

Information, Education, Discussion **Bulletin**

In Defense of Marxism

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

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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), p. 247; for another translation see Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 32 pp. 43-44].

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

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

An assessment of the SWP preconvention discussion is submitted in the first item in this Bulletin No. 9, an article signed by the editor. It calls attention to the transition at this juncture to the pre-World Congress discussion, as guided by the SWP leadership.

The authorized and organized branch discussion is at a temporary standstill. This does not mean, however, that discussion has halted among party members about what will happen at the convention, what is causing the party crisis, and what will become of the party. Such questions are typical of the present mood inside the party, engendered mainly by the insecurity and uncertainty of the narrow circle of central leaders. Some of this will probably be expressed in at least one more issue of the SWP preconvention Discussion Bulletin-- along with other contributions of a more thoughtful character--in the remaining month before the opening of the 32nd National Convention of the SWP at Oberlin on August 4.

As the SWP convention date nears, the discussion in the party carries over into the pre-World Congress discussion which will continue for the rest of this year and extends to all sections of the world movement. The contributions to the SWP preconvention discussion here in Bulletin No. 9 will be useful in later debates. These contributions take up the bureaucratic traits of the SWP leadership as displayed in the officious letter from Barnes to Eileen G. at the start of the party discussion (Breitman), the historic consequences of blind factionalism as typified today by the SWP's policy of exclusion and slander (Williams), and the most common questions arising from the lurching course of the party over the past five years (submitted anonymously by SWP members in several branches). The first two contributions supply relevant facts and provide insights on the political myopia of the Barnes faction. The other one shows the caliber and level of political education of SWP members. These rather sophisticated questions published here are not asked by many members, but they are meaningful to many and most SWP members would like to know the answers.

Among the separate and conflicting political tendencies that have emerged from the SWP since 1979, two have a remarkable programmatic and methodological affinity. They are the Barnes faction which has seized control of the SWP apparatus and the Camejo tendency which seeks to constitute its loosely structured North Star Network outside the SWP. Steve Bloom explains what Barnes and Camejo have in common, what separates them, and why both are hostile to the Fourth International and to revolutionary Marxism.

We are pleased to continue publishing "From the Arsenal of Marxism," with another Cannon letter. This one is better appreciated today than when it was written 17 years ago. The circumstances under which this was written and its prophetic significance are explained in the introduction by George Breitman.

This number of the Bulletin also continues our publication of Suppressed Documents with some from the December 1982 plenum of the SWP National Committee which reveal the programmatic character of the struggle of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (at that time the Fourth Internationalist Caucus in the NC) against the revisionism of the then secret faction of Barnesites.

We urge readers to turn to the book review, another by Adam Shils. He writes this time about a good book with a misleading introduction (and returns to the question of what was wrong in Grenada).

WHERE THE SWP PRECONVENTION DISCUSSION STANDS

by Frank Lovell

Preparations for the twice-postponed 1984 SWP National Convention, the first in three years, are proceeding according to directives issued by the party administration when the official convention call was sent out at the end of May this year.

Branch discussion did not begin until early June, and even then was further delayed in many branches because the local executive committees were unable to prepare the subject matter of the "first part" of the discussion which was on the "workers and farmers government." These dilatory practices further reduced pre-convention discussion from the constitutionally required 90 days to hardly more than half that, and less than 45 days in some branches. This convention discussion required by the SWP constitution has always been strictly adhered to, and occasionally has been extended. It was never before curtailed or restricted.

In this discussion members were instructed to read the published version of a report to the February-March 1982 plenum of the SWP National Committee, titled "For a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States." In most instances the branch organizer or a designated executive committee member gave a "presentation," explaining that this is probably the most important question to be decided at the convention. Its importance was previously explained to branch executive committees in a letter from the Political Committee (signed by Larry Seigle), informing them of a constitutional change to read: "The purpose of the party shall be to educate and organize the working class for the establishment of a workers and farmers government leading to the abolition of capitalism and the achievement of socialism." The constitution presently says the party is for "a workers government to achieve socialism." The important programmatic difference, according to Seigle, is the recognition that a workers and farmers government will be established before capitalism is abolished, and that such a government is a necessary stage in the overturn of the capitalist system. Within this context most party members who participated in the branch discussions spoke about the importance of family farmers in the U.S. economy, hard times on the farm, the need for a worker-farmer alliance, and similar aspects of the farm problem.

After one or two "discussions" of this kind during the month of June a general feeling developed that the designated subject for the first part of pre-convention discussion had either been mastered or exhausted, and in some branches the "ample time" allotted for this part of the agenda was used otherwise.

A new Discussion Bulletin (Vol. 38, No. 2, June 1984) was delivered to the branches near the end of the month. This one, like the May issue, is reserved for the written opinions of rank and file members, while party functionaries now publish their "line documents" in the party's public press. This discourages rank and file contributions, but complies with the constitutional provision for a pre-convention discussion bulletin.

The first Discussion Bulletin contained two contributions and consisted of 8 pages total. The second has four contributions and 11 printed pages. Despite all efforts of the party leadership to downgrade and minimize this written discussion, these six contributions from rank and file members are a revealing breakthrough. Unfortunately they finally come to the membership as the time before election of convention delegates dwindles to hardly more than a month. More rank and file members who may want to respond or otherwise participate have only until the July 19 deadline to submit contributions.

The Discussion Bulletin material, sparse as it is, tells more about the caliber of the SWP membership than anything else published by the party since the 1981 convention. Both contributions in the first bulletin were critical of the present leadership, and one of them attempted to reverse the bureaucratic abandonment of the party's Marxist program and tradition.

The four contributions in the second bulletin introduce problems that must be on the minds of many if not most members: How can those critical of the leadership organize their own principled political tendency against the bureaucratic obstacles erected by the leadership? What are the political goals and military limitations of U.S. imperialism in Central America? Is it inevitable, as the SWP leadership contends, that U.S. troops will invade Nicaragua or El Salvador and other Central American countries? What can SWP members who happen to be involved in a union organizing drive expect from the party leadership? How will party branches be built in localities where major unions or main industries that have been targeted nationally for the creation of union fractions do not exist?

The most significant of these contributions for the future of the SWP is the "Draft Platform of the Permanent Revolutionary Tendency," by Eileen G., Philadelphia branch, an attempt to comply with strictures imposed by SWP National Secretary Barnes in response to her criticism in the first bulletin. The question of party program which she raises is the most fundamental of questions, but others are no less urgent to many comrades who are trying their best to carry out party policy. Comrade Mike C., for example, who writes about a union organizing drive in San Antonio says, "With the dissolution of the San Antonio branch, our fraction members are off to other cities and we won't know how this attempt to win a contract will turn out." Likewise the comrade who raised questions about the party's "big nine" targeted unions wants to know, "when is it politically justified to dissolve a fraction in an important workplace that is non-big nine, and send it into a secondary big nine shop?" These questions reveal more about the schematic mentality and methods of the party leadership than this leadership is prepared to talk about or think about.

As June came to an end and with less than a month before the election of convention delegates, the party leadership had still not submitted a political resolution for discussion, amendments, and voting. If no resolution is drafted by the leadership for this convention it will be another "first" in the recent record of party vandalism set by the Barnes faction. Some members speculate that the purpose of the convention agenda points, "Political Resolution" and "Political Reports," must be to allow for a list of reporters to explain to the delegates why they are doing things differently at this convention and why, after careful consideration, mature judgment dictates that no new resolution is needed since the party position is firmly established on all questions.

The "first part" of pre-convention discussion, having been carried through in June as outlined in the previously cited Seigle letter, is now being expanded into a second part which was not initially detailed. In this part the agenda prepared by the Barnes faction for the coming World Congress of the Fourth International is introduced, with the apparent intention of letting this become part of the SWP pre-convention discussion and continuing as the pre-World Congress discussion.

The World Congress agenda is a disputed subject in the FI and relates to the SWP debate over fundamental questions of party program. The SWP leadership seeks to evade this debate in the International by introducing its own factionally motivated agenda. The programmatic questions that must be debated include the theory of permanent revolution, the Leninist strategy of party building, the political

revolution in Poland and other degenerated workers states, including the Soviet Union, the working class struggle for power in highly industrialized nations, the advance of the colonial revolution, and the future of the Fourth International.

Despite all efforts of the SWP leadership to subvert the organized discussion of these disputed questions within the ranks of the party, they nonetheless began to break through in the very first two discussion bulletins. The second phase of preconvention discussion appears designed to remove the discussion further from the party ranks, presenting the factional positions of the leadership in the public press of the party as if these were already adopted SWP positions. This negates the usually accepted purpose for a convention and further discourages opposition currents inside the party.

An article in the June 29 Militant signed by Steve Clark outlines "political strategy" for the working class today. Here the SWP leadership presents what it has decided should be the focus of the pre-World Congress discussion in all sections of the International. The debate in the FI, they say, is over Central America, workers and farmers government, and the turn to industry. These were questions discussed and debated at the 1979 World Congress and remain unresolved. The same issue of the Militant carries a reprint, in conjunction with the Clark article, of the lengthy introduction by Mary-Alice Waters which first appeared in the January 1980 special supplement to Intercontinental Press, a compilation of major resolutions and reports from the 1979 World Congress. This 239-page IP special supplement is now offered to readers of the Militant at the reduced price of \$2. This is in connection with a new issue of New International (No. 3 of "A Magazine of Marxist Politics and Theory" launched one year ago by the SWP leadership) which appeared in late June with the main article, "The Workers' and Farmers' Government: A Popular Revolutionary Dictatorship," by Mary-Alice Waters. Taken together this adds up to a mountain of polemical material on the history and problems of the Fourth International, contributing little to the clarification of the disputed questions.

The questions listed by factionalists Clark and Waters as central to the debates in 1979 were disputed at that time, but they were not the only ones. We now know that underlying much of the 1979 debate were unstated positions of the present SWP leadership.

Since the SWP's 1981 convention the Barnes faction has publicly vented its anti-Marxist philosophy, diverted disputed programmatic questions into organizational channels, bureaucratically expelled the opposition in the National Committee and then proceeded to purge the party membership of all known or suspected oppositionists. It now proceeds to the party convention as if the new course imposed on the party in this way was already ratified and all that remains is to impose this same procedure, method, and political program on the various sections of the International.

