workers . . . The tours in the 1976 campaign have emphasized campaigning at unemployment lines, shopping centers, plant gates, in the Black community, and among unionists or groups of people comrades work with on the job in addition to the campus, and press engagements . . . Nationally the YSA fielded fifteen traveling teams to help win support for the campaign. The teams visited 167 campuses, distributed 56,000 copies of 'Youth and the '76 Elections.'

"The teams won 108 new members to the YSA and helped establish ten new YSA locals; both figures are greater than for previous teams." (All quotations from SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 33, No. 13, August 1975, pages 21-22-23)

It will be interesting to compare this report with the one that will probably be given to the SWP national convention this summer. I know one thing that will be very different: the attitude toward the involvement of campaign supporters and volunteers. In 1975, the reporter stated, "We want to open up socialist campaign committees to include all people who want to help win support for the socialist candidates. This will strengthen the campaign. It will mean more campaign workers' ideas and energies to take advantage of opportunities. The ideas and skills of people who are not members of the YSA or SWP are useful and needed." (same source as above)

Mason-Gonzalez campaign activities are not open to longtime SWP campaigners like myself regardless of the ideas and skills built up over nine presidential elections and numerous local and state campaigns. Three weeks before the 1984 SWP ticket was launched, I and 15 other California SWP members were expelled after being charged with "disloyalty." In truth, we were ousted because we had all expressed political differences. This fact was proven conclusively when a wave of expulsions swept over SWP branches across the country within a week after the Mason-Gonzalez campaign began. The SWP Political Committee, which carried out the mass national purge, published an "enemies list" of 154 names of expellees and resignees. If your name is on "The List" you are not allowed to attend public meetings in a party headquarters or even enter to buy a pamphlet or a Militant. Although the Bulletin In Defense Of Marxism endorsed the SWP 1984 national campaign (see No. 3), not one member of the Editorial Board can enter an SWP headquarters for a campaign activity because all our names are on that list.

We all have "ideas and skills" which "are useful and needed." For example, I recently read in the Militant, April 20 issue, an article titled "SWP, CP debate strategy in elections." The representative of the CP's national ticket told the audience, ". . . the defeat of Ronald Reagan is probably the most important thing that can happen to insure the continued existence of the world." A logical question was asked during the discussion period: why is the CP running candidates since it says "the number one priority" is defeating Reagan? My mind immediately flashed back to our 1964 campaign when, as SWP candidate for U.S. Senator, I was repeatedly confronted with the same argument: "The most important thing we have to do to insure peace is to defeat Barry Goldwater." The major focus of our campaign was to expose what the U.S. government was doing in Vietnam (this was before the big news stories and the

anti-war demonstrations). As our candidate I explained over and over that the "defeat Goldwater" argument was, in effect, calling for a vote for Lyndon Johnson — who would surely put Goldwater's program into effect if he won the election. He won and he did — that's history. Since the "Vietnam syndrome" is alive and kicking these days, that specific fact of history can be used to drive home our socialist program about U.S. imperialism's war drive, the role of capitalist parties, and the need for independent political action.

The role played by Jesse Jackson in the Democratic Party today is illuminated by the arguments presented by George Breitman in a 1959 debate, "Should Progressives Work in the Democratic Party?" (published as a pamphlet by the Friday Night Socialist Forum in Detroit and reprinted in Pathfinder's 1977 book The Lesser Evil?). Breitman's 1964 speech, published as the pamphlet "How a Minority Can Change Society," remains a valuable Marxist analysis of the revolutionary role Blacks play in helping to change U.S. society. Breitman is no longer allowed to contribute his ideas and skills to the SWP. He, too, is on The List.

Members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, which publishes Bulletin In Defense Of Marxism, comprise a "useful and needed" pool of "ideas and skills" for the campaigns of Mason and Gonzalez as well as the many local candidates fielded by the SWP this year. With the drastic drop in party membership over the past five years, every supporter and volunteer is a help to the campaign and should be utilized to the fullest.

STOP ATTACKS ON SWP HEADQUARTERS!

At 2:00 a.m. on April 26 the Seattle SWP Campaign Headquarters was set on fire. Two days earlier, the Los Angeles headquarters had been fire bombed. In recent weeks, SWP offices in Atlanta and Charleston, W. Va., have been attacked by right-wing vandals. All those who support democratic liberties in this country must protest these crimes, and demand that the criminals be apprehended and prosecuted.

In the past, because of its proud record as a revolutionary party and champion of the oppressed, the SWP has frequently aroused the hostility of reactionary forces and been subjected to right-wing violence. The official defenders of "law and order" have never done anything to stop this — until faced with a public outcry from the defenders of civil liberties. Such a vigorous public response is the only weapon a working class organization can use to fight back in these circumstances, but it can be an effective one if properly shaped.

Party members who have been expelled as part of the SWP leadership's recent purge are experienced in dealing with situations of this kind. Members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency stand ready to help in any way we can to expose and halt the current wave of violence against the SWP. The policy which has been adopted of excluding us from all party events and activities is particularly harmful in this situation. Mobilizing the energies of everyone willing to help combat these attacks is an elementary necessity.

