

VOTE WORKING CLASS IN '84!

The results of the latest public opinion polls show the failure of labor officialdom's attempt to promote the Democratic Party to working people. Mondale is down by more than twenty points. In order to win he would have to overcome a gap that is unprecedented in presidential elections. There is talk in the air of a "new realignment," so confident are the Republicans of victory. The 1984 elections may well leave the Democratic Party even weaker than it was after Carter's defeat.

To that we say: Working people, youth! Turn your backs on the Democratic Party and begin now to build a Labor Party! Alliance of workers and oppressed to cast a working class vote in the elections!

Mondale's personal appearance of weakness, his "dull" campaign, is really a reflection of the overall crisis of the Democratic Party. A party that has secured the allegiance of the trade unions and Blacks for more than forty years without giving anything in return.

We need our own party! Yes, there is a realignment taking place. A one-sided realignment of the bosses, the rich and powerful, against the working people. No matter who wins, Reagan or Mondale, he will be part of this realignment. Working people need to line up their forces now. The first step in building our own party, a Labor Party, is rejecting any support for the bosses' parties, Democrats and Republicans, and registering as large as

possible a vote for working class candidates in the 1984 elections.

To that end, the Trotskyist Organization will be fighting for the unity of organizations that claim to represent the working class — socialists, trade unions, and Black organizations — to work together to build such a vote.

There are many working class parties on the ballot in many states, including the Socialist Workers Party and its candidates that call for a Labor Party.

An all-out fight against support for the bosses' parties, the oppressors' parties, for a vote for these working class parties, is the first step in the mobilization of the working class to build its own party.

This struggle is a class struggle, just like a demonstration, a strike or a war. Which side are you on? Are you for the bosses' parties or for the workers' parties?

The Trotskyist Organization calls on all organizations that claim to be for a Labor Party, especially the Socialist Workers Party, to form a Workers Electoral Alliance for a Labor Party to maximize the vote for working class parties in this election now.

There is no middle ground, no room for sitting on the fence, in the class struggle.

Down with the bosses' parties!

Build a Labor Party!

Vote working class in '84!

TRUTH

Jobs for All!

By DAVID MARK

While the proposals of Mondale and Reagan to deal with unemployment are different in some respects, the basis of each is the same — the market and the needs of the corporate bosses determine the level of unemployment. A real solution to unemployment starts from the opposite side of the coin — the needs of those who work and labor must determine the level of joblessness. That is why for the working class the only acceptable demand is jobs for all.

Reagan's program is a traditional conservative approach, the so-called "trickle down" theory according to which the crumbs from the table of the rich will be enough to feed the poor. It has one simple advantage over Mondale's — it is very popular with the capitalist class. But it is impossible to separate the economic effects of Reagan's administration and policies from the political effects. In order to make massive unemployment stick, Blacks and immigrant workers have been made the scapegoat of the failures of the capitalist system. In fact, Reagan's major weapon has not been economics, but using the government as a tribune to rally all the most reactionary forces in the society as a giant capitalist goon squad against the working class.

Mondale unveiled his plan last week. The theme of it is to reduce deficits. This plan is best called a band-aid, a band-aid for a wound that is infected to the point of being dangerously fatal to the patient, the working class, especially, young workers and Blacks. Mondale, of course, is not going to do anything to alter the level of unemployment that would seriously anger the class of rich and powerful that he wants to serve. Instead he offers a few more crumbs — \$22 billion — or less than two percent of what the government spends on its defense budget. In this sense, Mondale's program is nothing but Reaganism without Reagan.

And, please, do not be fooled by the current "upturn." Since World War II there have been almost a dozen upturns. Each "up" a little lower than the last; each "down" a little lower than the last. The 1980 "recession" was far worse than the 1975 one and 1975 was much worse than the one in 1971. Every "recovery" has been more sickly than the preceding one.

Just as the working class needs its own party to fight for its demands and interests, so the solution to unemployment is based on the principle that those who perform labor must decide how to organize work! From any point of view, jobs for all is in the interest of working people, if not the entire human race.

At any cost, and on any basis, the tremendous levels of unemployment among youth (20%) and Black youth (40%) must be stopped. Allowing this to go on in the new generation of the working class is slow death for the entire working class. We must fight on the local and national scale for public works, under the control of the trade unions and labor organizations.

In such an unconditional struggle against joblessness and poverty the youth can be organized to regenerate the trade unions and wake them up to their responsibilities to the entire working class. The guiding principle must be unity of employed and unemployed, unity of Black and white workers for jobs for all.