This is where the SWP preconvention discussion stands in the final weeks before the election of delegates. The obstacles to an informed and orderly resolution of the party crisis are a formidable challenge to the opposition and the first real test of this membership. How the challenge and the test are met will be gauged first at the SWP convention in August and again in the discussion leading to the World Congress.

A FAR CRY FROM THE BOLSHEVIKS

by George Breitman

When the SWP preconvention discussion opened in May, after a year's delay, it provided the first opportunity for rank and file members to comment on the new political line of the central leadership team headed by Jack Barnes, and the actions of that team in expelling all known or suspected oppositionists from the party. One member, Eileen G. of Philadelphia, submitted an article which appears in the first issue of the SWP Discussion Bulletin. It is entitled "For 'A Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing,'" and true to its title it raises strong political objections to the programmatic revisions of the central leadership team and the organizational reprisals which it has taken against its opponents in the party.

At the end of her article, Comrade G. makes the following three proposals: 1) to readmit the expelled comrades to "make sure that we have the fullest possible theoretical debate," 2) to open a written discussion on democratic norms in the SWP and revolutionary parties in general, 3) to form a tendency to fight for the positions put forward in her document.

Upon receiving this article for publication, the central leadership team sprang into action. At a meeting of the Political Committee Jack Barnes was assigned to draft a reply, which was sent to Comrade G. as a letter, dated May 21, 1984. The letter was then made available to the entire party as part of an "Information Bulletin" (No. 2, May 1984). This bulletin appeared in the branches simultaneously with the document containing Comrade G.'s original article.

Such an expeditious reply would ordinarily be commendable. It is only correct and proper, after all, for a serious revolutionary leadership to respond to questions and objections about their political course raised by rank and file members of the party. There is one problem, however. The PC's response to Comrade G. did not discuss any of the political questions she raised. Instead, the Barnes letter is an attack on her for proposing the formation of a tendency during the preconvention period--supposedly in an incorrect manner.

In order to accomplish this, Barnes presents and defends a narrow, schematic and factional notion of what a tendency is in a revolutionary party, excluding any other possible uses of the term than the one he presents. His polemic against Comrade G. on this question has broad implications for the future functioning of the SWP, since it represents a further step on the path of transforming the party into a monolithic organization, where any serious challenge to the present leadership and its policies will be impossible. Let's look at what he has to say:

"A tendency in the preconvention discussion period is a current of thought shared by comrades who agree, or tend to agree, on a specific document or platform in the Discussion Bulletin on line questions to be decided by the convention, as against other and conflicting documents or platforms before the party."

Barnes goes on to explain that similar tendencies defending specific points of view exist at all times during the life of a revolutionary party, and do not arise only during preconvention discussion. "The only thing that changes during a preconvention discussion period is that such trends of thought from time to time become evident around counterposed political lines that are regis-

tered in resolutions before the party as a whole in the Discussion Bulletin. . . ."

Barnes then draws the following conclusions about the organization of tendencies: "A tendency in the party preconvention discussion has no structure. There is nothing adherents of a tendency need do aside from arguing their individual point of view in the branch preconvention sessions and in the Discussion Bulletin. No organization is needed for that."

A faction, according to Barnes, is different from a tendency in that it does have a structure. "A faction's structure is derived from its purpose. A faction is justified only if its initiators believe that the party's current elected leadership has demonstrated that it is incapable of learning from the test of experience in the class struggle and correcting mistakes, or that the leadership functions in such a way as to make impossible, in the party's elected leadership committees, a democratic discussion and resolution of disputed points by majority vote. . . . A faction seeks to convince the membership that a new leadership is required."

The conclusion Barnes draws from this exposition is that only in the event of the formation of a faction, dedicated to a change of leadership for the party, can rank and file members of the party collaborate with each other in thinking through and preparing political positions to present to the party. Members of a common tendency may not do so. This is the key idea which the Political Committee is attempting to impose through its letter to Eileen G:

"Any platform [of a tendency] is 'worked out' before the party as a whole, in the Discussion Bulletin. Supporters of an ideological tendency in the preconvention discussion communicate with each other in the same fashion and through the same mechanism as they communicate to every other member: by submitting articles to the Discussion Bulletin and taking the floor in the branch discussion. . . .

"This is worth stressing, so that no one gets the mistaken idea that you are inviting comrades from around the country who read and are inclined to agree with your contribution to get in touch with you, to begin meeting among themselves, or to start circulating drafts of an as-yet-undecided platform outside the Discussion Bulletin now open for all party members to present their views and proposals."

The conclusion in these last paragraphs is a further attempt to restrict the elementary right of members of the revolutionary party to discuss politics with one another, and to think collectively in working out a correct political line. This is a right which has always been taken for granted in our movement, but is now under a severe attack from the central leadership team. The attempts by that team to restrict individual members from collaborating and discussing political ideas are completely at odds with the past practice in the SWP, with Bolshevik tradition, and with the basic Leninist conception of an independent and self-reliant membership as the essential backbone of the revolutionary party.

Some of what Barnes says about the functioning of tendencies in this letter is correct if we limit ourselves to a simple ideological tendency. This does not require any structure. Even here, however, there is no reason why those with similar ideas cannot collaborate in order to present them to the party in as clear and precise a fashion as possible. Such collaboration, far from being in contradiction to Leninist functioning, is in the best interests of the party as a

whole--since it increases the political clarity of the overall debate. Anyone who has been in the party for previous discussions is aware of articles in the bulletin by more than one comrade (even occasionally from different cities) who have obviously engaged in just such a process of consultation among themselves before sharing their ideas with the party as a whole. For some reason the SWP has functioned and prospered for many years in violation of this basic norm now discovered by the central leadership team.

The most serious problem with Barnes's exposition, however, is its rigid definition of the term "tendency" to refer only to such an unstructured ideological tendency, and his sharp distinction between this and an organized faction with a goal of replacing the leadership. In fact, internal groupings in a revolutionary party can be many and varied in form. Why can't a group of comrades who do not believe a change of leadership is required to correct a false line, also think simultaneously that an organized fight is required? In such situations it is perfectly proper to form a structured ideological tendency, which could meet to consider the best way to present its viewpoint and intervene in the discussion. Many examples of such structured tendencies from recent party discussions could be cited. Yet again, for some unexplained reason, the PC has never in the past seen the need to object to the procedures followed by comrades in forming them.

The words "faction" and "tendency" have never had rigid meanings for us in the past. For Lenin, Trotsky and other revolutionary Marxists they have been pretty much interchangeable. In recent years the SWP tradition has made a distinction between formations that call for a change of leadership (faction) and those that call simply for a change of line (tendency). At times in the past these terms have distinguished between organized and unorganized groupings. But in trying to fuse these two quite different distinctions into a single definition Barnes develops a rigid schema which is hostile to our real traditions. A truly Bolshevik organizational practice, in contrast, is characterized not by rigid rules and definitions, but by the flexible and creative application of organizational procedures to specific political circumstances and needs.

The central leadership team's latest notions are also in contradiction with the practices of the Russian Bolshevik Party before its degeneration. Although many examples could be cited, this fact should be obvious from a single event which everyone who has the slightest familiarity with Bolshevik history knows about: the banning of tendencies and factions in the party as a temporary emergency measure in 1921, after the Kronstadt uprising. How could the Bolsheviks have banned tendencies if these were nothing more than unorganized groupings of members who took the same position on a given question? The Bolsheviks were well aware that thought processes could not be outlawed. Clearly what the Bolsheviks banned was any organized internal grouping in the party, and this could be either a tendency or a faction.

The consequences of following Barnes's proscriptions would be the further stifling of internal life for rank and file members of the party. The burden imposed on an individual of having to work out the details of a coherent counter-political perspective in the event of major disagreements--without even being able to consult other party members--will certainly inhibit any but the most audacious people. And apparently, this would also be necessary if somebody

wants to call for a faction, since until the faction was actually formed and its membership established, if we follow Barnes's logic, members could only communicate with one another through the discussion bulletin. Therefore, it is clear, a rank and file member wishing to initiate a faction must work out the entire initial program on his or her own. There isn't a single member of the PC or NC who would consent to work out a political line for the party under similar circumstances.

Of course, the loser in all this is the party itself, which will be denied the real benefits of a preconvention discussion--the working out of its political line through a process that really taps the collective experience and understanding of the entire membership. Such a process requires the widest discussion of all political questions by every member of the party. Such discussions will inevitably give rise to temporary internal groupings of all sorts, and these should be welcomed and encouraged by a revolutionary leadership, instead of having organizational obstacles erected against them at every turn. Such internal groupings are a sign of vitality in a healthy party.

There is also an unstated implication in Barnes's letter that a tendency in the party must have a broad alternative platform to that of the leadership. But it should be obvious that tendencies can form, and have often done so, around a single question, or an otherwise limited program. In that connection, Barnes's assertion that Eileen G.'s article did not provide adequate basis for a tendency call is clearly false, since her proposal for a democratic discussion including all of those who have been expelled is a more than adequate basis for a tendency in the party.

Those who are familiar with the present crisis of the SWP will know that there is good reason for the central leadership team's choosing the present moment to "clarify" its new norms regarding tendencies in the preconvention discussion. In addition to being one more step in the process of strangling internal democracy in the party--developing a set of rules and regulations which are designed to make it impossible for rank and file members to discuss political questions with each other or raise disagreements with the leadership --it is a continuation of the leadership's effort to avoid the political questions by citing another so-called threat to our norms.

It is a sorry performance. A rank and file member raises a series of vital political issues in a contribution to the preconvention bulletin. The leadership responds once again not with a political discussion, but with a letter on the "organization question." The central leadership team finds sufficient time to complain at length that Eileen G. calls for a tendency without presenting a positive political program; but the central leadership team (whose draft political resolution has not been printed for the members at the halfway point of the preconvention discussion) obviously has a lot of trouble finding the time to present a positive political program of its own--though they have far more resources and a greater political responsibility to do so than Eileen G. It is a sad irony indeed that all of this is done in the name of defending Bolshevik organizational norms.