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON PERSPECTIVES FOR THE 1984 ELECTION

(Submitted by Steve Bloom and Frank Lovell to the August 1983 NC plenum)

I

The 1984 general election is an opportunity to explain the war in Central America, the worldwide crisis of capitalist economy, the predatory nature of U.S. imperialism, the causes of unemployment and inflation, the antagonisms between world imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy, the meaning of international workingclass solidarity, and the socialist solution to the crisis of humanity. These issues are interrelated. They are topics of the day. The task of the SWP in the election campaign, as in all other activities, is to explain, to educate, and in this way to reach new radicalizing layers of the working class.

The question of political independence for working people, and for Blacks and other oppressed nationalities is posed once again -- more sharply than in past years. Working people are faced with the continued deterioration in their living standards; billions of dollars disappear down the sinkhole of the military budget, and the government threatens to wage an open war against the people of Central America; cutbacks in unemployment relief and other social programs are visited most harshly on Blacks, Latinos, undocumented workers, and other specially oppressed sectors; the social gains of women are increasingly eroded.

II

All signs indicate that Blacks and women are more conscious now than ever before of the causes of race and sex discrimination under the present conditions of economic depression and mass unemployment. But a more profound form of radicalization is emerging. The cruel fact of 13 million unemployed in this country is an indictment of capitalism. Among those 13 million and their families are newly radicalized workers who never thought they would be out of work, and never before questioned the values of capitalism and the right of the employers to manage our basic industries.

Large sectors of the population are suffering: the urban unemployed; thousands of dispossessed family farmers; millions of young people deprived of jobs, education, and hope. The military machine is the future for young people -- that or jail for the most deprived, oppressed and exploited.

There is a new social and political consciousness among workers and other victimized strata of the population. One of the signs of this awakening is the appearance of a nebulous unemployed movement. Another sign is the distrust of capitalist politics, the failure of the two-party system to retain credibility.

III

No sector of the ruling class offers any alternative to austerity and deprivation. The two capitalist parties have begun preparing for their 1984 sham battle. But at this stage they have trouble finding issues to quibble over. The urgent questions of foreign policy and domestic economy have been relegated to a grey area of political uncertainty.

The escalating war in Central America is avoided as much as possible by all six of the early announced presidential candidates in the Democratic camp. When forced to explain their equivocal positions on this issue they pretend it is Reagan's war. They hope it will be negotiated away.

There is common agreement among all capitalist politicians in both the Republican and Democratic parties: that Cuba and Nicaragua jeopardize U.S. investments in Central America; that the U.S. Government cannot afford to "lose" El Salvador, Guatemala, and other "friendly" Latin governments;

that "Soviet aggression" is the main destabilizing force throughout the world; and that U.S. military might is essential. These are the underlying fallacies of "cold war policy," the simplistic justifications for imperialist expansion which is inherent in the capitalist system.

The capitalist politicians also agree basically on the economy. The Democrats criticize "Reagonomics" . . . but without practical alternatives. The economic crisis results from "wrong policy" or "miscalculation," they say. But the problem will be resolved by the hoped-for "recovery" which they say is in sight.

They agree that "recovery" requires a lower national debt. They argue among themselves about what sectors of government spending to cut, how much to increase the military budget and how fast to undermine the living conditions of working people.

The Democrats will try to take advantage in 1984 of the hatred generated by Reagan's policies, as Reagan took advantage of Carter's unpopularity in 1980. But increasingly, the masses of American people are becoming suspicious.

There is little popular confidence in the desire or will of either the Republican or Democratic parties to try and bring about any change. Both appear satisfied with the more or less even division between them in government. Most workers see little difference in these two ruling parties.

IV

Capitalist politicians can talk about "recovery." But that does not satisfy the urgent needs of their constituents, especially the millions who are out of work.

This is why preparations for the 1984 general elections are provoking frustration among political and community leaders of Blacks and other minorities. Women who seek a more meaningful role in the electoral process are likewise frustrated by the capitalist campaign strategists. The union bureaucracy is similarly shunned, receiving little recognition and no reward for past political services.

The Congress itself appears to be outside of or apart from the main political process. There is no serious debate in either house about such urgent matters of state as foreign policy or the failing economy.

This is why the established leaders of the deprived and exploited sectors of the population are frustrated as never before. They have no answers to the urgent problems of the great mass of people they claim to represent. They get no help from the employing class, as in the recent past. They are told to be patient, to preach faith in the coming economic recovery. The present upturn in the business cycle is a harbinger of good times ahead, they are told. But there is no sign of new jobs for the unemployed, of new schools for the youth, of better housing for the poor, of peace for the world. Consequently, community leaders, feminists, the union leaders are all forced to respond as best they can to the demands that are made upon them by their constituencies.

The almost unanimous answer to this political situation from the reformist leaders of the Black community, from the union bureaucracy, and from the feminist politicians is to repeat what they have said before: "Elect peoples candidates on the Democratic ticket."

