

TRUTH

ORGAN of the TROTSKYIST ORGANIZATION of the USA • SECTION (SYMPATHIZING) of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL No. 151 September 3, 1982 15¢

Union Candidates in the 1982 Elections

By KEVIN FITZPATRICK

Now is the time to organize union candidates for the 1982 elections!

Situation

Everything about the present situation — the best and the worst — absolutely demands this step. And the opportunities are immense.

While everywhere the recognition is sinking in that the old lie about "permanent American prosperity" is dying in the midst of what is the worst economic and social crisis since the Great Depression, the class struggle is heating up rapidly.

And let us be clear — the class struggle is not some spontaneous, triumphal march of the working class toward a red dawn. No, it is the intensification and multiplication of *ferocious battles* between the two key classes — workers and capitalists.

The fearful — including those who claim to be revolutionaries — whine that the capitalist class is out to take back all our gains, that everywhere you turn there are more demands for the so-called concessions. These people are in shock that our democratic ruling class really will — as bureaucrats like Fraser and Kirkland proclaim in astonishment — wage a "class war."

And these same people are even more fearful, because for the same reason they thought the capitalists wouldn't fight, they think the workers will not fight.

Wrong on both counts!

The extremely bitter and violent strikes they mention in fear only prove them wrong. At Iowa Beef Processing, at Browne and Sharpe in Rhode Island, tear gas, clashes with the cops, the appearance of the National Guard, show that the workers are *already* fighting. And such strikes are but a bare outline of the future.

Auto is, in particular, going to be (and already is) a key battleground of such fights. The UAW bureaucracy of Douglas Fraser finds itself more and more cornered in the Chrysler negotiations. The workers *refuse* to accept the existing conditions, the company *refuses* to give up anything.

It may well be that the policy of concessions in auto will explode where it began, in the "Chrysler syndrome" with a whole new twist.

Likewise, the labor bureaucracy is in trouble in general on concessions. Steelworkers President Lloyd McBride himself had to recommend a unanimous vote against opening negotiations with the steel companies by the members of the Basic Steel Conference — after having himself been the one to propose it.

And in the UAW, despite a provision in the GM concessions pact that kicked unsettled local contracts (where GM sought to make a killing) upstairs to the UAW bureaucrats to settle, things are far from settled. In many cases, no changes were made. In others, no settlement has yet been reached — and nothing has been brought to Solidarity House.

Politics

The class struggle is above all a political struggle. It is about *who rules*. The rule of Ronald Reagan, the attack on social programs, the vicious drive to subject the world to the US imperialists through war and threats of war, go hand in hand with the drive for concessions.

And the workers and their allies hate Ronald Reagan and want him out.

We have said before that a General Strike is the way to bring down Reagan. We have posed the road to preparing this, in the UAW, as a Special Convention that would put the union in the hands of its members. Finally, we have said that the workers need to build their own party — a Workers Party — to lead such struggles and to transform them into workers power.

In the present situation, the road to this lies through the upcoming elections.

All the forces that defend the old order — labor bureaucrats, Stalinists — are going all out to channel workers' opposition to Reagan into support to the Democratic Party this year and in 1984. The Stalinists say: "defeat the Reaganites!" The bureaucrats say: "Labor must have a voice!" But in both cases, these words boil down to supporting the Democrats — and the reason the workers are in the spot they are in is because for generations they supported the Democratic Party.

Now is the time to break out of that trap. When the bureaucrats have the nerve to call for a "Solidarity Day II" on election day, we have to capture the

real content of Solidarity Day — a class, independent, mass mobilization based on support to the Polish workers' example and opposed to Reagan — and carry that into the elections.

Candidates

All the forces in the unions — LOC, the "unauthorized" sub-councils, etc. — that earlier went into motion are stymied by the elections. This confusion in turn threatens to react on the movement that produced them. They have to organize and support candidates — independent in action of the two capitalist parties — in these elections, precisely in order to go forward.

This is completely possible. Not only in a general sense, but in a very practical one. For example, the Communist Party sued the state of Michigan — which has no provision for independent candidates to appear on the ballot — in order to run one of its members (to be sure, only for the State Board of Education — a gesture).

But the CP won! Its candidate will appear on the ballot. That means that, through a fight, others can, too. We have to take up this possibility *right away!*

The Detroit Local Committee of the Trotskyist Organization/USA in the immediate future will carry this fight into the unions. In particular, in order to get it well underway, it will run one of its members — Barbara Putnam, an experienced militant and unionist — in the 13th Congressional District, which lies in the heart of Detroit.

This will be a bitter battle against the Democratic Party and its supporters. George Crockett, the present Congressman, is one of the most liberal Democrats in the nation, and is extremely close to the Communist Party. (The timid Socialist Workers Party is running no one against either Crockett or the similar John Conyers in the 1st District).

We have every confidence, nonetheless. Within the boundaries of this District we gained the most votes in our campaign for a workers candidate for Detroit mayor. It is where we have built the Malcolm X Circle of the International Young Guard/USA. And it is a center of the working class — including Chrysler's critical Jefferson Avenue plant.