THE SWP'S NEW POLICY OF EXCLUSION AND SLANDER

by David Williams

DISCUSSION ARTICLE

(The Communist Party) explained at great length that we had sold out to American imperialism; that we were counter-revolutionists in league with the enemies of labor and the imperialist powers scheming to overthrow the Soviet Union; that we had become the "advance guard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie." This was printed day after day in a campaign of political terrorization and slander against us, calculated to make it impossible for us to retain any contact with individual members of the party. It was made a crime punishable by expulsion to speak with us on the street, to visit us, to have any communication with us.... A wall of ostracism separated us from the party members. People whom we had known and worked with for years became strangers to us overnight.

--James P. Cannon
The History of American Trotskyism

The leaders of the Socialist Workers Party should know better. Surely they have enough experience with slander and red-baiting, right up to this year's exclusion of SWP members from the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP), to know how violations of workers' democracy harm the entire workers movement, not only the intended victim. Even if the current SWP leaders were not yet born when the pioneer Left Oppositionists were defending themselves and their program against Stalinist slander, they will surely remember the accusations of a YSA plot to take over the Student Mobilization Committee to end the war in Vietnam. They surely have not forgotten the campaign of pro-Democratic Party elements of the National Organization for Women to drive the Socialist Workers Party out of the feminist movement.

All of the slanders directed against the revolutionary Marxist movement - from the expulsion of the Socialist Party's left wing in 1919 to the present day - have one purpose: to prevent working people from hearing our ideas. The bureaucrats and petty-bourgeois politicians have no answers that can convince working people that we are wrong. The more their program is weighed fairly against ours the more reasonable and convincing the revolutionary Marxist program appears. They have only one recourse - to divert the debate away from ideas to accusations of "communist infiltration," "YSA takeover," "agents of the Mikado," "male-dominated," "FBI-CIA agents," and so forth.

It is tragic indeed to see the leadership of the SWP resorting themselves to the tactics of smear by first excluding members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency from public functions, headquarters and bookstores of the SWP and then justifying it later with the outlandish charge that the FIT is participating in the Healyite effort to disrupt the SWP. Look again at the quotation from Cannon which opens this article. Substitute the words "agents of the Healyite disruption campaign" for "advance guard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie." It sounds familiar, doesn't it?

The campaign of ostracism directed at the Fourth Internationalist Tendency has gone to some rather outlandish lengths in only a short time. Larry Stewart, a forty-five-year party veteran, was excluded from the SWP campaign rally in Newark. Stewart was the SWP congressional candidate in New Jersey's Tenth District in 1976; he has been an activist in the Black struggle for decades, and, prior to his retirement, a rank and file member of the Brotherhood of Teamsters. Stewart carried out some of the most effective trade-union work ever done by

the Newark branch, introducing the party to Black truck drivers and fighting for union democracy and Black rights on the job. Stewart supports Mel Mason's candidacy for president. How ironic, how tragic, that the young militants on the defense guard set up to protect Mason from racist death threats should instead be excluding a Black campaign supporter whose record as a proletarian fighter is an example for all! What must those young comrades be thinking?

How ridiculous that at a public demonstration against the war drive in Central America Sarah Lovell should not even be allowed to spend her money at the Pathfinder literature table. One would think that the best thing to do with someone who disagrees with one's political ideas would be to convince her - sell, give, force down her throat, whatever, as much literature as she can handle. One of the books Lovell wanted to buy was Maurice Bishop Speaks. It contains a long introduction by Steve Clark, one of the most articulate spokespeople for the SWP's new line. Shouldn't the SWP want Lovell to read this book, hoping it would convince her of the error of her ways? Especially when she was willing to pay good money for it? No - one must not allow the disruptive FIT currency to mix with the pure bills and coins which recognize Central America as the axis of world politics today. There is a good term for the attitude of the SWP leadership - "factional blindness." In their fear of ideas that challenge theirs they deny the Party the energy and experience of people who seriously want to build the Party and fight for socialism. They miseducate and mislead inexperienced militants on the questions of workers' democracy and proletarian norms. That is, if anything, the most serious consequence of the SWP's policy of exclusion and slander. If history tells us anything it is that the revolutionary movement is going to continue to be slandered and bureaucratically excluded from the mass movement whenever the misleaders of the working class and its allies can get away with it. The more chance we have of convincing people of our ideas the hotter they are going to make it for us. The SWP will need to build cadre well schooled in the norms of proletarian democracy in order to meet these challenges head on and win the hearing that revolutionary ideas deserve. What a poor example the leaders of the Party are setting!

Factional blindness led the American CP ultimately to collaborate with the class enemy against its opponents. In 1940 they supported the Smith Act when it was used against the Socialist Workers Party. They were genuinely surprised when the ruling class used the same law against them. They were even more surprised by how few working people came to their defense. They had refused to defend others when they came under attack; the instinct - wrong though it may be - of working people was to treat the Stalinists as they had treated others.

The Socialist Workers Party is not Stalinist; it remains the revolutionary party in the United States. The logic of its new line of adaptation to the weaknesses of the Castroist current in working class politics, which leads to this self-destructive policy of exclusion and slander, threatens the SWP's existence as a revolutionary party here in the U.S. This should be carefully reviewed from its beginning. The present stage in this development should cause "a triple red light" to flash in the eyes of every SWP member, and especially in the eyes of a leadership team not yet completely blinded by its own factional frenzy. It is not too late. Reverse the course while there is still time!

SOME QUESTIONS SWP MEMBERS WOULD LIKE ANSWERED

When will party members be allowed to read the leadership's draft Political Resolution? More than half the pre-convention discussion period has passed with no sign of this resolution. Will the members have enough time to discuss it adequately before they must elect delegates?

Why has the SWP leadership failed to publish a resolution in the last three years on any of the political questions that it says are crucial for the future of the SWP and the FI?

The SWP leadership claims to be the only body that can open a pre-world congress discussion. Why hasn't it done so till now? It has been almost five years since the last world congress and many other sections and sympathizing groups of the Fourth International opened their pre-world congress discussion more than a year ago. Why was the party leadership unwilling to face such a discussion before expelling the oppositionists?

Will the PC permit the appeals to the convention from many members expelled in the recent purge to be printed in a preconvention bulletin where all members will be able to read them? Many expellees have requested that this be done. Or will those appeals only be made available to the delegates at a closed session?

In January of this year the United Secretariat adopted a Report on the Current Stage of Building the International. When will an English translation of this document be made available to the membership? Is the SWP leadership unwilling to discuss the ideas raised in it?

How does the SWP leadership account for the dramatic loss of party membership (from about 1600 in November 1977 to fewer than 900 today) and influence over the last few years? How many workers have been recruited and assimilated into the party since the turn and the colonization of industry began?

In 1982 we were told that the future of the anti-war movement in the U.S. depended on the intervention of proletarian forces reaching out their hands to us from Central America through The World Front. Why was this orientation dropped? Why has there been no assessment of this orientation?

Will the SWP leaders offer a balance sheet on our NBIPP work over the last three years?

Are exclusion and slander really the only answers that the SWP leaders have to offer in response to the political questions being raised by the FIT and others?

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THE U.S. WORKING CLASS NEEDS A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND THE PARTY NEEDS A PROGRAM

by Steve Bloom

On April 10 of this year Lew Jones, a former leader of the Socialist Workers Party, addressed a letter to the party membership. In it he raised a number of differences with the present policies of the Barnes leadership, explained that because of these differences he had become a victim of the political purge of oppositionists (he was expelled for "boycotting party activities" on April 9), and stated that he was joining the North Star Network organized by Pedro Camejo.

Jones's criticisms of the sectarian and abstentionist policies which have been imposed on the party over the last few years are largely shared by other expellees--as well as by many who remain party members. Jones, however, explicitly states his agreement with the programmatic and theoretical revisions that have also been introduced by the Barnes leadership. In this he clarifies the main difference between the North Star current and those of us who have been expelled from the SWP because we reject any repudiation of the theory of permanent revolution or Trotskyism, and continue to support the building of a Fourth Internationalist party in the United States.

Jones asserts: "Nicaragua's revolution helped the party to realize the outright inadequacy of the theory of the permanent revolution, the unfading value of Lenin's views on the democratic revolution, and the actual position to some extent of Lenin and Trotsky in the development of Marxism." By "Lenin's views on the democratic revolution," of course, Jones is referring to the 1905 call for a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry," which Jack Barnes and the leadership of the SWP have also embraced under the title of the "workers and farmers government." Neither the Barnes leadership nor Jones and Camejo seem perturbed by the fact that the "value" of Lenin's pre-1917 conception "faded"--at least in the eyes of Lenin and the Bolsheviks--after April 1917, when it was replaced by the call for a "workers' government in alliance with the poor peasantry" (see "The Workers' and Farmers' Government and the Socialist Revolution," by Steve Bloom, Bulletin IDOM #6, April 1984).

Because Jones and Camejo now reject this fundamental programmatic basis of the world Trotskyist movement--which has also represented the continuation of Lenin's heritage--they call into question the very existence of that movement as a specific political entity. Jones explains: "Any revolutionary with integrity, especially in the Americas, has to find his or her place in the existent, prevalent movement the Cubans lead." He criticizes the Barnes leadership's attitude toward a "new mass Leninist international" because, "When it became clear that the Cubans, or anyone else who had made a revolution, held no interest in this whatsoever, the SWP leadership dropped the subject." Leaving aside whether or not he is accurate on this point, Jones does not believe that North Star should let such a small problem stand in its way.

What can be the result of such an orientation? What does it mean in fact for Camejo and North Star? If the task of North American revolutionaries is to "find [our] place in the existent, prevalent movement the Cubans lead," and at the same time the Cubans reject the creation of a North American political party which would be part of that movement and part of a new international, then the only possible conclusion is that we must reject the idea of a Leninist party in this country--at least until it is sanctioned in Havana. And of course we must reject a Trotskyist program, which is a serious obstacle to becoming a part of the "movement the Cubans lead." It is hardly surprising that these two points--a rejection of party-building in the U.S. and a rejection of the program of the Fourth International--are precisely what distinguish the course being charted by Jones, Camejo, and North Star.