This self-defeating strategy has a different meaning today than before because a new layer of the population is becoming more politically conscious. And in Black communities nationalist sentiment is growing.

The registration drives among poor people, and especially among Blacks,

is getting a greater response than four years ago, at the beginning of the last presidential campaign. There are several reasons for this, but the central one is resentment against the Reagan administration.

Those reformist leaders who now seek to channel this resentment into support for the Democratic party have discovered that in order to make the voter registration game work and produce more votes two conditions must be met. First, the "peoples candidate" must appear to be against machine politics, in substance a potential opponent of the two-party system, independent of the party apparatus. Secondly, a "peoples program" must consist of practical and achievable answers to the most pressing problems of the poor. This is what the Harold Washington-for-mayor-of-Chicago campaign did. It worked.

Other Black candidates are trying the same strategy in Philadelphia and in Boston, under different local circumstances. This is a formula for possibly increasing the number of Black elected officials, gaining a greater recognition for the needs of Black people, and winning concessions. It is sure to be tested repeatedly in this period. It is used by Jesse Jackson in his bid to gain support for a Black candidate on the 1984 Democratic presidential ticket.

Something similar is happening in the feminist movement. Feminism is gaining new adherents, and the political power of women is growing. At least 40 women's groups -- including NOW, Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), and the League of Women Voters -- representing an estimated 15 million members -- have formed an organization to register women voters. They recognize that in order to get these potential voters to the polls they must demand economic equality, the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion rights, curbs on military spending, and other reforms of special interest to women. All prominent leaders of the women's liberation movement agree that they must seek to reform the Democratic party. Their recent experience with the ERA and other "women's issues" does not give them much ground for hope. Former congresswoman Bella Abzug says, "If the Democrats don't respond, there could be a very interesting alignment of women and minorities in the future."

The labor movement is faced with the same problems, and in some respects is trying the same strategy. Union officials occasionally remind Democratic politicians of their option to run their own union candidates in Democratic primaries, and also to run for office independent of the capitalist parties. [The top bureaucracy, as represented by Lane Kirkland, has not yet developed a fully consistent strategy of seeking to become an independent force within the Democratic party, giving the impression of potential independence of the two-party system. In this respect the AFL-CIO bureaucracy is still behind the position projected by the old CIO officialdom when it set up Labor's Non-Partisan League in 1936.

Despite all the hesitancy there is a growing sense among local community leaders, the organizers of women's action groups, and secondary union officials that an independent coalition of the forces they represent is necessary and possible. This was expressed by Chicago's Black mayor Harold Washington in his endorsement of Charles Hayes, a vice president of the state AFL-CIO in Illinois, for the congressional seat vacated by Washington. He did not endorse Hayes as a Black candidate, the most able candidate on the list to represent the Black community. Washington said, "I'm endorsing Charley Hayes because I think it's time for organized labor to have its own man in Congress."

Washington and Hayes understand the potential power of a coalition of Blacks and unions. They also understand that any power such a coalition can eventually wield derives from its ability to satisfy the present needs of poor Blacks and victimized union members. They are unemployed or working under wage-cutting speedup conditions. Washington said, "The main issue facing

us today is jobs, jobs, jobs -- and Charley Hayes is the man who knows what it takes to get them."

This is a persuasive promise. Experience shows that a Democratic member of the U.S. Congress can create no jobs. But for purposes of the election campaign such promises will bring votes for the Democrats.

The Harold Washington mayoral campaign in Chicago and Jesse Jackson's proposal for a national Black presidential candidate give the appearance of independence. This development is distinct from the "dump Reagan" perspective of the union bureaucracy and liberal Black groups, who will line up behind the usual Democratic party politicians. Although the Washingtons and Jacksons will likely end up in the same line, their ability to pose as "independent" at this stage makes them more attractive to the masses of the Black community. And to an increasingly dissatisfied layer of white workers as well.

This is, of course, a big contradiction for the ruling class and for those who control the Democratic party. Proposals like Jesse Jackson is pushing can get out of hand. The dynamic of the demand for independence that he is trying to tap must go beyond the ruling class parties if it is to have any effect on the living conditions of Blacks and other victims of government cut-backs. If Jackson succeeds in coralling the anti-Reagan sentiment there is no guarantee that he can keep it within the acceptable bounds of the two-party system.

Jackson's proposals and perspectives begin as a reflection of sentiment for independent political action in the community, but in trying to exploit that sentiment as a bargaining chip within the Democratic party, he may help open the door to a much deeper and broader development -- a development which could go beyond the bounds that Jackson or those elements of the traditional Black leadership who support him now have in mind.

The idea of Blacks and other workers running for office gets a sympathetic hearing today -- though most workers still do not see it as an immediate practical solution to their current dilemma.

The founding of the National Black Independent Political Party shows -- despite the failure of the NBIPP leadership to chart an effective action program for the organization which has resulted in its virtual demise -- that there is a renewed interest and willingness to consider the possibility of independent political actions within the Black community.

