

To End Depression, Bring Down Reagan!

By KEVIN FITZPATRICK

It has now been two years since Ronald Reagan came to power. What has been the development of the class struggle since then and what is the road forward?

The New Depression

As the 98th Congress replaces the 97th, the US working class finds itself in a *depression* — not “recession,” “economic downturn,” or any other lying expression. The unemployment rate (10.8% nationally for December, 17.6% in Michigan) is the highest since the Great Depression of the 1930's — and that was the worst in the history of capitalism. Soup kitchens, panhandlers and foreclosures are everywhere, just like in the Great Depression.

At the same time, the stock market has reached new heights and some people are rolling in money. Reagan spent New Year's in Rancho Mirage (appropriate name!) outside Palm Springs, California, at Sunnylands, the estate of one of his multi-millionaire friends. Rancho Mirage has seven country clubs and a grand total of fifteen black people (with a population of 6,300).

The writer John Dos Passos said long ago that America was “two nations,” but Reagan isn't even on this planet.

This all-out, blatant attack on the working class is a direct result of Reagan's first two years in office.

“Reaganomics” in politics has been supplemented by “concessions” in regard to the unions. Cutting welfare, cutting food stamps, cutting all kinds of aid to the poor and helpless has linked up with massive wage cuts and layoffs to create the highest level of poverty — again — since the Great Depression.

The 97th Congress, with a Democratic majority in the House of Representatives, basically went along with every one of Reagan's attacks. Not just in economics, not just in union busting (PATCO) and strike breaking (railroad engineers), but also with a massive military rearmament aimed at counterrevolution around the world.

Today, not only does the 98th Congress (with even more Democrats in the House, voted in as a way to oppose Reagan) admittedly not have a single proposal to restore what has been taken, it can only squabble about how much more to take (higher taxes).

Similarly, Michigan Governor James Blanchard, elected as an “anti-Reagan” and “labor-backed” candidate, proposes as a solution — more taxes and more budget cuts, especially in education. That is the alternative the Democratic Party presents.

The Reason Why

They told us all through school that the Great Depression was a fluke, that it could never happen again, that “American prosperity” was eternal. It was only the crazy Marxists who said capitalism inevitably meant new depressions and worldwide crisis.

Who was right and who was wrong; who was lying and who was telling the truth?

It took the betrayal of the mass upsurges of the 1930's (especially the CIO) coupled with an immense World War to lift American imperialism out of the Great Depression, to create even the superficial “prosperity” of the postwar period.

There's a lot of talk about the “infrastructure” today, the interstate high-

ways and bridges are collapsing. In fact, they were as jerry-built and shoddy as the “prosperity” they represented and expressed. It is the “infrastructure” of capitalism that is really crumbling today. The whole wreck has to be torn apart, a fresh start has to be made. You can't patch up this system any more than you can the roads — in no time at all new cracks appear.

From the time Reagan became President, the Trotskyist Organization/USA has said that the task was to bring down Reagan with the general strike. Even more, that in order to do this, it was necessary to build a Workers Party — especially to make the general strike not into pressure on imperialism, but into a

revolutionary action.

What about the talk about a “recovery”? Isn't that why the stock market is so high — everything is going to get better, at least a little bit, even if slowly?

Better for whom? There was a recovery a few years ago, but hardly anyone can even remember it. The reason is that in a period of capitalist crisis the upturns recover less and less of the territory lost, while the downturns grow sharper and sharper. The next recovery will be even more of a passing fancy — for the working class — than the last one.

And the next downturn will be a catastrophe.

No to the Bosses' Caucus in the UAW!

In a matter of months, the United Auto Workers' bureaucracy will hold what it plans as the coronation — you could hardly call it an election — of Owen Bieber (who?) as the next president of the UAW.

In this way, the “administration caucus,” which has had a pro-imperialist stranglehold on the union since 1946, which is responsible for the massive layoffs and concessions, seeks to keep the auto workers down.

We have already proposed the formation of a *united workers slate* to run as delegates to the UAW's Constitutional Convention in May, particularly to run a candidate against Bieber. Delegate nominations take place in February, so there is no time to waste.

What should be the platform for such a slate? In our last issue, we indicated some key points for this platform. Now we want to develop it as a clear proposal for discussion.

First, as we said, a campaign against the “administration caucus,” especially Bieber.

Second, a fight for an independent party of the working class (a labor or workers party). That is, a break with the two capitalist parties, especially the Democratic Party.

Third, no concessions! Stop the attacks on the working class. Defend our gains, don't give them away.