Organize union candidates now!
TRUTH

All Out for Gdansk, December 13!

The International Rally of the Youth, held July 3-4 in Hamburg, Germany, issued a call for a demonstration in Gdansk on December 13 of this year. Gdansk is the birthplace of Solidarnosc ("Solidarity") and the date is the anniversary of the imposition of the State of War (martial law) against the Polish workers.

This call was based on the fact that the underground leaders of Solidarnosc have openly stated and urged all their members and supporters to prepare for a general strike this autumn. The workers and youth of the entire world must support this new upsurge of the Polish Revolution.

To be in Gdansk on December 13, in the largest numbers possible, will be a concrete action, an international sign of this support!

The events in the last few weeks all over Poland — demonstrations large and small, confrontations with the thugs of the ZOMO riot cops — are part of the preparation of this general strike. In particular, they are aimed at leading up to mass actions on August 31, the second anniversary of the legalization of Solidarnosc.

(We will be going to press before the date set for the largest actions.)

Every worker and young person supports the Polish workers and youth. When ZOMO turns the water cannon on the protesters, who doesn't recall the fire hoses used against civil rights demonstrators in the American South?

What we need to do is to *organize* this support into concrete activity, in this country and others. In particular, we can focus it toward the demonstration on December 13 in Gdansk.

That is the road of unity and workers power.

But there are also those who want to split that unity and leave the power in the hands of the true *anti-socialist* elements — the Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland and its Kremlin masters.

At the very moment when the Polish Stalinists threaten to stop at nothing to crush Solidarnosc, there are those who — even while claiming to be for the Polish workers — are actually carrying out the task of the Kremlin. They are collaborating in the old game of "divide and conquer."

In the past issues of *Truth* and *The Fourth International*, we have reported on the attacks made on our Polish section, the RLRP. We have said, further, that these attacks were aimed *through us* — the consistently revolutionary and internationalist wing of Solidarnosc — at the whole radical wing of the movement!

This attack is aimed at convincing the "moderates," the timid and their friends, that if only they would rid themselves of the "extremists," then they could come to peaceful terms with the regime. But the regime, faced with a split movement, would in fact give up nothing.

This drive is going hand-in-hand with that of open threats. That is the key role that the Catholic Church is playing, with its call for a "national accord" and "negotiations." That is the meaning of the statement by Jan Kulaj, the former head of "Rural Solidarity" (the peasants' union), that what was needed was a union that was not "political," but was just a union.

US Out of Lebanon!

On August 25, 800 US Marines landed in Beirut, Lebanon.

These Marines have not landed to "help evacuate the Palestinian Liberation Organization," or "to protect the PLO from Israel," as the imperialist press claims.

These Marines have landed to *disperse the PLO*, to enforce the US "peace plan" — a plan that gives Israel a free hand in Lebanon, demands that

The defense of the Polish Trotskyists, the ultimate "extremists," is, therefore, not a private matter at all, but a question of defending the radical wing of Solidarnosc and of safeguarding the movement's strength.

In the United States, the other side of the same coin appears. Since Reagan "supports" Solidarnosc (which is a false premise), therefore, our first task must be to distinguish ourselves from Reagan (it is hard for centrists to do this).

This takes the form of not doing anything to support the Polish workers. Here the centrists join up with the Stalinists, who openly oppose Solidarnosc and use the line that, since Reagan "supports" it, that *proves* it is "reactionary."

And in practice, the centrists do not *act* any differently than the Stalinists. While the Stalinists openly denounce the Trotskyists, the centrists (RWL, SWP, IS, etc.) join in suppressing the fact of their existence.

In preparing the December 13 Gdansk action, we are going to organize the support of workers and youth for Solidarnosc — against the compromisers, against the centrists — in the fight to defend its united strength; above all, by defending our Polish comrades.

TRUTH

the PLO turn over all its heavy weapons to Israel's Lebanese puppet regime, and that the Palestinians who remain in the country submit to the law laid down by these butchers:

Thus the alleged "evacuation of the PLO under US protection" is in no sense a victory for the Palestinians, as the Stalinists and PLO factions close to

Continued on page 4

Report on Our Seventh National Conference

By DAVID HEFFELFINGER

The Seventh National Conference of the Trotskyist Organization/USA, held over the weekend of July 17-18, marked a new stage in the fight of our party. The Conference was able to base itself on a rich experience in the struggle for the leadership of the revolution on both an international and national scale. In particular, on the gains in the organization of the working class youth in the Revolutionary Youth International, and the fight of these youth alongside the Fourth International for the proletarian and international revolution.

Its Work

The Conference was attended by nine delegates of the TO and three observers. Also present were three members of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. Two of the delegates were recently recruited to the party. One is a former member of the Young Socialist Alliance (youth group of the Socialist Workers Party), won in the course of work done in the anti-draft movement and the campaign for the workers candidate, while the other is a young Palestinian. Two of the observers were from the Chicago Workers Video group, which fought together with the TO to raise the defense of the Polish Revolution in the American working class. And also present was a young worker from Detroit who had been active in International Young Guard, the American organization of the Revolutionary Youth International, and is a founding member of the Malcolm X Circle of the RYI in Detroit.