In the initial issue of the North Star Newsletter (October 1983), a "Draft Platform of the North Star Network" appears. It explicitly states in the introductory note, "This is titled a platform. It is not a program. . . . We need . . . a program. It will develop out of the living struggles and evolve with those struggles." If these lines mean anything at all, then North Star, in the interest of recognizing "the unfading value of Lenin's views on the democratic revolution" does so at the expense of rejecting the basic Leninist perspective of building a revolutionary party with a program that can lead and educate the masses. Every student of Lenin and of the class struggle knows that such a program will not simply arise spontaneously "out of the living struggles." Lenin fought all his life against such notions. Conscious revolutionaries must fight within the mass movement for the program of socialist revolution--which encompasses all of the lessons of past victories and defeats.

North Star's rejection of this conception in fact reflects nothing except a lack of confidence in its own ability to offer real solutions for the U.S. working class today. At its roots, this is precisely the same problem which has created the crisis in the SWP, and has caused the progressive withdrawal of the party from meaningful mass activity. The Barnes leadership, having lost confidence in our program and in its own ability to provide leadership, simply closed the party in on itself to await the development of a "new leadership which will emerge from the class struggle." The membership was told that "we could not substitute ourselves" for such a leadership, and must bide our time, in order to "link up" with it when it did come along.

Camejo and North Star criticize the SWP leadership for its retreat from serious work in the class struggle, yet they suffer from the same fundamental crisis of perspective. An outlook which simply substitutes activity for inactivity in the absence of a program--waiting for it to "develop out of the living struggles"--may offer an alternative symptom for the disease, but not a cure.

It should be obvious today that the leadership crisis of the North American working class is most acute. A solution to it requires the active intervention of conscious revolutionaries with a program--a transitional program--to combat the attacks on the trade unions, the Black community, the women's movement, and other allies of the

working class; to fight for a labor party; and, most acutely today, to organize and build a broad united front opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. Our forces are quite small in relation to the American working class as a whole, and even as compared to the organized Left. As we have learned from history, however, even a small group, when armed with a correct revolutionary program, can exert an influence far in excess of its numbers and grow to a position of leadership in a relatively short time.

Camejo, although still claiming political solidarity with the Fourth International, has, like the Barnes group, been evolving away from the perspectives of the world Trotskyist movement for some time. In 1983 he published a pamphlet entitled "Cuba and the Central American Revolution, A Criticism of the IEC Majority Document on Cuba." Here he objects to the general line of the 1981 resolution "The Cuban Revolution, the Castroist Current and the Fourth International," which was adopted by the International Executive Committee of the FI in May 1981.

The main point in Camejo's criticism is that the IEC failed to characterize the Castroist current as proletarian and revolutionary Marxist. He presents his case as if there was a dichotomy within the International between those who want to embrace the successful revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean and approach the Castroist current as fellow revolutionaries from whom we have a great deal to learn--Camejo's (and Barnes's) description of their own perspective--and those who would be aloof, circumspect, hostile, and consider the Castroists as somehow inferior to ourselves--Camejo's (and Barnes's) descriptions of the IEC majority. (Readers who are interested may order a copy of the IEC resolution for 75 cents from the Fourth Internationalist Tendency--see advertisement on page 12. Also available is the article "Why We Oppose the SWP's New Line on Castroism," which supports the IEC resolution and responds to many of the arguments raised by both Camejo and Barnes.)

In fact, however, it should now be clear from the continued evolution of both Camejo and Barnes that what is really at issue is not a question of embracing the Central American revolution, establishing comradely relations with the Castroist current and working with it in every way possible. This is a goal shared by the entire Fourth International. (To cite only one example, which Camejo himself points out, the Mexican PRT has as good relations with the Cubans as any other political organization in Latin America.)

Our dispute is over a far more fundamental question: whether or not the development of the Central American revolution requires us to alter (or more correctly to abandon) the political program upon which our world movement has been built for more than fifty years and to liquidate our organization into the "movement the Cubans lead." Barnes and Camejo say yes; the majority of the Fourth International says no.

According to Camejo the theory of permanent revolution has created an inherently sectarian tendency in Trotskyism. This, he declares, is responsible for the development of currents like the Healyites, the Posadistas and the Morenoists. But such an analysis is

extremely superficial and is equivalent to the process by which Leninism is declared to lead to Stalinism, or Marxism to totalitarianism. Revolutionary Marxist ideology has frequently been abused--in both sectarian and opportunist ways--by those who do not really understand it, or who would use it to serve other ends than those of the proletarian revolution. Far from being refuted by the developments in Central America, permanent revolution has been dramatically confirmed by them, as Paul LeBlanc clearly documents in his new book, Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua. (This is also available from the F.I.T.; see information on page 12).

It is true that errors of judgment were made by the FI and its sections concerning the course of the FSLN during the insurrection that toppled Somoza; but errors of this kind can be overcome as long as our world movement remains healthy. The majority of the Fourth International has learned some essential lessons in this particular case. (And I think that even Camejo would acknowledge that the present majority of the FI cannot be held responsible for the political misorientation of Moreno or other sectarians.)

The entire history of the international workers' movement has been a fight to defend the revolutionary proletarian program. To reject that program now, in the name of fighting the sectarian abuse of it, or sectarian errors, would leave us completely disarmed. Pedro Camejo, Lew Jones, and others, who are organizing the North Star Network because they are so concerned with the history of sectarianism which calls itself "Trotskyism," should also concern themselves a little with another side of our historical experience--the fate of those who have tried to build revolutionary organizations without programmatic clarity on fundamental questions.

TIMELY QUOTATION

"It is to be expected that those who deprived us of all rights to defend our views in the normal party way will now raise a great hue and cry because we take other means of bringing our position to the party membership. They pervert the great Leninist principle of discipline based on a correct revolutionary policy, into an instrument for shutting the mouth of the loyal party member and protecting their own opportunist policies and disloyal acts from any real criticism and exposure. Such bureaucratic machinations have nothing in common with Leninist organization principles. We would be unworthy of the name of revolutionists if we allowed our views to be suppressed by such sophisticated methods."

James P. Cannon, "Concerning Our Expulsion," November 1928, The Left Opposition in the U.S., p. 44.

JAMES P. CANNON ON THE SWP'S GREAT TRADITION

Introduction

by George Breitman

The following letter to the SWP Political Committee in June 1967 was written by James P. Cannon, a founder of the SWP and the Fourth International. It was one of Cannon's last political letters in the final period of his life, when he was living in Los Angeles and no longer responsible for the daily direction of the party. It is reprinted from SWP Discussion Bulletin, vol. 26, no. 4, August 1967, and it deserves to be reprinted because of light it throws on some aspects of the SWP's current crisis.

The background of Cannon's letter was this: For eight years Arne Swabeck, a party founder and NC member, had been trying to convert the SWP from Trotskyism to Maoism. Despite repeated efforts before and during several national conventions, his small group made little headway among the members. Swabeck had lost all hope in the SWP by 1967, when both an SWP convention and an FI world congress were scheduled. Instead of trying once more to convince the members of his own party, Swabeck publicly attacked the SWP's policies in a letter to an opponent political group in England (the Healyites). For this deliberate violation of discipline, the PC moved that the NC suspend Swabeck from membership pending the coming convention.

Cannon had no sympathy whatever for Swabeck's politics or organizational practices, but he felt it would be "awkward" to begin the preconvention and pre-world congress discussions by suspending the one articulate critic of the party's positions and actions. He therefore urged that Swabeck's provocation be handled by publishing Swabeck's letters together with a comprehensive political answer to them. This "subordination of disciplinary measures to the bigger aims of political education"--which he called a continuation of the party's "great tradition"--had always served the SWP well in the past, he argued, and in the Swabeck case would "better serve the education of the new generations of the party and the consolidation of party opinion" than would the proposed suspension.

Most of the members of the NC disagreed with Cannon. They felt Swabeck's violation of discipline was too flagrant to be ignored, and they felt that he already had been answered politically over and over again, so that disciplinary action in this case would not represent any rupture from the SWP's great tradition. The NC suspended Swabeck, who continued to attack the SWP publicly. The differences in this case between the NC majority and Cannon were tactical, and it is possible to see the logic and merits in both their positions. But perhaps Cannon was looking a little farther ahead than most of the NC members.

Swabeck had so discredited himself, Cannon told the PC, that the immediate effect of the party's reaction to the new provocation would not be very great whether he was suspended or not. "But the long range effect on the political education of the party, and its preparation to cope with old problems in new forms, can be very great indeed."

It is clear from this that Cannon was concerned by something much bigger than the fate of Swabeck; that he was trying to alert the party to dangers that greatly transcended the issue of whether or not to suspend Swabeck prior to the convention; that he feared mistakes on this minor issue could have damaging long range effects on the party, its political education and its ability to fulfill its revolutionary mission.

The Swabeck case was soon forgotten, but the dangers that worried Cannon are worth recalling today, when the SWP leadership, in a brutal and wholesale break with the party's great tradition of subordinating disciplinary measures to political discussion and clarification, has expelled and otherwise driven out any and all members it suspects of having dissident, critical or oppositional views. Of course the current SWP leadership "justifies" this purge by accusing the expellees of being ("like Swabeck") disrupters and splitters who are outside the party only because of their own alleged indiscipline and disloyalty. But everybody in the SWP knows that most of the expellees fought to remain in the party, unlike Swabeck, and are still fighting to be reinstated, again unlike Swabeck. The fight for the SWP's tradition continues, but now the SWP leadership is fighting on the other side.

This is the third Cannon letter on aspects of democratic centralism that we have printed in this Bulletin. The first (dated February 1966) appeared in our issue No. 4 (March 1984) and voiced Cannon's opposition to a proposal to take disciplinary action against an NC member who had circulated documents to non-NC members in disregard of normal NC procedures. The second (dated November 1966) appeared in our No. 8 (June 1984) and expressed Cannon's apprehensions about moves to "tighten" (further centralize) the SWP and the YSA. In both these cases the SWP leadership went along with Cannon's positions. Because of the relevance of such letters to the SWP's present crisis, we would like to print more letters by Cannon and other early leaders of the SWP which show how differently the present leadership interprets democratic centralism and the party's real traditions. If you have any such letters, please send them to us.