Fourth, no cooperation in any form with the companies, their agents and their schemes. Reject “Quality of Work Life,” “Employee Involvement,” etc. Fight against the false attempt — import restrictions, local content laws, etc. — to blame other workers for what the auto corporations are doing.

This platform would be a good point

the UAW to make it into a tool of the workers instead of a tool against them. We offer it as a proposal and we are open to adding other points, clarifying the ones here, etc.

It is, in other words, a proposal for a “united front” against the bureaucracy. As such it is open to everyone who can agree on the platform.

But each participant will have particular reasons for supporting the platform. For some it will be almost exactly what they think is necessary. For others it will be a little advanced.

Let us say where we are coming from. We are not trade union reformers, we are revolutionary socialists. Our goal is to build a leadership in the working class that can prepare a general strike (to bring down Reagan) and thus open up a pre-revolutionary period of development, leading to the seizure of power by the working class.

For us, that leadership is what we mean when we say Workers Party. We know and insist on one thing: that leadership cannot be built any other way than in the mobilization of the working class. We also believe that the Trotskyist Organization's program will have to be the program of such a party. Again, that can only be proved in the actual class struggle.

In fact, by our taking the *initiative* in stating what has to be done and in proposing how to do it — for example, the united workers slate itself — we think we are already starting to prove our point.

We are willing to work with anyone around such a platform because *any real mobilization* can only strengthen the working class and, in turn, can only help to build the party that we are trying to build.

The Revolution

Lenin said long ago that there was no “final crisis” of capitalism — that it would continue to decay unless it was overthrown by the revolutionary working class.

Today, that statement has proven to be completely true. It is because the Great Depression did *not* lead to the overthrow of capitalism that the working class is again suffering.

Let us learn the lessons of that experience. Build our party now, organize the general strike, prepare the revolution.

Now more than ever, down with Reagan!

So, our goal in this fight is two-fold. It is not just to make some changes in the top personnel of the UAW — although that would be great. It is above all to advance the long-term interests of the working class in a very specific battle.

We are going to be the best fighters for a united workers slate — not because we can't think beyond it, but precisely we see how important its broad success and development is to those long-term goals. The working class does not wake up one fine day, ready for socialism. It develops its political and class consciousness through struggle, through the policy provided by the revolutionary leadership. It is precisely because our goal is the socialist revolution that we alone — so far as we know now — are preparing such a fight in the UAW.

Take for example the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The December 31, 1982, issue of its paper, *The Militant*, mildly criticizes Bieber's nomination and says the Chrysler “victory was won in spite of top UAW officials.” But then, *with a national convention of the union coming up*, the SWP announces: “The transformation of any bureaucratized union must begin at the local level.” Not surprisingly, the conclusion is: “What will happen at next year's constitutional convention remains to be seen.”

It is precisely because the SWP is not a revolutionary organization — having just *openly* renounced Trotskyism — that it will not fight in the UAW today, that it proposes a “wait-and-see” policy of passivity and prostration.

Build the united workers slate!

K.F.

Washington and Miami: Youth Rise Up

On November 27, the Ku Klux Klan attempted to rally in Washington, DC, in an action symbolic both of its open racism — Washington is predominantly black — and of its support to the current US regime.

Despite being protected by the cops, the KKK was prevented from carrying out its threat by a large, militant and splendid outpouring of opposition, above all by the black youth of Washington itself. This upsurge, which led to violent clashes with the cops, horrified the capitalists and their liberals, lead-

ing to calls for repression.

Just a few weeks later, in the Overtown black ghetto of Miami, Florida, youth again went into the streets because the cops had wantonly killed a black person. In other words, nothing had changed since the incident that sparked the 1980 Miami rebellion.

Both these clashes show the road that lies ahead in this country — increasing confrontations between the oppressed (led by the youth) and the agents of the terrorist state of US imperialism, whether official (cops) or unofficial

(Klan, Nazis).

While all the groups present in Washington are squabbling over credit for the role of the youth, none are willing to assume responsibility for organizing and preparing the violent clashes necessary to match the coming situation.

There can be no illusions. From spontaneous rebellion to conscious revolution, the path lies through training the youth for smashing the capitalist system that is their enemy.

K.F.

How to End Hunger

The facts have been slowly accumulating all over the country for months, but Christmastime in Detroit finally brought things right out into the open. There is widespread hunger in the United States, hunger not seen since the Great Depression, hunger among those who only a few months ago were working.

The news of bread lines and soup kitchens in Detroit spread worldwide; Japanese and German news agencies reported on it. At the same time, all the different varieties of the "Starvation Army" swung into action. The "Christmas spirit" nauseatingly overflowed with handouts for the malnourished — for about a week.