The Conference was organized around three documents: 1) a Draft Resolution for an American Conference, submitted by the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, 2) a Central Resolution (published in the last issue of *Truth*) and 3) a Resolution on Statutes; the last two submitted by the outgoing leadership of the TO.

The Draft Resolution, submitted by the IS of the Fourth International, amounts to a text of preparation for a Conference of the sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International of North and South America, which is planned for December of 1982 in Lima, Peru. The conclusions of the discussion over this document were introduced in the form of amendments to the Central Resolution and proposals to the International Secretariat aimed at clarifying our fight in the US for the American Conference and clarifying certain points in the document itself.

Both the Central Resolution and the Resolution on Statutes, which were put up for a vote by the delegates, passed unanimously.

Trotskyist Congress

The most important decision taken by the Conference was the *conclusion* that the rebuilding of the American section of the Fourth International, a task which has been in front of the Trotskyist Organization since its foundation in 1975, is now an *immediate and practical objective*. The Conference decided that in order to answer the pressing need for revolutionary leadership, including the significance that the rebuilding of the US section has for the rebuilding of sections in Latin America, that within the period normally allotted between National Conferences, the *Trotskyist Congress — Rebuilding the American Section of the Fourth International* must be realized.

This is not a question of a new name for the Trotskyist Organization's National Conference. It means a complete change in political and organizational terms for the party, and it means a fundamental change in the relation of the Fourth International to the American proletariat.

This decision was at the heart of our

Seventh National Conference, particularly concerning the relation of the Trotskyist Congress to the historical and strategic task of building a Workers Party independent of the bourgeoisie in the United States. The discussion and political struggle at the Conference revolved around the rejection of two parallel tendencies. One sees the Workers Party essentially as a tactic of pressure on the trade union bureaucracy, and this is completely identified with the belief in the possibility of a peaceful or democratic interlude in the class struggle. The other sees the Trotskyist Congress as a limited regroupment of militants from the pseudo-Trotskyist organizations, and an accumulation of workers and youth alongside this regroupment, which inevitably, also, is based on defensiveness and hesitations toward the development of the revolution.

The whole of the Conference and the documents passed by it represented a struggle against any *spontaneist* conception of the construction of the party. Against this conception, the Conference stated that the Trotskyist Congress is a struggle to build the leadership of the Workers Party, while "... we place no limits of an artificial character on how far the Trotskyist Congress can go in representing the construction of the proletarian party of the American working class..." (Central Resolution).

In other words, the fight for the Trotskyist Congress, for a revolutionary leadership forged among the new generation of the working class, will determine the course of the construction of the Workers Party as a class party against imperialism and the programs of class collaboration with imperialism.

World Revolution

This new stage of the fight of the TO, which the Seventh National Conference opens up, is necessitated by the turn of the class struggle on an international scale.

This turn of the class struggle, whose most advanced point is the Polish Revolution, began in fact more than three years ago with the fall of Somoza in Nicaragua and the Iranian Revolution. It is explosively manifest today around the Malvinas War, where the intervention of British and US imperialism has provoked an even deeper crisis in all the regimes supported by imperialism. The Draft Resolution for the American Conference stated the stake of the present confrontations in its opening lines: "This is not the first time that Latin America has risen up against imperialism. But this time it does it basing itself on the dislocation toward which the international apparatus of the Kremlin is heading in face of the European Revolution, which has begun in Poland. And this time it will be able to base itself on the steps that the US proletariat is taking toward a general offensive against the Reagan government and its imperialist plans in South America."

What we have seen, particularly around the Malvinas War, is a direct expression of the opening of the Polish Revolution — the collapse of peaceful co-existence in North and South America.

This collapse is based on the revolution and has a direct expression in the United States. The refusal of the American working class to accept imperialist intervention in Central America, the political crisis of Reagan's government and both bourgeois parties, together with the beginning of a wave of strikes and struggles within the powerful American trade unions against the concessions agreements laid down only months ago — this is the backdrop for the struggle to forge a leadership to finish with the imperialist order.

In numerical strength, in the militant and material resources which the Trots-

kyst Organization has at its disposal, the Seventh National Conference represents only the first forces for preparing a new stage of the struggle of Trotskyism in the US and organizing the new turn of the class struggle in the Americas. But the objectives we have set, and the experiences in the unions and in the organization and formation of the working class youth that our Seventh National Conference was able to base itself on, are those which correspond to the advance of the revolution.