Union organizing drives of unemployed!

Organize Black workers and youth who are in low-paying jobs!

Finally, just as the trade unions have won a sliding scale of wages (Cost of Living Allowance, COLA) so that when costs go up, wages go up, now the working class must win a sliding scale of working hours (30 for 40) so that when unemployment goes up, more jobs must be created by dividing all the work among those willing and able to perform it.

The need to fight for jobs is as real today as it

has ever been. The present upturn is nothing but the calm before the storm. The trade wars between capitalist nations, the military interventions in Central America and the atmosphere of racism that this government has created are all signs of the nature of this period. If the working class is going to be in a position to fight these attacks, then a united fight for jobs must be waged by all the partisans of the workers movement.

Vote No! An Auto-wide Strike!

By BARBARA PUTNAM

Bieber's agreement with GM casts in concrete the collaboration of the union with the bosses and their candidates in the elections, Reagan and Mondale. When Reagan told auto workers to "show restraint" in negotiations with GM, Bieber took it seriously. That is why workers need to vote down the contract, prepare a national strike of auto to interrupt the orderly process of destroying the union, and begin to build their own party with their own candidates. This can be a starting point for regaining all that has been lost in concessions and passing to the offensive.

Bieber's tactics in negotiations were based on three central collaborationist ideas that were meant to avoid a real conflict:

- 1) no national strike so as not to appear unreasonable for Mondale's benefit;
- 2) emphasis on gains for older workers (pensions) at the expense of younger workers;
- 3) selective strikes to gently pressure GM into an agreement that would not make Bieber smell too bad to the membership.

While the UAW Bargaining Committee passed the agreement 9-1 (Pete Kelly, Local 160 president, head of "Restore and More in '84," and long-time oppositionist, voted against the agreement), now the Bargaining Committee must sell it to the ranks.

The magic words "job security" may cast a spell over a certain segment of the union until the unveiling when autoworkers have to live with the consequences. There is nothing wrong with job security. It is what all workers need. But the tentative agreement does not provide it and should be rejected by auto workers for the fraud it is.

Workers who lose their jobs due to outsourcing and automation will allegedly be paid out of a six-year fund (money undoubtedly siphoned off workers' wages only until GM sends them to another plant or "retrains" them. Only certain workers are eligible and it would mean they would have to agree to totally disrupting their lives by moving to another city or state.

GM's job retraining program has proven to be a debacle in Los Angeles. There federal and state money was added to \$2.5 million from GM (money extracted for workers' hourly wages) to set up the program. Over half of the 2,279 auto workers who participated dropped out. The kinds of jobs they were being retrained for were obsolete by the time the training was over or they were non-union jobs at entry level wages that could not hope to sustain an autoworkers' standard of living.

What is more, in exchange for this dubious gain, the contract eliminated the 3% Annual Improvement Factor entirely. There will be a 1% to 3 1/2% wage increase the first year (no doubt a different amount for different workers) and lump sum payments the second and third year that will not be folded into the workers' basic wage rate! While the actual COLA formula will remain the same, 11¢ per hour of COLA from the most recent quarter will not be folded into the worker's basic wage rate and 13¢ per hour of COLA over the life of the contract will be diverted to pay for fringe benefits. In other words, this historic agreement makes another 24¢ per hour concession to GM. That is millions of dollars!

Auto analysts are predicting that the new contract would mean 25% higher labor costs over the next 3 years, but this fact is only for public consumption because 15% of that amount would merely represent the rate of

inflation and the last 10% is to be "offset by productivity improvements." (*Detroit Free Press*, September 22, 1984). In not so many words, there will be no increased labor costs for GM, but the workers, on the other hand, will pay heavy costs in terms of speed-up, tighter work rules, job eliminations and the like. This is one reason several plants remained on strike after the announced settlement. These were strikes over changed work rules at the local level.

Auto workers have shown a willingness to strike and have not yet given any favorable response to the tentative settlement.

A national strike of auto would go far to bring the era of "business unionism" to an end with a bang. This is why all tendencies in the UAW against concessions must make a common fight to vote down this contract, build such a strike, and a Labor Party with its own candidates to lead this struggle.

Cleveland: An Important Advance

Six hundred militants met to map out a plan of action against US intervention in Central America in Cleveland, Ohio, September 14-16.