June 27, 1967
Los Angeles, Calif.

To The Political Committee
New York, New York

Dear Comrades:

I am opposed to the motion adopted by the Political Committee recommending the immediate suspension of Comrade Swabeck.

As you have been previously informed, I favor a different approach to the problem raised by Swabeck's letter to Healy. I explained my views to Art Sharon during his brief visit here, and I presume that he communicated it to you. Also, Joel showed me a copy of his letter to the National Office in which he reported the discussion which took place at a meeting of the N.C. members here.

I consider it rather unfortunate that these divergent views were not incorporated in the P.C. minutes of the meeting which decided to recommend the suspension of Swabeck -- so that the other members of the National Committee would have a chance to consider and discuss them before casting their vote on the ballot sent to them together with the P.C. minutes.

My approach to the problem can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. Since Swabeck's letter to Healy deals with two questions of great world importance -- Chinese developments and our policy and tactics in the struggle against the Vietnam War -- which are now properly up for discussion in the international movement as well as in our party, any action of a disciplinary nature which we may propose should be closely coordinated with international comrades, particularly the comrades in England, and carried out in agreement with them.

2. Since we are just now opening up our preconvention discussion, where the questions raised by Swabeck will properly have their place on the agenda, it would be rather awkward to begin the discussion by suspending the one articulate critic of the party's positions and actions. A more effective procedure, in my opinion, would be simply to publish Swabeck's letters (to Healy and Dobbs) with comprehensive and detailed answers.

If past experience is any guide, the education of the new generations of the party and the consolidation of party opinion would be better served by this procedure. Examples in favor of this subordination of disciplinary measures to the bigger aims of political education have been richly documented in the published records of the fight against the petty bourgeois opposition in 1939-40, and in the internal discussion bulletins dealing with the Goldman-Morrow affair in 1944-5-6.

3. In the course of discussion, during a number of years of opposition to party policy, Swabeck has managed to isolate himself to the point where the immediate effect of the party's reaction to this new provocation will not be very great one way or the other. But the long range effect on the political education of the party, and its preparation to cope with old problems in new forms, can be very great indeed.

It is most important that our party members, and the international movement, see the leadership once again in continuation of its great tradition -- acting with cool deliberation to serve our larger political aims without personal favoritism or hostility.

Fraternally,

S/ James P. Cannon

JPC:bh

SUPPRESSED DOCUMENTS FROM THE DECEMBER 1982 NC PLENUM

Introduction--The following four items, three resolutions and a motion, were submitted by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus in the SWP National Committee to the December 4-8, 1982, NC meeting--where they were rejected by a wide margin. Although the resolutions are quite general and the events they deal with are long past, they remain relevant to an understanding of the evolution of the SWP leadership's perspectives, of the discussion within the party, and of the attempts by the opposition in the National Committee to change an increasingly incorrect course.

These resolutions also had the merit of presenting the views of the minority NC members in writing--in coherent form for the party membership to accept or reject (had they been allowed to read them). The majority leadership, however, did all they could to prevent this and prohibited the circulation of minority resolutions on pain of expulsion. At one plenum Jack Barnes set an example--which he obviously hoped the rest of the NC would follow--by stating that he no longer even bothered to read the resolutions of the Fourth Internationalist Caucus before voting them down.

Even more revealing: while the opposition attempted to present its alternative viewpoint to the party, the Barnes leadership failed to submit a single written resolution of their own, on any political question, to any of the six NC plenums between the August 1981 convention and August 1983--when the four NC oppositionists were purged.

In addition, the SWP's fraternal representatives in the International Executive Committee and in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International have similarly failed to submit a single resolution to the pre-World Congress discussion of the FI, which was formally opened more than two years ago, though they have consistently voted against documents put forward by the majority of the International. The failure by the Barnes faction to present its views in writing, to be voted on by the party or by

formal leadership bodies, represents another lamentable break with the SWP's revolutionary traditions.

Two of the resolutions in this collection, "The Tasks of the SWP in the American Antiwar Movement," and "The SWP and the Women's Liberation Movement Today," were specific attempts to call attention to and reverse the increasingly abstentionist and sectarian course of the party in the American class struggle after two important events: the death of the Equal Rights Amendment, and the march of a million opponents of nuclear weapons in New York City on June 12, 1982.

The third resolution, "Problems of the Middle Eastern Revolution," also dealt in part with a similar problem--the failure of the SWP to try and mobilize sentiment in this country against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the Spring of 1982. But its main purpose was to challenge the basic political analysis of the SWP leadership with regard to events in the Middle East.

The key problem here was the application of the theory of permanent revolution to the anti-Zionist struggle. In the beginning of December 1982 the majority leadership of the party had not yet openly and explicitly repudiated permanent revolution. This would not occur until Jack Barnes's speech, "Their Trotsky and Ours," at the YSA convention later in the month. But the political line on a number of world events being expressed in the party press was only consistent if permanent revolution had already been abandoned as a guiding theoretical perspective. The Militant's and IP's analysis of the Palestinian struggle was an obvious case in point.

In order to call attention to this problem, the Middle East resolution concentrated on the practical conclusions which flowed from permanent revolution for that part of the world. The "Motion on Permanent Revolution and the Palestinian Struggle" was an attempt to get an explicit statement from the NC--either a reaffirmation of permanent revolution or an open rejection of it.

The Tasks of the SWP in the American Antiwar Movement

Resolution submitted by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus in the SWP National Committee to the December 4-8, 1982, meeting of the NC.

For the agenda point, "Political and Organizational Report."

On June 12, 1982, over a million people took to the streets in this country to demonstrate their opposition to the military policies of the U.S. government. The organizers of that demonstration focused their efforts on tapping the mushrooming opposition to nuclear weapons and channeling that sentiment into the movement around the "bi-lateral freeze." But the demonstration itself broke through all attempts to limit its perspectives, and those who attended raised every conceivable demand and slogan, overwhelmingly directed against the United States government and its policies.

In the November elections the American people voted massively in favor of the "freeze" propositions where they were on the ballot. This vote in no way reflects an interest in the maneuvers of the Democratic Party politicians who tried, through these referenda, to enhance their prestige and take advantage of the anti-Reagan and antiwar sentiments among working people. The vote on this question fundamentally reflects the depth of the feeling which has developed in this country for the abolition of these weapons of mass destruction, and the referenda offered an opportunity for the organized expression of that sentiment.

These elementary pacifist feelings of the masses in this country today--which constitute a progressive force--don't limit themselves to the question of nuclear weapons. All polls show a continued opposition to the use of U.S. troops in Latin America to prop up the Salvadoran and Guatemalan military dictatorships, or to overthrow the FSLN government in Nicaragua. The same people who marched on June 12 are the ones who will join any protest against Reagan's war moves in Central America and the Caribbean. There is also massive opposition and non-cooperation among American youth on the question of the draft.

The American government is far from its goal of overcoming the "Vietnam syndrome," and being able to use its troops freely for counterrevolutionary interventions as it did, for example, in Guatemala in 1954, the Dominican Republic in 1968, or in Vietnam itself. It will continue to try to test what is possible, use covert operations, and send massive aid to reactionary governments and counterrevolutionary bands. When it considers that the stakes are high enough it will be compelled to intervene directly with its own army. But the fact that the American people still remember the lessons of the Vietnam experience will always be a limiting factor. This considerably increases the risks involved in any direct use of troops by Washington.

There is also a growing consciousness among American working people that one of the biggest contributors to the economic problems they face is the gargantuan Pentagon budget, which fuels inflation and diverts much needed money from necessary social expenditures.

This too was reflected in the November elections, with the massive "yes" vote on "jobs with peace" referenda around the country. These proposed the use of some of those funds for other government programs and services. The slogan "jobs not war" or "fund human needs not the Pentagon" can provide a unifying perspective which links the increased opposition of American workers to the attacks on their standard of living--a growing awareness of the need to fight back--with their sentiments on the war question.

These are the themes which revolutionary Marxists in the United States must encourage, reinforce, and help organize in our union work and in other mass organizations. Conditions are favorable for us to help build and influence broader coalitions with our specific programmatic perspectives:

- Complete and total opposition to all nuclear weapons, and support for the demand that our own government be the first to begin the process of eliminating them.
- One hundred percent opposition to any use of U.S. troops, in Central America or any other country in the world.
- No draft, no draft registration.
- A complete end to U.S. aid for reactionary dictatorships.

In addition, we as revolutionary Marxists call for the total abolition of the imperialist military budget. But we will not hesitate to work with others who are willing to fight around specific demands for the elimination of individual military programs (such as the MX missile) or for the partial reduction of the war budget in order to fund socially useful programs.

These different aspects of the fight against war today are not contradictory, but complementary. We believe that a serious antiwar organization cannot avoid taking up all of them. However, this understanding cannot be an excuse for a sectarian approach toward forces which begin to emerge around one or another part of the struggle; and which do not yet see the whole picture. We should welcome every manifestation of opposition to the U.S. government's war plans, no matter how limited. Where we have the ability to participate in such struggles we should do so with all enthusiasm. One of our tasks must be to educate in the context of active involvement in the movement --to explain the interconnections and unity of different sides of the question. But we will not get a serious hearing for our ideas from those we are trying to influence if we seem to be sideline critics who refuse to involve themselves in the real day-to-day tasks of building an antiwar movement in this country.

One of our primary contributions is an approach to organizing which does not tie the movement into one or another wing of the Democratic or Republican parties. The lack of understanding on this question today is one of the biggest obstacles to mobilizing an effective antiwar fight. It has allowed the capitalist politicians

to parade as champions of peace, particularly on the antinuclear issue. We recognize that although there are specific proposals we can make to antiwar activists about how to organize an independent struggle even within the present context of a bourgeois electoral monopoly, the fact of that monopoly creates severe limitations. This situation provides important opportunities for us to explain our ideas on independent working class electoral action to those activists.