By contrast, the Socialist Workers Party, which once represented a pillar of the Fourth International, has become a product and captive of the dislocation of the international apparatus of Stalinism. Its sole contribution to the workers movement is to have become the privileged interpreter of Castro, the representative of Stalinism in the American continents. In full retreat before the advancing revolution, this party, too, has reached a qualitatively new stage of its development — the Barnes leadership of the SWP prepares to liquidate finally and unequivocally all the traditions and the lessons of the fight of the SWP for Trotskyism in North and South America. In its own Stalinist-corrupted manner, the SWP leadership is paying homage to the possibilities for the rebuilding of the Fourth International at the head of the two proletariats of North and South America — by striking out at the theory of the permanent revolution and formally proposing the liquidation of the SWP itself — because that is the full significance of its call for the "mass, Leninist International."

By itself, the crisis of the SWP is nothing positive; it means only a deeper attack on Leninism and Bolshevism. The only way to positively resolve this crisis is to fight for the party and the lessons of more than 100 years of Marxism that are represented in the struggle for the Fourth International as the organization of the class struggle itself toward the revolution. In this sense, the Seventh National Conference concluded that "... the struggle against the opportunists is our fight in the working class because it is the struggle against the programs the working class must confront" (Central Resolution).

The Trotskyist Congress and the new stage of the fight of the TO that it proposes, necessitates a complete renovation of the work of the party, in its policy and propaganda, in its organization and in its methods, as well as in the renovation of its cadres through the massive organization of the working class youth in the RYI alongside the party. This struggle was brought up sharply in the discussion of the Resolution on Statutes: "We have now reached a decisive turning point in the life of the TO. Since the Seventh and Eighth World Congresses, the TO has been engaged in a turn that has led to what amounts to a transformation of the organization and its functioning. The TO stands on the verge of accomplishing what its task was — the rebuilding of the US section of the International — and, therefore, on the verge of completing its role as the TO."

"In this sense, this resolution on Statutes is not a simple list of rules, but an attempt to educate the organization fully in democratic centralism..."

Our Tasks

Just as the rebuilding of the Fourth International in 1976 meant the construction of a leadership based on democratic centralism in the complete sense, it has also meant a political struggle to fully assume the responsibility and the methods of work of a world party faced with the task of organizing and centralizing a deep turn of the revolution on a world scale. For the TO this has meant that every step forward has meant a step away from a small group existence. The

Resolution on Statutes adopted at our Seventh National Conference codifies the lessons of this political struggle and provides the framework for surpassing the present stage of development of the TO.

Flowing from the policy and overall strategy laid out by the Seventh National Conference, definite concrete tasks and tactics were decided upon:

- For the Trotskyist Organization to assume a major responsibility in preparing and building the American Conference at the end of 1982;
- To build a Conference of the Circles of the RYI in November of 1982;
- That the major campaign of the TO preparing the American Conference will be its intervention in the 1982 elections for union candidates and a Workers Vote. This campaign will be the means to lead the current split in the UAW toward the fight for a Workers Party.

What about SWP

Ben Chavis Int

We are publishing below excerpts of an interview with Ben Chavis. Chavis is a leader of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP), and became well-known as one of the defendants in the famous Wilmington 10 frame-up. He recently led a split with the CP in the peace movement in opposition to the CP's demand that black people drop all their demands for the June 12 UN rally in favor of the demand for peace, helping to form the Third World and Progressive People's Coalition. Chavis had worked closely with the CP as a supporter of the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression.

We are publishing, for reasons of space, only those sections of the interview which particularly pertain to the struggles of black people. Chavis also discussed Central America, Palestine and the lessons of the 60's.

As our readers will see, our policy and Chavis' policy are not the same. In particular, we disagree with his conception of the nature of the struggle and the party necessary to free black people. We are publishing the interview in the interests of clarifying these questions and will respond in the next issue. The interview was conducted by Alor Cortazar, Filipino militant of the Fourth International.

TRUTH

Q. What are the aims of the National Black Independent Political Party?

A. Our aims are several. We attempt to attain power, to radically transform the present socio-economic order, that is, to achieve self-determination and social and political freedom for America's black people.

Therefore, our party actively opposes racism, imperialism and capitalist exploitation.

That is general; let me be more specific. Our analysis shows that one of the fundamental problems, not the only one, but one of the fundamental problems, is the state that organization is in, in the United States. Therefore, what we are attempting to do is to organize at the grass roots level. Not just to organize for the sake of organizing, but to organize for the objectives of: 1) political education; 2) heightening black consciousness; and 3) to involve the masses of black people in the political process but in their own interest.

Response to CWV: The Fourth International

In the mobilization for the Hamburg Rally, numerous organizations and tendencies fought with the Fourth International under the slogan, "Freedom for Workers Poland," for the construction of a new revolutionary leadership. In the July 9 issue of *Truth*, we reprinted the endorsement of members of Chicago Workers Video for the Call of the Revolutionary Youth International for the Hamburg Rally. This statement contained also their position regarding the aims and slogans of the Rally, and of the Call itself. While we feel it is necessary to make a sharp and clear political response to the comrades' statement, we nevertheless feel that the debate itself is a necessary and positive one.

At the heart of the Hamburg Rally and the position of the CWV comrades is the question of the Fourth International. Or, to put it more precisely, does the Fourth International exist, or is its existence still a question? The CWV statement does not directly address this crucial question, all the more crucial because of the existence of many organizations that claim to be for the Fourth International *in general*.