This conference was an important advance for the American working class. It was the first such national and democratic conference since the Coalition Against Registration and the Draft (CARD) in February, 1981. A significant number of leading trade unionists did support and participate in the conference. And this conference did adopt a national plan of action against US intervention, in opposition to liberal Democrats, the Communist Party, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) and the Socialist Workers Party, all of which virtually boycotted the conference and intervened in it in opposition to adopting any concrete plans.

What is even more important for the working class in the long run is that a significant minority emerged within the conference in favor of a break with the imperialist Democrats and a Labor Party.

The Trotskyist Organization led a struggle at the conference to stop union support to the imperialist Democratic Party now and build a Labor Party — beginning with a fight for Labor Candidates and a vote for working class parties in the 1984 elections — as the most important thing we can do right now to defend the Nicaraguan Revolution. On this basis, we sold nearly 60 copies of *Truth*, won 13 new

subscribers and 42 votes in favor of putting our resolution on the floor. And many people who were not yet ready to give any concrete support to this struggle said they were tremendously moved by our struggle for a Labor Party, including a number of trade unionists.

We were also able to reach an agreement with the Revolutionary Workers League and the Internationalist Workers Party to put forward a common resolution in favor of a workers party and labor candidates in the elections and waged a common struggle for this resolution throughout the conference.

And at a caucus meeting of opponents of the Democratic Party held after the conference the Trotskyist Organization and the Revolutionary Workers League voted together to form an alliance to continue the struggle for a workers party and labor candidates within the framework of the anti-intervention coalition. (The Internationalist Workers Party had left the meeting.)

Now is the time to make this happen, to build the largest possible struggle for a workers party in the 1984 elections, particularly in the preparation of demonstrations on the anniversary of the invasion of Grenada, October 27. The next issue of *Truth* will elaborate on this question in detail and give a full report on the conference.

M.G.

SWP Amendment: An Anti-Revolutionary Sentence

By MARGARET GUTTSALL

The Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) recent convention, the first convention in three years, adopted an amendment to its constitution that reads: "The purpose of the party shall be to educate and organize the working class in order to establish a workers' and farmers' government, which will abolish capitalism in the United States and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism."

Jack Barnes, the SWP National Secretary, claims that this is a "revolutionary sentence" (*The Militant*, September 7, 1984, page 14). Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is an attack on the revolution developing in the Americas, particularly Nicaragua. It is part of the integration of the SWP into the Kremlin's attempts to suppress the revolution, attempts in the interests of imperialism and coexistence with it.

Since 1938 the SWP constitution has read: "The purpose of the party is set forth in its declaration of principles: its purpose shall be to educate and organize the working class for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' government to achieve socialism." As of 1967 it still read: "The purpose of the party shall be to educate and organize the working class for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' government to achieve socialism."

The striking thing about the amendment is not so much the addition of workers' and farmers' government. This does not really change the political content of the constitution.

The striking thing is that the party's purpose is no longer the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a workers government to achieve socialism. The party's purpose is to establish a workers and farmers government that will abolish capitalism and join the worldwide struggle for socialism. In other words, the workers government is for the here and now and the abolition of capitalism and the achievement of socialism are for the future.

Why such a change after nearly fifty years? Have fifty years of struggle shown that the abolition of capitalism and the achievement of socialism are even farther off than they were in 1938 or 1967? No. Quite the contrary. This amendment comes now precisely because the abolition of capitalism and the achievement of socialism are on the order of the day in the Americas and the SWP opposes this.

The Nicaraguan Revolution, like the Russian Revolution before it, began as a bourgeois democratic revolution against imperialism and the imperialist bourgeois dictatorship in Nicaragua. On the basis of this revolution, a democratic bourgeois state was established with a petty bourgeois nationalist leadership — the Sandinistas.

Yet precisely because both the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie in Nicaragua are so tied to imperialism, it is the working class that has played and continues to play the leading role in this revolution. And the working class, in its effort to achieve basic democratic demands, like the eight-hour day and the distribution of the land, has a natural tendency

to go beyond these demands and fight for working class, socialist demands, like the destruction of the bourgeois state, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. In other words, there is a tendency in Nicaragua, as in Russia and everywhere, for the bourgeois democratic revolution to go over to a working class, socialist revolution; that is, there is a

tendency toward *permanent revolution*. This is why we — Trotskyists — say that the abolition of capitalism and the achievement of socialism are on the order of the day in the Americas, beginning with Nicaragua.