The biggest challenge the antiwar movement faces is the creation of an organizational vehicle which can provide a real alternative to the posturing of the politicians and can break out of the framework created by the bi-lateral freeze. There is no ready made solution to this problem. In some places committees which formed around the freeze will be receptive to our ideas on how to develop the antiwar struggle on the basis of a broader and more correct political focus--one clearly mobilizing opposition to our own government. It is likely that we will especially find forces receptive to this perspective in campus committees. It will be necessary to develop a serious set of proposals for teach-ins, rallies, demonstrations, etc., around specific political slogans such as those mentioned above which can provide a positive alternative to bi-lateralism.

A major focus for this effort in the next few weeks, especially on the west coast, should be the call issued by the Tijuana solidarity conference for demonstrations in San Diego and Tijuana on January 22. In those parts of the country where distance will make travel to San Diego difficult we should make every effort to have solidarity actions called by local groups and coalitions.

It is also important that we not ignore the role of already existing solidarity groups like CISPES. Although the perspectives of this organization have been limited, and it has not by-and-large seen the need to tap the broad anti-interventionist sentiment in this country (focusing on political support to the goals of the Salvadoran revolutionists) it nevertheless has a great deal of authority, a layer of healthy activists, and has staged some impressive actions. CISPES varies quite a bit from one city to another. Also, there is a large milieu of religious, pacifist, and civil-liberties type organizations and individuals which, given a proper perspective can play a role in building the movement.

Such a correct perspective, which can mobilize the American people in effective action against war, will not arise spontaneously. If revolutionary Marxists do not participate fully, in every way we can (even within organizations which do not yet have a clear political outlook) undertaking a serious effort to educate and win people over to that correct perspective, we cannot expect any other force to emerge which will do it for us.

One of the most important components of this work, which can have a big impact on our overall effectiveness, is the role which will be played by our industrial fractions. There are important new opportunities on the question of war within the labor movement. We want to tap and help organize the sentiment that exists.

All union bodies, from the local through the international levels, should be encouraged to participate actively in the antiwar struggle by joining coalitions, sponsoring demonstrations, organizing educational activities for its own membership, etc. Individual union officials can also be involved in antiwar activity. The Labor Committee in Support of Human Rights and Democracy in El Salvador is an example of what is possible in this area.

But even where we do not actually involve the unions as organizations in the antiwar fight, our advocacy of this will put us in the best possible position to involve our coworkers and other rank and file trade unionists. This we will want to do in any case. We must encourage them to work actively in whatever antiwar groups we are involved with. Together we can organize union contingents in demonstrations, as well as participation in other kinds of activities. It may also be possible to form antiwar committees in some unions, either as official union committees which could involve the rank and file, or at the independent initiative of the rank and file itself. This is a possibility which should be considered by each of our industrial fractions and by other union comrades.

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The SWP and the Women's Liberation Movement Today

Resolution submitted by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus in the SWP National Committee to the December 4-8, 1982 meeting of the NC.

For the agenda point, "women's Liberation Perspectives."

The defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in the spring of 1982 was a serious setback for women's rights in the United States. For the past several years, federal and state governments have succeeded in limiting, and in some cases reversing, women's right to abortion. But despite these defeats there are a growing number of women and men who are looking for some way to fight effectively to advance the cause of women's liberation. The political victories which have been achieved by the ruling class have not been accompanied by any reversal of the overwhelming sentiment in favor of women's rights. And this is true despite a massive effort through the likes of Phyllis Schlafly, and the "moral majority" to create the appearance of a popular groundswell of reactionary, antiwoman public opinion. Millions of dollars were spent in this effort.

The big contradiction facing the women's movement today is that this overwhelming popular sentiment in support of women's rights finds little or no effective organizational expression. Despite the not insignificant layer of activists who have shown their continued willingness to work for the cause of female equality, there is no organization within the feminist movement which has clearly drawn the lessons of the ERA defeat at the hands of the capitalist politicians, the attacks on abortion rights by both Democrats and Republicans, the cuts in social programs vital for women (especially poor and minority women), the attack on women in the workplace, etc. None of the main women's groups has recognized the dead end which they have reached as a result of supporting capitalist politicians.

The main role of the Socialist Workers Party within the women's movement today is to explain and fight for an alternative outlook, an effective course that can mobilize and rely on the strength of the women's movement itself, and sees that movement as a component of a broader struggle of all working people and their allies against the bosses and against the government that represents the interests of the bosses. To be effective in presenting this alternative view we will have to play an active role in the day-to-day work of building the women's movement, side by side with those we are trying to talk to and influence. In addition to educating in a broad way about basic strategy, we will have to be prepared to offer specific tactical suggestions and proposals at each step which can effectively advance toward that broader strategic goal. We also have an important role to play in educating about the origins of women's oppression in order to combat the idealist notions which are widespread among both women and men.

Each party branch should assess the groups that exist on a local level, and determine which ones offer the best opportunity for us to get involved in. The two major national women's organizations, NOW and CLUW, should get particular attention. Both of these groups have the potential for playing a major role in

reorienting the women's movement as a whole if they develop a left wing that can chart an effective course of struggle. Both are currently dominated by conservative leaderships, but they also have a layer of rank-and-file members whose perspectives are different from those of the leadership. This layer can be won to the program revolutionary socialists present.

In addition, there are a large number of other groups which are actively trying to organize women. Some of these are national, but others only exist on a local level, or on college campuses. In many areas these organizations will present openings for us to participate in a fruitful way. In general, it is the relatively small forces we have available, rather than any lack of objective possibilities, which will be the limiting factor in our actively pursuing this area of work.

One of the most important issues facing women today is the fight to defend and extend abortion rights. It is likely that there will be at least local initiatives for rallies, demonstrations, or educational events on January 22, which is the 10th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. We want to actively build and support any such actions. We should participate wherever possible in their initiation, and in the development of coalitions to build and organize them. The same approach should be taken toward local actions around International Women's Day, March 8; and we should be involved in renewed struggles for the ERA.

One issue which is likely to become more and more important as the economic crisis deepens is the continued attacks on women in the work place--particularly in the industrial jobs which were fought for and won by women within the last decade. Major problems include sexual harassment on the job and defense and extension of affirmative action gains. These are the kinds of questions which we want to bring to the fore and stimulate consciousness about in the women's movement. They are particularly important because they draw together the fight for women's rights with the general problem of the need to defend the interests of the working class against the employer-government assault.

There are many other problems which we believe the feminist movement in this country should address. Some are of particular urgency for working women, like child care, equal pay for work of comparable value, and the organization of predominantly female office workers.

We encourage the participation of minority women, both in their own separate organizations to deal with their own special needs, and as part of multi-national women's groups. We urge the entire women's movement to facilitate this process by reaching out to third world women, supporting their demands, and making it possible for them to play a leading role in the movement as a whole. This approach will strengthen all components of the movement. Lesbian rights is always an important question, and gay women have generally played a vanguard role in the fight for all of the demands of the women's struggle.

It is these and other issues which are of special concern to women that are the necessary focus of feminist organizations. In addition, however, we think it is vital that these groups view other battles of workers and their allies as an inherent part of their own fight, even if they do not relate directly to "women's issues" narrowly conceived. Every strike, every struggle against racist attacks, every defense of civil liberties, is of crucial importance to the women's movement, and must be given unqualified and unconditional support. This, in turn, will facilitate the developing consciousness within broad sectors of the labor movement, and within organizations like NBIPP, of the need to actively support and involve themselves in the fight for women's rights.

The industrial fractions of the SWP can play an important role in this overall process. By participating in the women's movement as industrial workers, and showing that support can be mobilized for this struggle directly from the most powerful institutions of the American working class, as well as by participating in our unions as active fighters for women's rights, we can demonstrate the practicality and necessity of this basic strategic link.

One important vehicle in this work will be women's committees in the unions. We should join these where they exist, and try to organize them where they don't. Such committees can bring women's issues into the unions, and also stimulate women to participate fully in all union activities. We should urge women's committees to take the leadership in specific struggles, and participate in coalitions with other groups.

It must also be emphasized that the central problem which confronts the feminist movement--the problem of independent political action--is the same as that facing all other struggles for social change today; and this cannot be resolved outside of the framework of an alliance with the unions in this country. The women's movement must come to see itself as part of the broad struggle for a labor party based on the unions, which can provide a real alternative to the Democrats and Republicans. Education around this basic necessity is one of our primary tasks.

Although no women's organization as such can actually begin the process of constructing a working class political alternative, these groups can actively agitate for the unions to take such a course. This is particularly true of CLUW, and we should pay close attention to opportunities for advancing our views on the labor party in this organization. We must look for opportunities to work with other rank-and-file members, or secondary union officials, whom we can convince of our perspectives on the labor party, and find ways of involving them in the process of trying to win CLUW to a perspective of independent political action.

Problems of the Middle Eastern Revolution

Resolution submitted by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus in the SWP National Committee to the December 4-8, 1982, meeting of the NC.

For the agenda point, "World Movement."

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon brings into bold relief all of the tendencies and contradictions in the Middle East today. It demonstrates once again, more clearly than ever before, that no solution to the crisis in the region can be offered by any bourgeois political force, whether it makes its headquarters in Tel Aviv, the Arab countries, Washington, or some other imperialist capital. Nor is there any solution from a narrow, petty-bourgeois, Arab or Palestinian nationalist point of view. The only hope for a lasting solution to this decades-long conflict lies with the socialist revolution.

For Israel and the Zionists, this war exposes the complete utopianism of any hoped-for military solution to its conflict with the Palestinian and other Arab peoples. Each new victory, by creating new refugees and new occupied territories, simply paves the way for still bigger wars to come. Yet the military approach is the only option open to a state which is based on the uprooting and expulsion of an entire population.

The Arab governments were once again shown by this war to be completely impotent both politically and militarily. The overriding consideration in their policy is to preserve the privileged positions of the Arab ruling classes. They would like nothing better than to find an accord with the status quo which will defuse the conflict with Israel. But the need to appear as opponents of Zionism in the eyes of the Arab masses requires them to take a militant stance which, though it rarely goes much beyond words, still makes an actual accommodation with Tel Aviv extremely difficult.

The differences on this score between the so-called "radical" Arab regimes and those that are considered more conservative turned out to be little more than rhetoric. Syria, Iraq, and Libya did nothing substantial to help the Palestinians in Lebanon, and did not seriously distinguish themselves from Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. (The USSR also demonstrated that it was unconcerned about the fate of the Palestinians and would do nothing which might bring it into a conflict with the imperialists' plans for the region.)