The comrades write: "... This

Fourth Communist International does not yet exist in a complete sense, nor are the groups which exist today *The Fourth International* by virtue of primogeniture (Cde. A begat Cde. B, who then begat Cde. C)."

As for the question of "primogeniture," we can only assume that the comrades are referring here to the "theories" of certain self-proclaimed historic chiefs, who, after definitively breaking with and attempting to liquidate the Fourth International, tried to set up fake Internationals based on their own national capitulations. To name names, Gerry Healy and Pierre Lambert.

In succession, both Lambert and Healy based themselves on a fundamentally nationalist and Stalinist adaptation in order to get at the thorn in their side, the Fourth International built as an international center based on democratic centralism — the negation of their parochial, national orientations.

What we want to get at however, is not "who" is the Fourth International, but "what" is the Fourth International. In this sense, what do the comrades mean by the statement that the Fourth

International does not exist "... in a complete sense"? We feel we have to point out what is intended by this understanding, implicitly if not explicitly, by the whole milieu of parties and organizations that like to toy around with the idea of having an International. But then they maintain that the rebuilding of the Fourth International must wait for the building of strong national sections. In its best moments, this is what the International Committee had to fight against before the capitulations of Healy and Lambert. Such a conclusion begins by turning everything upside down. This is an old road travelled by the POUM, by the SWP, and even today by Thornett and his Trotskyist International Liaison Committee.

We are told, for example, by the Revolutionary Workers League, the American co-thinking group of Thornett, that the genuine rebuilding of the Fourth International must await the programmatic clarity of national parties claiming to be

The RWL is so upset by our audacity in calling ourselves the Fourth International that it has reverted to calling us the "Vargaites" (a magical incantation

designed to ward off the nagging remembrance of a world party). But the RWL has not hesitated to give itself a rather bold name and set itself up as a political organization, despite the fact that it awaits, and has great need of, "programmatic clarity." By its own admission, the RWL has two standards — one for the national party and one for the International. In the present situation, where the whole fabric of the world order set up by imperialism with the collaboration of Stalinism is coming unraveled, the proletariat needs — an unclear national party to build a clear and correct international party? What confusion and sophistry!

Of course, the Fourth International must have a correct policy in order to win the workers and youth to its banner; but in order to have a correct policy it must have an organization, a leadership organized in a democratic centralist manner. This principle is widely recognized in the case of the national party, but rejected in the international case. However, no Marxist can have two standards — one for the national case and another for the international.

The point is this: if the comrades do not accept that the Fourth International has been rebuilt as an international center against Stalinism, that is one thing; but, if they still maintain that this event must wait for the building of strong national sections, that is a far more dangerous position.

Indeed, while we must insist that the Fourth International has been rebuilt as an international center, and (though we wish it had been otherwise) that we alone have fought to continue the Fourth International not as a vague idea but as an international center, we also can easily agree that the Fourth International does not yet exist "in a complete sense."

This, of course, only underlines the importance of having an international party to make a struggle, as the Fourth International did for Hamburg, with one policy in order to organize, around the Polish Revolution, the most decisive sector of the proletariat, the working class youth.

The comrades write: "... The formulation in the Call 'Massively Organize the Revolutionary Youth to Resolve the Crisis of Leadership of the World Proletariat' can give the impression that the youth are the principal revolutionary stratum in society."

But in fact the whole point that the Call is trying to make, and that we defend, is that the construction of the party must be based on the organization and political formation of the stratum of the working class that is already placing itself at the barricades, precisely because it is the least compromised by the centrist misleaders — who await "programmatic clarity," but we always ready to enter into unprincipled agreements *against* the construction of a world party based on democratic centralism.

Of course, the youth have no magical quality of pure revolutionism about them. They bring with them all the illusions of the working class as a whole. That is why, in the manner in which Trotsky and the newly founded Fourth International addressed the question, we fight for the Revolutionary Youth International to be the instrument, in an autonomous fashion, of the formation of the youth in Bolshevism.

There are other questions that we would like to continue to debate and clarify with the comrades of CWV also, such as the full significance of the Polish Revolution. But here too, it seems to us that the question that is at stake is the fight for the Fourth International.

We invite the comrades to respond and to continue this debate, which is of such vital importance to advanced workers and youth.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Interview: The Black Movement

There is no doubt that black people participate in the political process in this country but they do not participate, we believe, in their own interest. We believe that through the Democratic and Republican parties — that kind of political participation — is not in the interests of black people, is not in the interests of poor and oppressed people.

Therefore we feel that we have to involve them in an alternative mechanism in which they can participate. Not just in the electoral process. We're talking about grass-roots organizing, institution building, setting up alternative vehicles for communication and information, for education. Those kinds of things, things that are necessary for the future.

One chapter of the party is actually feeding people. Another one has got farms bringing their produce to where people can get food.