The SWP, on the other hand, has opposed this tendency within the Nicaraguan Revolution from the very beginning. It opposed freedom for working class tendencies that wanted to go beyond the Sandinistas, including its own comrades in the Simon Bolivar Brigade. It opposed the workers' demands to finish with the National Guard and counseled "generosity" along with the Stalinists and the Sandinistas. And it opposed the occupation of the factories and the land in favor of the maintenance of a "mixed economy." Today it opposes the suppression of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie's political rights and supports the elections in which counter-revolutionary bourgeois parties that foster support for the contras are being allowed to participate.

Saying that Nicaragua already has a workers and farmers government is simply a way to cover for opposition to the continuation of the revolution, to the real fight for a workers government today.

There is no workers and farmers government in Nicaragua. There is no such thing as a workers and farmers government that bases itself on and maintains the bourgeoisie and its property. That is a petty bourgeois government, maybe even a very radical petty bourgeois government, but it is not a workers government.

The SWP says American workers already have what they need in Nicaragua, because it wants to stop them for fighting for what they need, a workers government. This is the role that the SWP has played in the revolution from the beginning. The amendment to the SWP's constitution putting off the abolition of capitalism and the achievement of socialism is simply a codification and affirmation of this role. In working class politics, as in daily life, the law follows the deed.

Anyone who has doubts about our interpretation of the meaning of the SWP's new law can take a look at Jack Barnes' report "For a Workers' and Farmers' Government," February 1982, or Mary-Alice Waters' "The Workers' and Farmers' Government: A Popular Revolutionary Dictatorship," Spring 1984.

This is not the first time that a party that claims to represent the working class has called for a "workers government" that maintains the capitalists and their property. But they usually do not call them workers governments. They call them "democratic dictatorships of the proletariat and the peasantry," "popular fronts" or "peaceful roads to socialism." And every time these parties have succeeded in imposing this policy on the working class it has led to total disaster — China, 1927; Spain, 1936; Chile, 1973.

Today the Kremlin and its associates in the Stalinist parties are trying to do the same thing. They did not succeed in preventing the outbreak of the revolution in the Americas. So they have undertaken "self-criticism" and decided to "join the revolution" (see Shafiq Jorge Handel and the Salvadoran CP's statements) in order to suppress it from within, to establish popular front-type governments that will maintain the capitalists and their property.

But this policy and its advocates are so bankrupt, so discredited in the working class, that the Kremlin cannot hope to do this without some help. It needs a new name for its policy, new theories, new arguments, new cadres whose hands are not obviously dripping with blood ... enter Jack Barnes, the SWP and the new updated version of "the workers' and farmers' government."

The victory of the American Revolution, beginning in Nicaragua, demands an all-out struggle to defeat this maneuver. And this in turn demands a struggle to rebuild the Trotskyist workers party, to implant Trotskyism in the working class, to train Trotskyist worker cadres. All who claim to defend Trotskyism against Barnes have a responsibility to make a common struggle to achieve these goals.

Think it over. The stakes are high.

"The purpose of the party shall be to educate and organize the working class in order to establish a workers' and farmers' government, which will abolish capitalism in the United States and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism."

— Amendment to the Socialist Workers Party's Constitution, Summer, 1984.

Permanent Revolution by Paul LeBlanc

By FRED VITALE

The oppositionists to the Socialist Workers Party leadership's anti-Trotskyist turn have produced a pamphlet, *Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua* by Paul LeBlanc. While the pamphlet has been published by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT), LeBlanc is a member of Socialist Action (SA). These are the two main groupings of the expelled oppositionists.

The pamphlet claims to show how the theory of the permanent revolution "applies" in Nicaragua. But the theory of the permanent revolution is first and foremost an analysis of the relationship of class forces from which flows a *political policy*.

Today, in the case of Nicaragua, this concerns what policy will defend and advance the Nicaraguan Revolution? And it is from this point of view that we want to examine this pamphlet.

The pamphlet's fundamental thesis is: the Sandinistas have basically carried out the Trotskyist program in Nicaragua. They have established the dictatorship of the proletariat and are embarking on the road to socialism. They do not fully understand the necessity of expanding the revolution throughout the region, but will do so under the pressure of events. Thus, there is no need for a Trotskyist party in Nicaragua.

This thesis is wrong.

The policies of the Sandinistas have weakened the Nicaraguan Revolution, have emboldened the counterrevolutionary forces both inside and outside Nicaragua and, if continued, could result in the overthrow of the revolution. It is necessary to build a Trotskyist workers party in Nicaragua.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat?