Imperialism too, like the Arab regimes, would like to defuse the tinderbox in the Middle East--which threatens its interests in a wide variety of ways--and reach an accord with the Arab states. But its only really dependable, stable ally in the region is the Israeli regime, and in the last analysis it must defend the Zionist state no matter what tactical differences might develop with its ally over the best way to achieve a demobilization of the Arab masses (through direct military confrontation or through partial concessions). This position of the imperialist powers, Washington in particular, as staunch allies of Israel makes it difficult for them to adopt a pose of impartial mediators--a pose which under different circumstances would aid the Arab regimes in reaching an accommodation with Israel.

None of the "peace plans" which have been or will be proposed by any of these forces can hope to resolve the present conflict, because they do not resolve the basic underlying problem--the displacement and oppression of the Palestinian masses by Zionism. The Arab regimes at the recent Fez conference posed the solution of the "mini-state" in the occupied territories. For them, the acceptance of this proposal by Israel would open the door for an accommodation by providing a fig-leaf concession toward Palestinian self-determination. But in reality, as long as the state of Israel continues to exist, any such solution as envisioned by the Arab governments would be a complete mockery of self-determination, and would only lay the basis for bigger explosions in the years ahead. The recently proposed Reagan plan provides even less. His idea of self-determination requires that the Palestinians "determine" that they want to live under the tutelage of King Hussein. And as for the government of Israel, even that little concession is too much. The Zionist "peace plan" requires the renunciation by the Palestinians of any desire for even a square foot of their homeland. This is purely and simply a plan for continued wars.

Of course, the Palestinians show no signs of capitulating to the Israelis' demands. The strength of their resistance to Zionism over the course of decades has been an inspiration and an example to all freedom fighters around the world. Nevertheless, the Palestinian movement faces a political crisis which has reached a new stage with the most recent war. The question that must be answered is: What strategy should be followed in order to create the possibility of victory in their struggle? Can the PLO limit itself to a purely nationalist perspective which attempts to unite all Palestinians and all Arabs, regardless of social class, in a common struggle against the Zionist regime? Or is it necessary to combine the national struggle with a perspective for socialist revolution, a perspective which will unite the working class and oppressed of the region? Is there any solution to the national question outside of this framework?

Up to now, Arafat and the main leadership of the PLO have pursued a purely nationalist perspective. And it is this class-collaborationist policy that has brought the PLO fighters to their current impasse and crisis of perspective. The path has led inexorably from Jordan in 1970, when the PLO failed to rally the masses for the overthrow of King Hussein and thereby gave him an opportunity to expel them from the country; to the Lebanese civil war in 1975-76, when the PLO again failed to present a perspective for state power to be seized by the revolutionary forces and so ended up reconciling themselves to the bourgeois Sarkis government; to the most recent events in Lebanon. Time after time the perspective of appealing to the Arab monarchs and bourgeoisies for a united front against Zionism has led only to bloody defeats. The Arab ruling classes realize only too well that the mobilization of the Arab masses, which a real struggle against Zionism will require, will be impossible for them to control. There is nothing that they fear more than such a mobilization.

The price which the Palestinians will pay for maintaining a perspective of alliance with the Arab governments can only be, in the short term, continued battles in a war where victory is impossible; and in the long run, the demobilization of their struggle. Ultimately such a course can only lead to reconciliation with Zionism and imperialism. The endorsement by Arafat of the peace proposals made at the Fez summit show the direction in which the main PLO leadership is moving. This plan is virtually identical to the Fahd plan presented by Saudi Arabia last year, and rejected by Arafat at that time as incompatible with Palestinian self-determination.

There is nothing wrong in principle with the possibility of a Palestinian mini-state. Under some circumstances such a state could serve as a step through which to advance the anti-Zionist struggle. But under the present circumstances of a serious military defeat for the PLO, and in the context of the diplomatic maneuvers of the Arab governments (which are pursuing their own narrow self-interest and not that of the Palestinians), the acceptance by Arafat of the mini-state plan can only be interpreted as a de facto step toward the recognition of the state of Israel, no matter what his subjective intentions might be.

The alternative to this course of subordination to the Arab governments is for the Palestinian resistance fighters to draw the lessons from their years of experience. Palestinian nationalism is a progressive and revolutionary force, but in order to be victorious that nationalism must develop a proletarian perspective. There can be no basic strategic plan based on a common front with the Arab states. The Palestinians must begin to see their national struggle as one component--the most militant and resolute component today--of a broader struggle for the socialist revolution in the Middle East. They must seek their main allies amongst the proletarian and semi-proletarian forces both within the Arab countries and within the state of Israel itself. Only if the Palestinian movement resolutely seeks to participate in and advance the struggles of the workers and peasants of the Arab countries against the interests of the Arab ruling classes, at the same time as they continue their fight against the state of Israel, can a real fighting force with a chance of victory against Zionism be mobilized. This will require the development of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard within the Palestinian movement which can present it with a consistently proletarian program of struggle.

The consolidation of such a revolutionary Marxist tendency must be the conscious perspective of the international Trotskyist movement --the Fourth International. The questioning and reconsideration of past perspectives going on within the Palestinian resistance--and in the broader Arab world--in the wake of the Lebanese defeat provide an important opportunity. The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements will be pushed to the right by these events, closer to an accommodation with Zionism. But others will be able to draw the correct lessons, and will be open to considering a revolutionary Marxist alternative.

A recognition of the role which can be played by the Jewish working class within Israel itself is a crucially important element in this political differentiation. The Israeli proletariat is one of the most significant potential supporters of the Palestinian movement. The Lebanese war and its aftermath have revealed the growing contradictions in Israeli society, a society whose stability depends on a class collaborationist agreement based on reactionary nationalist ideology. Such a set-up is inherently unstable, and cannot help but break down as the pressures on it build up.

In the long run, no matter what their temporary successes might be, the Israeli bourgeoisie cannot succeed in suppressing the class contradictions of their society through the device of Jewish nationalism (which plays a completely reactionary role in the Middle East today by reinforcing the idea of a strictly Jewish state) or even by simple anti-Arab chauvinism. It is these class contradictions that will force the Israeli masses to realize that the real danger to their security is at home; that this threat doesn't come from the reasonable

and just demands of the Palestinians. Only a proletarian perspective on the part of the Palestinian fighters will be able to take full advantage of these class differentiations within Israel itself.

The slogan of a "democratic secular Palestine," which has been and remains the clear demand of the Palestinian movement, lays the firmest possible foundation for this alliance between Israeli worker and Palestinian freedom fighter. It makes clear that self-determination for the Palestinian people is not predicated on the expulsion or oppression of the Jewish population, as the Zionist propagandists charge, but simply on the dismantling of the current Israeli state--which must carry out, because of its Zionist perspectives, the expulsion of the Arab population and the suppression of its national and democratic rights.

Politically, the Lebanese war (and particularly the Sabra and Shatila massacres) stimulated the growth of a massive revulsion within Israel against the most brutal aspects of the Begin war policies. Although this opposition does not yet go beyond the framework of Zionism it nevertheless demonstrates the potential that exists for future changes in consciousness by the Jewish masses. And the Israeli aggression against Lebanon also stimulated a parallel political development throughout the world, increasing the prestige of the Palestinian resistance fighters and stimulating a new consciousness about the justice of their cause. It undermined the authority of the Israeli government even among its staunchest constituencies, such as the Jewish community in the United States.

But whatever the political results of the war, it must be acknowledged that the military results constitute a severe blow to the PLO and the Lebanese left. The main base of operations for the PLO was dismantled, and it was compelled to retreat, dispersing its forces among a number of Arab countries. Despite its heroic resistance, which held off the Israeli Blitzkrieg longer than any Arab army had previously been able to do, the PLO in the end felt it necessary to accept the Habib plan, a plan that implemented the immediate war goals of Israel and imperialism. In addition to the dispersal of the Palestinian fighters, the basis was laid for the coming to power of a right-wing Christian government in Lebanon itself, with the consequent reign of terror against Palestinian refugees and Lebanese Moslems.

No one can dispute the right of the PLO to negotiate the best possible terms for its retreat. But this recognition does not in any way change the obligation of revolutionaries, particularly in the imperialist countries, to denounce the completely reactionary role played by Habib's shuttle diplomacy and by U.S., French, and Italian "peace-keeping" forces which supervised the PLO withdrawal. Our demand is not that the U.S. government play the role of mediator to assure the "peaceful" carrying out of its own solution, imposed on the Palestinians by the force of Israeli military power. Instead we demand that all support by our government to the Zionist war machine be halted, and that the Israelis be pressured to withdraw and allow the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples the right to determine their own destiny. The same approach holds for the second wave of U.S. "peace-keeping" forces which entered Lebanon after the PLO withdrawal from Beirut. The imperialist army does not and cannot play the role of "peace-keeper" in Beirut or anywhere else in the world. Revolutionary Marxists demand

its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from all foreign territory.

The potential for developing a real movement around these simple demands in the United States has never been greater than it was during the seige of Beirut. Today there are still good opportunities. Trying to stimulate and help organize such a movement must be a conscious priority for our party. It is an elementary internationalist responsibility.

The fundamental political focus of this work will be around demands and slogans which have the potential for mobilizing the maximum number of working people in this country in actions that will objectively serve to advance the cause of Palestinian national liberation. The most important slogans from this point of view are "U.S. and Israeli troops out of Lebanon Now!" and "Halt U.S. Military Aid to Israel!" Other slogans should also be advanced which discuss the basic question of the right to self-determination for Palestine. Within the context of such a movement based on the democratic right to self-determination, revolutionary Marxists will present their own views on the need for a socialist revolution in the Middle East as the only real road to achieve this, as well as on the role a military victory for the PLO over the Israeli state can play to advance this process. However, we will oppose making agreement on these points a prerequisite for common action around opposition to the military policies of Washington and Tel Aviv.

In many parts of the country there are groups working to organize around Lebanon and the Palestinian question. These groups have different perspectives on how to proceed, and local party branches will have to assess the specific situation in each area, determining how we should intervene to advance our general goal of building the broadest possible movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The collective experiences of the branches in this work will lay the basis for the development of national perspectives in this area for the party as a whole.