The development of these trends will not proceed automatically, as the case of NBIPP clearly demonstrates. There is no guarantee that an independent, mass-based party will result from this political differentiation.

The tendency toward pseudo-independent formations is likely to grow. Such developments as the Peace and Freedom Party in California and the New Alliance Party in New York may appear elsewhere. These formations give the appearance of "independence" but are tied completely to bourgeois politics. Disillusionment with Democrats and Republicans can stimulate a renewed interest in such parties.

V

New opportunities for the SWP in the electoral arena are better now because of the inability of the ruling class to offer palatable solutions to the social and economic crisis, and because of the resulting disarray of the two-party system.

If the trend toward a rethinking of the political perspectives of Blacks, other oppressed nationalities, or of the working class in this country is to lead in a truly independent direction, then those who understand and can explain what is at stake must have the perspective of boldly taking advantage of the

rising political consciousness. The SWP, as an organized political force with a clear perspective must try to play a role in this process far beyond what our current numbers and influence in the working class would seem to make possible. We know that in a situation where the objective conditions are favorable, even a small group can make a big difference.

We are not guaranteed in advance that our efforts will qualitatively affect the outcome of events, though this is by no means excluded. But even if the masses of Blacks, of Latinos, and of working people fail to find an independent course in the 1984 elections, our consistent advocacy of this objective will win us respect and recruits from the most conscious layers, and help lay the basis for further developments.

Instead of conducting our election campaign in a routinist way, a bad habit the party has fallen into in recent years, we should mount an aggressive propaganda campaign that explains who we are, what we stand for, and what we hope to accomplish. This is the kind of campaign that will attract attention, open new opportunities for us to engage in meaningful debates, help to educate others, and also serve to advance our own education.

Our campaign must address the immediate problems and provide realistic answers. It is our duty, for example, to champion the struggles of women workers and Blacks and other minorities for affirmative action programs to protect them against discrimination in hiring where jobs are available. We have a consistent record of support for affirmative action programs, and we are therefore better qualified than most others to speak on the meaning and need of these programs today under the pressures of mass unemployment.

We are firmly convinced that unemployment can be eliminated, that the union movement is capable of creating jobs, and that the unemployed ought to turn to the unions for help in their demand for a massive public works program financed entirely by the federal government.

We know that money and resources are available for this because billions are being squandered on the arms build-up in Europe and the military intervention in Central America, the Middle East, and Asia. By explaining the connection between the economic crisis and wars and preparations for war our candidates will demonstrate that they are the most sincere and effective champions of peace.

We should not hesitate to make the "Jobs-Peace-Freedom" slogan of the August 27 demonstration in Washington this year our own. We do not embrace it as a plea for help addressed to the capitalist class and capitalist politicians, but as a call for workingclass action to resolve the present crisis. Consequently, our specific demands upon the capitalist rulers under the general jobs-peace-freedom goal are the following:

- 1) Stop the military intervention in Central America immediately, withdraw all U.S. troops from bases around the world.

- 2) Unilateral destruction of all nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal.

- 3) Open trade negotiations with the Soviet Union, China, the governments of East European nations, and Cuba. The objective of these negotiations should be to facilitate the exchange of commodities in a world market open to all producers.

- 4) Special attention to the worldwide economic crisis, with emphasis on the high rate of unemployment in the U.S. combined with the rapid rise of prices and interest rates. We urge radical and drastic solutions: a 30-hour work week, full compensation at prevailing wages for all those seeking work for whom jobs are unavailable, a massive public works program to provide jobs for everyone,

a jobs-training program for all who lack necessary experience and skills.

We know, of course, that these demands will not be granted by the employers or by the capitalist government solely because convincing arguments for them can be made. They must be fought for by the working class and all its allies. As an essential part of this struggle we advocate the organization of a labor party based on the union movement.

It is clear that our election platform as indicated by the above partial list of demands will need to be further developed and explained during the campaign. This means that our candidates cannot limit themselves to "single issue" campaigns which focus on, or "prioritize," such slogans as "out of El Salvador," "hands off Nicaragua," "for a Black, Latino, Labor coalition," or other such desirable goals.

In past campaigns we have said that we must make the labor party the central issue of our propaganda, and we have talked about the need for a labor party. We have tried to explain what a labor party could do if it were a majority in Congress, and even what a single labor representative in Congress could do. But this is not very convincing because there is no labor party, and no sign that a labor party is being organized.

We have good evidence that the Democrats have traditionally and consistently betrayed every election promise they ever made, that Democratic administrations always serve the interests of the employers against the workers, and that working people need a labor party. But these facts must be demonstrated over and over again in campaign debates.

A serious flaw in the arguments of nearly all politicians who seek public office is their empty promises that if elected they will change the system and give some benefits to their constituents. This applies to Harold Washington and Charles Hayes as much as to any other politician who promises to bring results through the two-party structure of capitalist politics. This structure cannot be reformed. It must be destroyed.

We recognize that the grip of the Democratic and Republican parties has been weakened by the failure of the ruling class in this present crisis. Masses of people no longer have confidence in capitalist values, including the present electoral system.