The first conclusion at the end of the pamphlet states in part: "The democratic needs of the nation could only be met through a revolution based upon a worker-peasant alliance resulting in the dictatorship of the proletariat ..."

For Trotskyists, the dictatorship of the proletariat means, as the Transitional Program states: "Its (the Fourth International's) political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie."

This was not and is not the policy of the Sandinistas. Their goal was the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship and the establishment of a democratic government that included the capitalists who had been shut out by Somoza. This is exactly what they did.

Within months, these capitalists left the government. LeBlanc claims that the new government without these capitalists is a "workers' and farmers' government."

But this is self-delusion. The departure of the capitalists, under the pressure of the masses, "was not a rupture with the bourgeoisie but the beginning of an imperialist sabotage of the revolution profiting from the conciliatorist and indecisive character of the Sandinista leadership"

(*Theses of the Seventh World Congress of the Fourth International*, Summer 1980). The strengthened counterrevolution is testimony to the correctness of this understanding.

Second, LeBlanc does not want supporters of the revolution to quibble over the maintenance of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and their property — a "mixed economy." He quotes Tomas Borge's famous speech on the Sandinistas' vision for Nicaragua as proof of their socialist goals.

But, there can be no socialism without the very concrete step of *expropriating the bourgeoisie*. This is lacking in the program of the Sandinistas. On this point, contrast Nicaragua to Cuba, where there is a dictatorship of the proletariat, although deformed and weakened by the Castroist leadership. This is sufficient to make the real *difference* quite clear.

One union leader of the Confederacion Sandinista de Trabajadores (CST), the largest union federation in Nicaragua and one led by the Sandinistas, is quoted in the pamphlet as saying: "The CST can, to be sure, take up problems, but how can it attack them?" This expression of powerlessness by leaders of working class organizations can only be answered by "expropriation of the bourgeoisie under workers control" (*Theses of the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International*, Summer 1984).

Such a measure would greatly weaken the bourgeois opposition, allow the workers to reorganize the economy to meet their war needs and train themselves in socialist planning. Without expropriation, the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie will base themselves on world imperialism and continue to flourish until they overpower the revolution.

"Involve the Masses"

The second main conclusion of the pamphlet states in part: "... (the revolution) must involve the masses in the process of ... establishing their genuinely democratic control over society."

For comrade LeBlanc, this is the direction in which the Sandinista leadership is headed.

If this is true, why are they holding bourgeois elections to a bourgeois parliament, an election that can only increase the legitimacy and strength of the bourgeoisie before the peasants and middle classes? These elections can only

weaken the working class. Already the mobilization of the counterrevolution has grown because of and around these bourgeois elections.

What is necessary to strengthen the revolution in Nicaragua is not elections that include the bourgeoisie, "but, on the contrary, the war effort and the sacrifices demanded of the masses demand the largest possible democracy for the oppressed. A parliament of workers and peasants, of the people in arms in Nicaragua, that of a congress of the committees of the ranks and the militias as the only *legitimate source of an authentic workers and peasants government in Nicaragua*" (*Theses of the Ninth World Congress*).

"Spread the Revolution"

The third and final conclusion of the pamphlet is: "The socialist future of the revolution can only be secured by spreading the revolution throughout the region and, ultimately, beyond."

We agree wholeheartedly with this conclusion.

But the Sandinistas' policy has resulted in the isolation of the revolution. They have said over and over, and have acted this way as well, that they are willing to isolate the Salvadoran guerrillas in exchange for an easing of Reagan's military pressure. They support the Contadora Group's plan that demands the same thing.

To spread the revolution throughout the region "and beyond" it is *first* necessary to defend the revolution where it is. Thus, the Fourth International has fought for a call to the workers and youth of the world by the Sandinistas for a mobilization of internationalist volunteers to defend Nicaragua.

The question of the permanent revolution in Nicaragua is not a question of an analytical tool as LeBlanc refers to it. It is the question of the existence of the revolution itself. The theory of the permanent revolution demands a Trotskyist policy: 1) expropriation of the bourgeoisie; 2) a congress of the ranks and 3) internationalist volunteers. It needs a Trotskyist workers party to carry this program out.

LeBlanc proposes only a continuation of the present policy of the Sandinistas. It has not advanced the revolution and it will not. The theory of the permanent revolution says so.

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