Motion on Permanent Revolution and the Palestinian Struggle

Submitted by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus in the SWP National Committee to the December 4-8, 1982, meeting of the NC.

For the agenda point, "World Movement."

In light of the latest war in Lebanon and its results for the Middle Eastern Revolution and the Palestinian Struggle, the SWP National Committee reaffirms the traditional revolutionary Marxist conception of permanent revolution as the indispensable theoretical framework for understanding revolutionary struggles in the 20th century--particularly the relationship between the national and the socialist revolutions. There can be no decisive victory in the fight against imperialist domination and national oppression short of the socialist revolution. Only a proletarian revolutionary program --which combines the nationalist and socialist perspectives--can provide adequate guidance for the insurgent masses in their struggle against all forms of oppression and exploitation. Anything less can only lead to defeat.

A USEFUL BOOK WITH A MISLEADING INTRODUCTION

Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution 1979-83. Pathfinder Press, New York, 1983, 352 pages, \$6.95.

Anger and sadness. These are the emotions that one feels when reading Maurice Bishop Speaks. Anger toward Hudson Austin's thugs who executed Bishop on October 19, 1983. Anger against the American colossus that trampled on the aspirations of the Grenadian people six days later. Sadness at the tragically unnecessary ending of the Grenadian revolution which not only raised the living standards of the Grenadian workers and peasants but also raised their dreams to new heights.

This book contains twenty-seven interviews and speeches by Bishop from August 1977 until June 1983. There is also some useful historical background material and an appendix made up of statements from the Cuban leadership on the death of the revolution. Four main themes run through the speeches: the plight of the Grenadian people before the revolution, the dangers of U.S. intervention, the need for the active support of the revolution by the Grenadian masses, and the concrete steps and measures taken by the New Jewel Movement (NJM) government.

Bishop places great emphasis on explaining the cultural and psychological effects of imperialism on the Grenadian people. He cites an anecdote from his own life, "I know the first time I realized just how deep this foolishness went and the extent to which they were miseducating us and trying to make us into little Black Englishmen is when I arrived in England to study law in 1963. One of my first and greatest experiences--shocking experience, traumatic--was when I went somewhere one day. The national anthem started to play--poor little Black me, I jump up fast. When I look around me only one standing up. Every Englishman sitting down." (pp. 305-306)

Bishop uses many similar popular and clearly explained examples of subjugation in order to impel the Grenadian people into action. For example, Bishop pulls no punches when, speaking about women's oppression, he says, "We look at the Bible, for example, and it speaks of the Trinity and the Trinity is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, all presumably being members of same sex... there was the beginning of the characterization of woman in an inferior role." (p. 34)

Bishop did not see imperialism as just the cultural oppressor of yesterday. He also describes the maneuvers of the U.S. government today. He speaks about how U.S. Ambassador Frank Ortiz was attempting to force Grenada not to have ties with Cuba, only days after the revolution. The book is full of descriptions of the different ways, from mercenaries to trade disruption, in which the U.S. tried to subvert the new government.

Bishop's answer to these operations runs through the whole book--the continued mass mobilization of the Grenadian people. It is striking that the vast bulk of the material in the book consists of speeches given at large demonstrations and parades. In all these speeches he urges the audience to become politically active and join the many mass organizations that the NJM encouraged.

Finally, Bishop carefully explains the steps that the revolutionary government took to improve the lives of the Grenadian people. He details the Center for Popular Education, which organized the literacy drive, the National In-Service Teacher Education Programme, which was beginning to revolutionize Grenadian education, and the increase in the number of doctors. Free milk distribution, running water, piping improvements and new terms for agricultural credit are

all reported. There is not room in this short review to describe all the benefits and gains that Bishop talks about. One gets a real understanding of the specific problems of Grenadian society and the steps that the Bishop leadership took to overcome those problems from reading this book. That's the strong point both of the book and of Bishop himself.

The book also sheds light on the Achilles heel of the Grenadian revolution--the question of workers democracy. There was no shortage of mass organizations in revolutionary Grenada. The National Youth Organization, the National Students Council, the NJM Young Pioneers, the National Airport Development Committee, the National Community Development Committee and an active and growing trade union movement all brought into activity the deep popular support that the revolution had. These organizations, along with others such as the Parish Councils and Zonal Councils, gave the masses a means of discussing how to implement national policy and make local decisions. However, the revolution needed a means for workers and poor peasants to make decisions on key questions of national and international policy. The mass discussions around the 1983 budget were important steps in this direction. If such popular sovereignty, a national structure of workers and peasants councils, had existed, it would have meant presenting to the Grenadian masses all the conflicting proposals on how the revolution should go forward. Such mass decision making would have provided a means to organize the massive support that Bishop had against the semi-Stalinist Coard faction. Bishop's popular support was huge. On October 19, 1983, 30,000 people, between 25 and 30 percent of the population, marched in his support and against Coard.

Bishop saw the dangers of not involving the masses when he said that "...one of the best ways to defeat destabilization, to defeat imperialism, to defeat counter-revolutionaries, is to be honest with your people, to tell them what is happening, to tell them who is trying to do what, so that destabilization does not come like a thief in the night." (p. 86) This turned out to be a tragic prophecy of what actually happened. The Grenadian people were not told "who is trying to do what" and that's what enabled Coard and Austin to "come like a thief in the night."

Closely linked to this weakness of the Grenadian revolution is the problem of democracy in the party, the New Jewel Movement. There was no way for Bishop to organize the party base against Coard with the structure that the NJM had. False ideas such as "discipline of leading bodies in front of the whole party" and "factions must be disloyal" led to the victory of the pernicious authoritarianism of the Coard faction. The Grenadian revolution could have been a great peoples' revolution. Implementing a genuine workers democracy and a Leninist view of internal democracy in the New Jewel Movement would have strengthened that revolution from the very moment that power was taken.

Maurice Bishop Speaks begins with an introduction by SWP leader Steve Clark. Clark does not equal the vitality, "the revolutionary heavy manners," of Bishop's speeches. Instead we are treated to a lengthy discussion of why "secret factionalism" was the cause of the Grenadian tragedy. Clark does not take up the key question that is on the minds of the militants of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement who are trying to pick up the pieces in Grenada today--that is, what could the revolution have done to survive? Answering this question requires taking up the questions of workers democracy and the functioning of a revolutionary party that arise from the tragic circumstances of Bishop's murder and the U.S. invasion. Clark avoids this like the plague. The Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, No. 3, published a full discussion of Clark's failure in an article entitled "Why Steve Clark Can't Really Explain What Happened in Grenada," by Steve Bloom. Clark presents us with a bleak picture--a very popular revolutionary leadership,

confronted by a small bureaucratic, "Afghan" faction, is ousted from power and nothing could have been done to prevent it. This outlook stems from the SWP leadership's opinion that any critical discussion of the Caribbean and Central American revolutionary leaderships must weaken our united solidarity against imperialism. The truth is that these revolutions need our active and practical solidarity--not passive sycophancy.

The best tribute we can make to Maurice Bishop's memory, captured so well in Maurice Bishop Speaks, is to throw ourselves into the movement in defense of the Caribbean and Central American revolutions. Today that means being in the front lines of the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America.

LETTERS

GOOD ADVICE

Editor:

As a Trotskyist for over 45 years and a retired SWP member I am shocked by the turn of events in the SWP.

I have read the comments of the majority and the minority on the issues in dispute and find that the majority is trying to throw overboard the essence of Marxism in the 20th century which Trotsky represents.

Trotsky had the task of defending Marxism-Leninism throughout his life. An instance of his democratic approach to his opponents occurred in the 1939-40 struggle against the Shachtman-Burnham revisionism. In a letter to Joseph Hansen (found on page 101 of Trotsky's book In Defense of Marxism) he advised, against closing off debate. I hope the Bulletin IDOM will reprint Trotsky's letter and the SWP majority will consider his advice in their dealing with the minority of today.--J.C., Newark, NJ, June 20, 1984

[Space does not allow us to reprint the full text of Trotsky's letter. His advice to the majority faction which Hansen was part of follows:

"We propose to you mutual guarantees for the future minority, independently of who might be this minority, you or we. These guarantees could be formulated in four points: (1) No prohibition of factions; (2) No other restrictions on factional activity than those dictated by the necessity of common action; (3) The official publications must represent, of course, the line established by the new convention; (4) The future minority can have, if it wishes, an internal bulletin destined for party members, or a common discussion bulletin with the majority."]

FIRST NAMES, LAST NAMES

Editor:

In the SWP's 1981 pre-convention discussion the full names of members and leaders alike were listed as authors of articles printed in the internal discussion bulletins. In the 1984 pre-convention period, however, only the central leaders are identified with their full names (Jack Barnes, Doug Jenness, etc) while the members are identified by first names and last initials (May S., Eileen G.).

Does anyone know a good reason for such an odd differentiation?

The party's actual "state of security" is little different than it was in mid-1981 when the SWP's trial against government harassment was being held and when the Gelfand-Healyite lawsuit attacking the SWP was already under way for a few years.

My guess is that the new practice is a cheap factional device by the SWP leaders to reinforce the impression they want the party members to have--that the party is under exceptional attack on all sides and therefore this is the time for the members to rally around the leaders, subordinating any criticisms that the leaders may deserve. If a "siege mentality" or "circle the wagons psychology" can be created or deepened in the party ranks, then the members may be more willing to accept leadership abuses and atrocities (mass purges, undeserved exclusion of expelled members from SWP public events, etc.).

Maybe I'm wrong in such an explanation. But can you offer a better one that squares with the real conditions of the SWP in 1984?

Good luck at the SWP convention!--A Reader, New York, June 18, 1984

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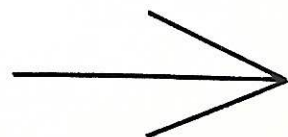
- REMARKS ON PARTY NORMS AND APPEALS by Frank Lovell--March 1982
- LETTER BY JAMES P. CANNON--February 1966
- LETTER AND STATEMENT TO THE NC by Steve Bloom and Frank Lovell--August 1983

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