Our candidates will explain this.

But we must also explain that whatever gains workers make will be through their own efforts, as has always been the case. They cannot expect elected office holders to give them jobs. This happens only for a favored few, not for the great mass of unemployed.

Workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, farmers, and all the natural allies of the working class who are victims of the capitalist economy will find solutions to their problems through their own independent organizations. These are the labor unions, farm associations, women's action groups, organizations of Blacks and Hispanics. This is where the political power is. This is where the struggle must begin. Through these mass organizations it is possible to win concessions from the economic and political overlords of this country.

One of the tasks of the SWP electoral campaign is to explain how immediate demands, such as Jobs, can be won. The union movement with all its financial resources and the impressive numbers of people it can mobilize has tried all the known methods of lobbying. All have failed.

There are other political methods.

We have discovered that begging the capitalist lawmakers for a handout does not produce anything. It is time for the victims to draft and submit their own plans for reorganization of the economy, and for a new party in the electoral arena.

It is proper for the SWP campaign to make the labor party a central issue in all our propaganda. But we cannot continue to speak about it as if it will sometime mysteriously come into being and until that happens nothing can be accomplished through electoral politics.

Our task -- and our opportunity -- is in explaining how the labor party can be built . . . through the struggle of the mass organizations of workers and poor people for immediate and transitional demands. The demand for full employment and decent living conditions will not and cannot be granted by some elected politician. Specific plans for a jobs program and for low-cost public housing must be drafted by representatives of the unions and other mass organizations. Office holders must be told, "This is what we want." This is different from going to Washington and to state capitols asking the capitalist law makers to please legislate some jobs.

The general demand for peace (which is very popular today) can be made specific if those in Congress are told to take the money from the military budget and use it for housing and roads and schools and other useful purposes.

The demand for a 30-hour work week is also a necessary part of the struggle for full employment and peace. The shrill cries of the employers that they cannot afford shorter hours, higher wages, better working conditions, child care centers, full-coverage medical plans, and all the other basic needs of working people and their families raises some questions about how industry is operated. Why can't employers afford to pay workers enough to meet their basic needs? Greater public access to the business secrets of the giant corporations will answer this question. Open the books!

In the struggle for these demands it is possible that some elected politicians can be useful. If Charles Hayes becomes a Congressman he can then introduce legislation that has been drafted by his constituents in the Black community and in the unions. He will discover that his Democratic party colleagues in Congress do not favor such legislation, nor do they encourage any sign of support for such legislation by duly elected legislators . . . especially those elected on the Democratic ticket.

One of our important tasks is to explain how a labor party can be created. Out of these struggles for workingclass legislation the need for a labor party becomes clear to millions of people, and the way to organize this party is also discovered in the struggle for these demands. This is how we explain and demonstrate the way to build a labor party.

This process through which political class consciousness develops is outlined in our Transitional Program. Our candidates in the 1984 election campaign should be prepared to popularize and explain this program. A realistic election campaign of this kind will envelop all the activity of the party in the unions, the women's movement, the anti-war movement, and the Black struggle.

IV

The political committee shall begin as soon as possible to explore and develop all avenues for the use of our transitional method and demands in the 1984 election.

It is unfortunate that our presidential campaign cannot be launched before Labor Day this year as has become customary for us. We pass up a propaganda opportunity by not being able to bring our campaign to the August 27 rally in Washington where hundreds of thousands from most parts of the country will be hearing and talking politics. Our program, if properly presented, would surely attract attention.

The PC is instructed to prepare an initial report at the earliest possible time for full discussion by the entire party of our 1984 electoral opportunities.

SWP presidential candidates ought to be announced soon in order to participate in the early rounds of 1984 electioneering. The main political line of our campaign will be, as in the past, the need for a definitive break with ruling class parties -- for independent working class political action, a labor party based on the unions; for independent Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican political action. In this campaign our candidates have greater opportunities to explain our politics than at any time since the end of the 1940s.

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Pierre Frank, a veteran leader of the Fourth International and the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the FI, died in Paris April 18. A summary of his work and a tribute to Comrade Frank by one of his longest and closest collaborators, Ernest Mandel, appears in issue No. 52, 7 May 1984, of International Viewpoint. A memorial meeting was held in Paris on Friday, April 27, where representatives of sections and sympathizing groups of the FI as well as friends and former associates paid tribute to their political collaborator and personal friend. The Socialist Workers Party (USA) was represented at the meeting by its co-chairperson Barry Sheppard who read a solidarity message from the National Committee of the party, meeting in New York City on April 24. (The text of this message from the NC plenum is published in Intercontinental Press, May 14, 1984.) The following message was sent by the F.I.T.:

"The Fourth Internationalist Tendency in the U.S. and the editorial board of its Bulletin In Defense Of Marxism share with you the loss of one of the early organizers and leaders of the Fourth International, Comrade Pierre Frank. As one of Trotsky's secretaries and as a member of the United Secretariat of the FI he learned in theory and practice the necessity for proletarian internationalism. He sought always to impart this fundamental concept to those seeking solutions to the evils of capitalism.