So the party certainly intends to raise ideological perspectives among black people, but it also intends to meet some of the basic practical needs of the people. So the party has to change the present socio-economic status of black people, but you cannot, we believe, do that without the total transformation of the whole society you live in.

So that is the ultimate goal that we are working towards and as we work towards that goal we can do many things along the way.

Q. How do you foresee the relation of the workers party to the black independence party?

A. Well I think that a true workers party makes support for it, and this is what I said at the SWP forum. All progressive forces must support the right of black people to have their own independent political party, particularly if that independent political party has stated out front, above board, that one of its chief objectives is to transform this society in a progressive

vein and to stand against racism in all its forms. Therefore in a simple answer to your question, a workers party should overwhelmingly support the right of black people to build their own national black independent political party.

Q. What opinion do you have of those left-wing tendencies that criticize the BLA for its strategy and do not defend it as a working class party against the repression of the police state?

A. I think that the BLA has been criticized from the right and the left. But I think what people should look at is what has been done in the concrete as a result of the BLA or of there ever being a BLA. I think that the repression that the members of the BLA are now facing is directly linked to the real consequential activity that they have been involved in over a number of years. I think that no amount of police, no amount of force is going to wipe out the BLA. I think that the BLA is an expression of the people and if reactionary forces on the left or reactionary forces on the right want to do away with the BLA than they should do away with the causative factor, the discontent in the society that causes the BLA to emerge. I think that the BLA should not involve an isolation of the peoples movement. And therefore I think ways have to be found to, not just say, well, I support the BLA because I think I have had problems with that a lot because people don't really understand what the BLA stands for, but concretely to defend the right of an oppressed people to have the BLA.

What we are defending is the right of the Palestinians to have the PLO, what we are defending is the right of the people of Namibia to have SWAPO, defending the right of the people in southern Africa to have an ANC. And therefore I don't see, in the strictest sense of the term, a problem of defending the right of black people to have a black liberation army.

Q. Last week in the SWP forum you mentioned the importance of the general strike for building the workers party and the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP).

A. Well, I suggested it as one strategy for the masses of working people, not as a strategy of NBIPP. But I think if the masses of workers, people who work, people who produce, held a national strike to say no to Ronald Reaganism, to say no to the military-industrial complex, to say no to

the domestic and foreign policy of the United States, it would be effective. I advanced the notion that we have never had a national strike across the board by workers of many varying backgrounds in the interests of making society more humane, in the interests of changing the relations in the society. And that is the point I specifically made because I believe that the strategy would be effective. I think the US, those who control the US bourgeois democracy, are able to live in relative comfort and are able to comfortably proclaim repressive policies because working people allow them to. I think that what I am saying is that a lot of responsibility falls on the working class.

If those who work don't like the way the society is being run it is the responsibility of those who work to involve themselves in the struggle to change society. And that is what I don't see happening in the US to as great a degree as it could be. And that is why I think a strike, while a strike will not solve all problems, but I think a strike is an effective strategy that we have yet to use.

Q. What has your party done in factories to make the general strike a reality?

A. Well again, I want to be clear that what I said at the SWP forum is my own perspective in terms of laying out some projections of what I thought would be effective in the future. The NBIPP has not adopted that particular strategy as its strategy. Right now we are in a dialogue about a number of different strategies that we could use. Right now the programmatic objective of NBIPP is to raise the issue of jobs at the community level.

As you know the unemployment rate among black people in this country is extremely high and we feel in order to be accountable, to meet the interests of our people, that we have to raise some of the issues that are most burning of our people, and certainly the issue of jobs is one of them. That is why we have a campaign, in fact the main program of our party, to raise the issue of unemployment, raise the issue of providing jobs for people at the local level.

Again, let me say that on the strike, I want to be really clear on that, that that is my personal opinion. I have said that on several other occasions, in other occasions, in other forums, particularly to the party, that the party, I believe, has to evolve some non-traditional methodologies to achieve our specific objectives. I believe that calling for a national strike is one of the non-traditional methodologies.

TRUTH

Bi-Weekly Organ of the Trotskyist Organization/USA

Editorial Board: Kevin FitzPatrick, Editor; Margaret Gutshall, David Heffelfinger, Barbara Putnam.

Subscription Rates: US and North America: \$1 for eight issues (introductory), \$3 for one year. Inquire for all other rates, including institutional rates.

TRUTH

Centrists Rush to the Aid of Barnes

When the Barnes leadership of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) openly repudiated the theory of the permanent revolution (see *Truth* #150), this marked a qualitative development of the crisis of the pseudo-Trotskyist group.

Which Way Out?

The SWP has shrunk greatly in membership. Its influence has diminished markedly. And, to top it off it has just announced that *Intercontinental Press*, its "international" publication, will retreat from weekly to bi-weekly publication.

How to respond to this situation? At the recent "educational conference" held by the SWP in Oberlin, Ohio, two counterposed positions revealed themselves.

We of the Trotskyist Organization/USA intervened in this conference on a clear basis. The destruction of the SWP, of the party that once represented Trotskyism in this country, is being carried out by the Barnes grouping in the interest of Stalinism. It seeks to use the name and tradition of the SWP to attack the very Trotskyism that it once stood for.