"'For true revolutionary Marxists, proletarian internationalism is not a sentimental notion that falls apart at the first sound of rifles, cannon, and bombs,' he told us. 'It is a fundamental concept, too often flouted, . . . which has deep objective roots; a concept that must be restored in order to extricate the workers' movement from the bog in which the social-democrats and Stalinists have mired it.' Such was the conviction and vision of Comrade Frank. We can all benefit from it in this hour when the Fourth International faces its most difficult challenge."

SWP LEADERSHIP WITHHOLDS INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN FROM MEMBERS

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International has published an International Internal Information Bulletin on "The Organizational Situation in the Socialist Workers Party (USA)." The English-language edition is dated February 1984, and its table of contents is reproduced here. But so far the leadership of the SWP has refused to make this international bulletin available to the members of the SWP, although it is available to members of all other groups sympathetic to or belonging to the FI. (see next page for table of contents)

The background of this bulletin is as follows: Last August the SWP National Committee purged four of its members because of their political differences with the majority faction headed by Jack Barnes. They appealed their ouster to the United Secretariat, which voted in October 1983, by an overwhelming majority, that the purge of the four was unjustified and that it would continue to treat them like members of the FI. It also voted to issue an information bulletin and invited the SWP leadership to submit a report on the case for this bulletin. The SWP leadership failed to submit such a report, but the bulletin reprints two S.W.P. leadership documents about the purge which originally appeared in SWP bulletins (items 3 and 10). S.W.P. members have not seen most of the other 11 items.

Members of the SWP have the right to see this international bulletin. They ought to let branch executive committees know that they want to see it. Copies can be ordered from the SWP National Office, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014, or from International Viewpoint, 2, rue Richard-Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

**THE ORGANIZATIONAL SITUATION
IN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (USA)**

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A RULING CLASS LOOK AT THE ECONOMY

The Twenty Year Century: Essays on Economics and Public Finance, by Felix G. Rohatyn, Random House, New York, 1984, 175 pages, \$12.95

The present upturn should not lead anyone to believe that the American economy is now on a sound footing and beginning to enter a period of upward expansion and development. Budget deficits, the strength of the dollar, the time bomb of Third World debt and the running down of basic industrial plants and infrastructures all create a fragile framework for the upturn. How to remedy this situation has been a topic of some discussion in financial circles recently. Felix Rohatyn has made an important intervention into this discussion, centering on the ideas of industrial policy and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

Rohatyn is not an ordinary business page pundit. He is the architect of the 1975 "Big Mac" Municipal Assistance Corporation rescue of the financial situation in New York City. Since that time, as senior partner of Lazard Freres, he has produced a series of insightful commentaries on the American economy, stressing the "long view" and the social instability inherent in the present situation.

These commentaries, mostly published in the New York Review of Books, have now been gathered together in The Twenty Year Century. What are Rohatyn's main ideas? He sees the period of American unrivaled world dominance as ended. The "American Century" only lasted from 1945 to 1965. Now, the American economy is fraught with dangers on every side. Rohatyn discusses the huge budget deficits, the national debt, the lack of a planned and coordinated industrial policy, the precarious state of the international banking system, the strong contracts which unions have won in the past, the increasing regional disparity and the erosion of the Midwest and Northeast industrial belt as some of the central causes of economic instability.

Rohatyn sees increased government intervention as being a necessary lubrication and assistance to the "free market." While he is not an advocate of government economic control or nationalization, he thinks that the government should promote increased government-labor-management cooperation in forming organizations to coordinate and plan different economic projects.

His inspirations are clear and explicit: Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, Jean Monnet and the formation of the European Common Market. Rohatyn's main proposal is the creation of a Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). The RFC would "cope with the fundamental restructuring of older industries and the renewal of the physical plant of older cities, and make use of the work potential of the inner-city unemployed" (p. 149). He says that "The RFC that I envisage would be able to provide (or withhold) capital in exchange for

concessions (from management, labor, banks, suppliers, local governments) leading to healthy industries, economical public works, and greater job security" (p. 15). The book is written from the standpoint of "militant liberalism," attempting to turn American liberalism into a hard-nosed and aggressive economic interventionist movement and away from flabby hand-wringing.

What is of particular interest for Marxists in this book? It has been very fashionable on the left recently to place great stress on deindustrialization, the flight of capital to the Sun Belt, growth of the service sector, etc. Now there is clearly some truth to all this. From 1950 to 1960, 22.1% of change in business capital stock was attributable to basic industrial capital. This figure had shrunk to 10.3% by 1970 to 1980. Conversely, the proportion of business capital stock change due to high technology items had grown from 16.3% to 34.5% in the same period (Figures are from the chart "Changing Sources of Capital Stock Growth" in The Changing Face of Labor by Jerry Harris, Wicker Park Press, Chicago, 1983, p. 2). These figures, and many other indices, show that there have clearly been some important changes in the economic structure of this country recently.

However, the big danger is to blow this out of all proportion. There are definite limitations and social and political constraints on the extent to which the ruling class will permit the basic industrial strength of American capitalism to decline. Rohatyn represents an important aspect of ruling class thinking when he says that "We cannot become a nation of short-order cooks and saleswomen, xerox operators and messenger boys. These jobs are a weak basis for the economy . . ." (p. 127). Rohatyn argues that "We need a viable steel industry for our security, not only in the narrow sense that steel is indispensable for weapons but in the larger sense that the United States would be fundamentally weakened if it depended on foreign countries for so crucial a resource" (p. 129). Rohatyn also warns of the social costs of letting a city such as Cleveland or Detroit slip into the quagmire. These arguments show the boundaries that the ruling class will impose on the process of deindustrialization. Today, it may be hard to make out the parameters of these structural changes due to the fervor of Reaganomics. In the long run, however, America will continue to base itself on basic industrial activity.

The second point that will interest Marxists is Rohatyn's constant warnings of a social explosion on the horizon. Rohatyn sees urban life deteriorating to such an extent that people will just no longer take it. While he is mainly speaking of inner-city rioting, he also speaks of "harmony" being broken by strikes and "ugly demonstrations" against cutbacks.

Finally, Rohatyn's most interesting essay, "The Coming Emergency and What Can Be Done About It," makes it clear that austerity is a course that all the important sections of the capitalist class have decided upon and not just a policy of the particularly vicious Reagan administration, vicious though that administration certainly is. It follows from this that the way to fight austerity is not by fighting to "Dump Reagan" but by fighting to mobilize the working class in defense of every struggle that takes place today and on the road to class independence.

The workers movement is badly in need of thinkers as far-sighted and devoted to their class as Felix Rohatyn is to his.

--Adam Shils

HOW THE SWP BEGAN

The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party: Minutes and Resolutions 1938-39.
Ed. George Breitman. Monad Press, Distributed by Pathfinder Press, 410 West St.,
New York, N.Y. 10014. 1982, 395 pp., \$8.95 paperback.

If the above title makes you think that here is a dryasdust book, of use to the specialist but not for those who read for pleasure you are drastically mistaken. For anyone on the left, and particularly for past and present members of the SWP, this is an absolutely fascinating book.

First of all it is not simply a record of the proceedings of the SWP founding convention in 1938, as a hasty glance at the title might lead one to think. As the dates in the subtitle are meant to indicate, it contains much more -- specifically the proceedings of the party's second convention in July 1939 and the minutes of two plenums or full meetings of the National Committee in between.

The SWP was founded on the eve of World War II; the Spanish Civil War was in its final stages and the Japanese conquest of China was at its height. Consequently the imperialist war and the position of revolutionary socialists towards it were the top priority subjects at both conventions. The resolutions passed on the Soviet Union, Spain, China and Latin America make engrossing and enlightening reading today. Since the effects of the Great Depression had not yet been completely dispelled by armaments production, reports on unemployment and the organization of the jobless as well as on the labor movement, then sparked by the young and combative CIO, also commanded the attention of the delegates.

Indeed, considerable history is crystallized in the convention resolutions. For example, that on the right of Black self-determination, written by C.L.R. James (then going under the pen name J.P. Johnson because of problems with the Immigration Department) was the first resolution on the Black struggle in the U.S. adopted by the Trotskyist movement and did invaluable service later in preparing the party for the emergence of Black nationalism and Malcolm X.

It is also of interest to note that E.F. McKinney, whose recent death has received considerable attention in the Black and trade union press, and in such bourgeois papers as the N.Y. Times, was the author of a resolution on organizing the unemployed and played a prominent role at both conventions in the chair and on the floor.

It is only now that the scandalous cowardice of the top Jewish leaders and organizations respecting the imperiled Jews of Germany is becoming known and written about. Fearful lest admission of Jewish refugees into the U.S. would increase anti-Semitism here and jeopardize their relations with the reluctant Roosevelt administration, the official Jewish spokesmen exerted little effort to loosen the immigration restrictions and save those who would perish in the next few years in the Nazi death camps. To the everlasting credit of the SWP it recognized the danger and did all it could to save the victims. In the volume under review will be found the "Theses on the Jewish Question" adopted in 1938 and a call for action issued in November of that year following the "Kristallnacht" pogrom in Germany. It is titled "Let the Refugees into the United States! Open the Doors to the Victims of Hitler's Nazi Terror!"

I could continue to list items that arouse interest today or could point to procedures in the handling of infringements of members' rights that make one proud of what used to be the SWP's democratic regime, but one must stop somewhere. However, it should be pointed out that the book is not composed entirely of documents. It also contains a confidential letter of James P. Cannon, the new party's national secretary, to Trotskyist leaders abroad assessing the founding convention and the membership's temper as well as the organization's prospects. This follows directly after Cannon's public report on the same.