Seen in this light, there is nothing positive about the SWP's destruction in itself. Our intervention at Oberlin was aimed at demonstrating the *positive outcome* of the crisis of the SWP: the rebuilding of the US section of the Fourth International in a *Trotskyist Congress*.

The political content of this Congress is the building of the leadership of the party of the class independence of the American workers, the Workers Party, through organizing the working class youth.

On this basis, in the course of a few large interventions, we were able to sell thirty-nine copies of *Truth*.

While this figure is quite respectable, we fell short of our goal in terms of subscriptions, getting just one. This was particularly important to us as an *organized link* between SWP members and the Fourth International.

The political problem expressed in these results is directly connected to the presence of the other position that we have already referred to.

In the middle of the Sunday morning intervention, members of the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), a Detroit-centered group connected to Alan Thornett's "Trotskyist International Liaison Committee," suddenly appeared — *very suddenly*, since this group has never shown any previous interest in the SWP — selling a pamphlet on the permanent revolution and the situation in the SWP.

At the same time, a member of the Weinstein-Mahoney opposition in the SWP, the largest of the formal opposition groupings, warmly embraced an RWL member. Meanwhile, just the night before, the great Weinstein himself had only one thing to say to one of our militants — "Shut up!"

What is the content of the RWL's position, as expressed in the pamphlet with which it was intervening? In the language of Marxism: *unprincipled combinationism*.

What is the significance of the RWL's sudden interest in the SWP? In essence, creating a *centrist roadblock* to the fight against Barnes, an "intermediate" solution counterposed to a revolutionary solution of the crisis of the SWP.

The bulk of the RWL's pamphlet is concerned with its open bloc with one David Keil.

As long ago as 1971, this person presented himself as an opponent of Barnes. But, when the Proletarian Orientation Tendency, in a very limited

and timid fashion, began to carry its opposition into action, Keil wrote to its already hesitant leaders that he hoped they would "not consider your document as a counter-line document, but rather that you will call for a 'yes' vote on the NC (Barnes' National Committee — KF) resolution while supporting your document's important criticisms."

And, further: "Instead of saying that the party 'no longer has a proletarian orientation,' it would be better to say that it no longer has a sufficient orientation to the proletariat, or that more of an orientation to the proletariat is needed . . . you attacked the leadership too strongly and too blanketly," etc.

But even this avuncular tone was abandoned when Keil wrote to the smaller Communist Tendency, which was ready — despite great weaknesses — to wage a *fight* against Barnes: "Does your document not come dangerously close to a position of disloyalty . . . very dangerous . . . a line which is not far from a split perspective . . . in no way will I participate in a discussion against the party."

"Comrades" All

That was David Keil's "oppositional" role then, and that is his role now — except that Barnes has split from him.

This same person, with no comment from the RWL, states in his article in the pamphlet his continued support to the positions of the "Leninist Trotskyist Faction" that the SWP organized in the mid-1970's. This faction's goal was to unite with the French OCI of Pierre Lambert, which just coincidentally was furiously slandering and attacking the forces that were rebuilding the Fourth International. In the end, the "LTF" only paved the way for the opportunist and brief regroupment of Moreno with Lambert, another of the many aimed against the rebuilding.

In the same article, again without comment from the RWL, Keil expresses his agreement with the revisionist theory of the late Joseph Hansen that between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat lies a halfway house called the "workers and peasants government." Hansen used this theory to support the Stalinist Castro. Barnes uses it to characterize the petty bourgeois Sandinistas. And Keil — this "opponent" — agrees: "Hopefully Nicaragua will follow" (this schema).

Oh yes, it's all quite cozy. For the RWL, Keil is "comrade Keil" and an "independent Trotskyist." For Keil, Doug Jenness, Barnes' mouthpiece against the permanent revolution, is "Comrade Jenness" and someone who "has up to now devoted his life" to the Trotskyist movement.

And for Jenness and Barnes, Keil and the RWL are — *very useful*.

The RWL by no means limits itself to not criticizing Keil. No, it sets out, in a common statement by Keil and three of its members (a little bit of fakery implying that a tendency exists in the SWP, while these individuals long ago, without any fight, drifted out of the SWP and into the RWL), what amounts to a platform for the centrist bloc.

In this listing, the first point is "Cuba" and the tenth, "Lesbians and Gay Men." Buried in the middle, as just some more points of equal importance, are "Permanent Revolution," "Poland" and "The Fourth International."

We already know the agreement that exists on the permanent revolution (Keil is "hopeful" about Nicaragua's "workers and peasants government"). As far as Poland goes, the two partners call for defending the Polish workers, "even with demonstrations in the street."

("Even"!)

This comes from the same RWL that characterized the SWP, which refuses to lift a finger, as failing "to distinguish itself from the anti-communists" (*Workers Struggle*, February 1982)! Similarly it and Keil remark that a "Polish nucleus based on the Transitional Program . . . would be a starting point for building" a revolutionary leadership. But the RWL knows full well that such a "nucleus (our Polish section) already exists; it has been "studying materials" about it for months now (*Workers Struggle*, March-April 1982).