Opening and enlivening the book is an interview with its editor, George Breitman, which serves as an introduction. In response to questions, he sketches in the essential details of the movement's background from the initial expulsions of Cannon and the other Trotskyists from the Communist Party in 1928. The Trotskyist Communist League of America and A.J. Muste's American Workers Party merged in 1934 to form the Workers Party of the United States. It was this that Breitman joined in 1935, and his subsequent description of the WP members' entry into the Socialist Party, the expulsion of that party's left wing in 1937, and the founding of the SWP is not only relating historical fact but is personal reminiscence. He was a delegate to the SWP conventions in 1938 and 1939 and was a member of the party's National Committee for over 40 years.

Although this book was published two years ago, it has not yet been reviewed in any of the SWP periodicals! -- reviewed by George Lavan Weissman

LETTERS

SWP Candidate Speaks at SEIU Local 535

Editor:

Naomi Bracey, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, District 2, addressed the monthly membership meeting of the L.A. Social Services Chapter of Social Services Union, SEIU, Wednesday, May 2, 1984.

Bracey had been invited to address Local 535's membership meeting by a unanimous vote following a dispute over a proposal to support a Democratic Party candidate in another race. I had spoken against the proposal to support the Democrat, and in favor of an independent labor party or labor candidacies. I pointed to the Bracey campaign as a positive example. Though the meeting voted overwhelmingly to endorse the Democrat, it also voted, in the interests of fair play, to invite Bracey to speak.

Bracey's presentation was very well-organized and thoughtfully put together. It began by pointing to the Las Vegas strike and the kind of solidarity being shown within the labor movement for that. Cesar Chavez reportedly told the strikers that they "ought to elect one of their own" in light of the brutal cop attacks against the strikers.

She commented favorably on a report issued by another SEIU local and expressed support for collective bargaining rights for county and public workers, talked about the feminization of poverty, and added that, despite what the government says, hunger and malnutrition are realities in our society at this time.

Capitalism is in crisis, she explained, but did not go into an elaborate or rhetorical explanation. She concluded by calling for the scrapping of the war budget and against the sending of U.S. troops to places like Lebanon, Grenada, and Nicaragua. A new movement of workers is needed, she said, toward the formation of a labor party and such a party could introduce a workers and farmers government.

As she left, I told her what a good job she had done. She had given a well-prepared and cogent talk, not one composed mostly of slogans.--Walter Lippmann, Los Angeles, May 8, 1984.

Jesse Jackson and Racism

Dear Bulletin IDOM Editor -

Since your publication is calling for support to the Socialist Workers Party campaign for President, don't you think that you should comment on their newspaper, The Militant, having dropped all criticism of Jesse Jackson in the last many issues and having leaped to Jackson's defense against the obviously correct charges of anti-Semitism against him?

The SWP has recently released a statement in the name of Mel Mason, their Presidential candidate, again denying Jackson's blatant anti-Semitism and equating criticism of Jackson on this score with an attack on the entire Black community. -- A.M., New York, May 1, 1984.

Reply - The accusations against Jackson reveal more about the racism of his accusers than about Jackson. White racists, most of them also anti-Semitic, seek to justify their hatred of Blacks by circulating evidence that the targets and victims of racism also harbor prejudices against those perceived as their tormentors.

Advice and Support

Dear Editor, Frank Lovell -

I am and have been for many years an active supporter, politically and financially, of the SWP which I am glad to see your Bulletin considers to be the only revolutionary party in this country. Although I am allowed to see SWP internal bulletins I don't feel qualified to pass judgment on your political differences with the SWP (permanent revolution, Poland, Cuba, Iran, etc.).

But I am very concerned and unhappy about recent organizational developments: a) The expulsion of many good and loyal members, whose real offense is not disloyalty or splitting but having differences. b) The unprecedented policy of excluding ex-members like you from public events of the party, which can only make the party look like a cult or sect and drive it into deeper isolation. c) The growth of an intolerant spirit inside the party, manifested not only toward members who may have differences or questions about party policy but also toward supporters and sympathizers who do not express 100 percent agreement with every last thing that is said or done.

When I first heard about the exclusion policy, I intended to let the branch leaders here know how harmful I think it is. But before I could do that, I was given to understand that "you're either with us or against us," and that any criticism or questions about the exclusion policy would put me into a "hostile to the SWP" category.

So I did not speak up, which I feel guilty about. But I want you to know that I feel the SWP leadership is making costly and avoidable mistakes, and I hope you will try in a responsible way to reverse them. And I am not the only one who feels this way. -- Name and city withheld. April 27, 1984

In Memory of Edward Pollak

Enclosed find contribution to the Bulletin IDOM in memory of my good friend Ed Pollak, who died March 6 in Miami, Florida. I only got to know Ed in the last years of his life. He was in the Manhattan branch of the SWP with me and attended as regularly as his health would permit. He also helped in indexing the Militant and I would see him at West Street, our national office, where he came regularly when he was well enough. I know that he attended Miami branch meetings during the winter when he went there because of his heart condition. He considered himself a Trotskyist all his adult life. I know he was distressed at the expulsions in the party and also by the lack of an opportunity for the minorities to get a hearing. I am certain he would not mind my marking his death with this contribution. -- Dorothea Breitman, May 1, 1984

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