On the Fourth International, we come to the heart of the question. "Comrade Keil" supports the "LTF." What does the RWL support? How does it characterize the SWP and its leadership, as well as the Pabloite United Secretariat? It doesn't.

The objective of this unprincipled combination, which includes the Weinstein people as silent partners, is another attempt at an opportunist regroupment — after the "Organizing Committee" of Lambert, after the "LTF," after Moreno's and Lambert's new "IC" — against the Fourth International. This is Thornett's "open conference" (and Lora can come, too).

In the meanwhile, this policy poses no *fight* against Barnes at all. The permanent revolution is abandoned? — let's have a theoretical discussion about it. Don't draw any drastic conclusions, however; don't, as "Comrade Keil" used to put it, "come dangerously close to a position of disloyalty" or "participate in a discussion against the party."

This centrist combination stretches in

US Out of Lebanon!

Continued from page 1

them claim.

The Communist Party USA approvingly quotes PLO-PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) leader Bassam Abu Sharif: "The PLO and the NPM (Lebanese National Patriotic Movement — MG) were ready to continue — and actually could have continued — their defense of the city. But guided by humanitarian considerations, the PLO leadership took the decision to leave West Beirut. We are leaving the city as victors . . . we have saved thousands of lives . . . The Palestinians resistance has not laid down its arms. The struggle continues."

The CP also quotes PLO-Fatah (Arafat's faction) leader Abu Iyad, who concurs with Abu Sharif and adds: "But after the evacuation the PLO position will remain firmly the same. We will carry on the struggle without let up, the struggle for our homeland and against the Camp David accords. Damascus will be the headquarters for our movement."

This is a delusion from beginning to end.

The PLO's departure is not saving lives. It is costing lives. The US and Israel have just begun. They aim to destroy Palestinians as an organized force. The rapid election (at Israel's instigation) of the Phalange (fascist) leader Bashir Gemayel to head Lebanon, a man known for terrorizing Palestinians, proves this. The PLO departure has left Palestinians throughout Lebanon at his mercy.

Nor will the PLO be able to pick up in Damascus where it left off in Beirut. The very dispersion of PLO forces to at least eight different countries will impede the struggle. And the regimes under which they will exist are far from friendly. Jordan already wiped out thousands of Palestinians during "Black September." It is just a matter of time before another reactionary Arab regime

practice from the RWL through Keil to Weinstein — and all the way to Barnes and Jenness.

Two Policies

Our policy and the maneuver being attempted by the RWL are the expressions of two fundamentally different assessments of the period and of the tasks it imposes.

For the RWL, the crisis of the old organizations leads it to attempt to patch together a deal with the scraps of these groups, the most worn-out and cynical (Weinstein, Keil) elements, not to say open traitors (Lora). This policy of orienting toward the "militant cadres" as the most advanced elements flows from and reinforces a deep opposition to the building of the party in the battles of youth and workers. It leads, as it is leading, to another dead-end regroupment.

For the Fourth International, the great revolutionary upheavals that are producing the crises in the old leaderships permit the building of the party through — above all — the mobilization and organization of the youth set free by these same crises. *On this basis*, as part of the preparation of the revolution, it is possible to win the best of the older elements in the course of the battle against the opportunist leaderships that forms the "natural terrain" of today's struggles.

Militants in the SWP stand at a fork in the road: the primrose path of opportunist regroupment or the road of the Polish Revolution.

Forward to the Trotskyist Congress!
K.F.

attempts to follow suit.

The Stalinists and PLO factions around them have, and no doubt will continue, to defend this policy on the grounds that there is no alternative.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The growing opposition of US workers and other workers on an international scale, and especially the Israeli, Jewish, soldiers, youth and workers' mobilization against the invasion of Lebanon provided the Palestinians with an alternative, with a means to defeat the US and Israel.

Indeed, Israel attempted to invade Beirut on August 4, was repelled and did not repeat the attempt for fear that it would lose all support and that the Israeli army, deeply divided, would crumble in such fierce fighting.

But, under the guidance of the Kremlin, the leadership of the PLO did not take advantage of this opportunity. Instead of turning to US workers, to the international working class, and especially to the Jewish youth, workers and soldiers in Israel, and building a unified, revolutionary mobilization to bring down Begin, destroy the Zionist state and free Palestinian, Jewish and all Arab youth and workers, the PLO leadership turned to US imperialism.

In exchange for the possibility, not even the promise, of eventual diplomatic recognition by the US, this leadership gave away what Israel had not been able to take with a three-month siege — Beirut — and freely agreed to what Israel had not been able to achieve at gun point — the dispersal of the PLO.

It is still quite possible to defeat US imperialism and Israel. But this requires a rupture with the policy of Stalinism and the PLO leadership.

US Out of Lebanon!
No to Dispersing the PLO!
TRUTH