Where does this hunger come from? One farm organization collecting food innocently asked: "How in hell can people go hungry when there's a surplus of food?"

We might add that this same "surplus" is ruining small farmers, leading to scenes today like something out of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

People can go hungry in the midst of plenty for exactly the same reason they can be jobless in face of the crying need for construction, mass transit, consumer goods. The reason is that the private ownership of the means of production — capitalism — finds this food and work force "surplus" to its needs for profit.

That is why we get the spectacle of the same people who are responsible for the ex-auto workers' being hungry — Coleman Young, Governors Milliken and Blanchard, GM Chairman Roger Smith, Doug Fraser — mounting an "anti-hunger" campaign. "Concessions" was the name of their *pro-hunger* campaign.

This is a campaign designed to reduce the working class to the level of the lumpen-proletariat — to have workers standing in the cold at missions like a bunch of winos and bag ladies. Thus, the Detroit papers mention in passing that the infant mortality rate, largely determined by the mother's health, in parts of Detroit is 33 per 1,000 — the level reported for Honduras!

There's nothing like fear of starvation to make workers do what they're told and take what they're offered. Perhaps that happy thought is what inspired the "Beggars Ball" held recently at a fashionable Detroit disco, at which the stylish guests playfully dressed up in rags, stood in a "soup line" for their drinks, and so on. Maybe the next affair can be "The Masque of the Red Death."

The hunger in Detroit and around the country, the massive unemployment behind it, show two things. First, that after a generation of lies about how there could never be another depression, the depression is back. Second, that this proves there is no hope of reforming this system; it is incapable of providing a minimum standard of living for the working class.

The All-Peoples Congress (APC), which is run by the Workers World Party, is trying to deny the second of those points. While raising radical demands for the seizure of food stocks, the distribution of all surplus food, etc., it proposes to accomplish these goals through pressure on the Democratic Party. Often it's hard to tell the difference between Coleman Young and the APC.

The papers announce a joint UAW-GM campaign to collect canned goods for the hungry. What a disgusting spectacle! Instead the UAW should be organizing mass protests, the seizure of food stocks and their administration under workers control, and so on. But it cannot do this as long as its leadership is collaborating with GM to *cause* hunger!

Ending hunger means ending the attacks on the working class, and that demands a struggle for power.

K.F.

Union Candidate for Chicago Mayor

Workers' opposition to the Democratic Party machine in Chicago has provoked such a crisis within the Democratic Party that already three candidates have come forward for mayor: Jane Byrne, the incumbent; Richard J. Daley, Jr., son of the late Mayor Daley; Harold Washington, Congressional Black Caucus.

Each is from the Democratic Party; each claims to be "anti-machine." And the bourgeoisie is divided over which one to support.

This crisis of the Democratic Party represents a tremendous opportunity for the workers to finish with this party, which has so long oppressed workers in Chicago while using their money to build up one of the most anti-working class and racist police forces in the country (Remember Fred Hampton!) and a lakefront playground for the rich.

Yet instead of taking advantage of this crisis, this division of the bourgeoisie caused by the workers' struggles, the leadership of the workers, the union officials, are trying to drag the workers down with them.

The Chicago Federation of Labor is divided among supporters of Byrne, Daley and Washington. A particularly pernicious role is being played by so-called progressives like Norman Roth of Trade Union Action for Democracy and by the Communist Party and the Workers World Party. They are calling on the unions and workers to support Washington as a labor candidate.

"Washington's record of accomplishments . . . places him in the forefront of those who have fought to defend the lot of working people and the goals of the labor movement," says Roth.

In reality, Washington is a Democrat, a 20-year veteran of the imperialist Democratic Party, a fact that these "partisans of labor" forget to mention. And his program for Chicago consists of establishing "Enterprise Zones," and tax breaks for capi-

talists in exchange for doing business in Chicago.

This is the same program that Coleman Young initiated in Detroit several years ago — a whole series of gimmicks designed to encourage businesses to come to Detroit, from the "RenCen," the Grand Prix, and prostitution, to mammoth tax giveaways. Instead of saving Detroit, as its proponents claimed it would, it has led to the increased impoverishment of the vast majority of Detroit's workers, to the obscene spectacle of more and more people with Gucci pants and shoes, and more and more people with no shoes at all, walking the streets of Detroit.

There can be no doubt that Washington will provide Chicago with the same thing, magnified a hundred-fold.

The only working class candidate running against these capitalist candidates is the Socialist Workers Party's candidate, Ed Warren. The Trotskyist Organization supports this candidate against the capitalist candidates, as it always supports *any* representative of the working class in a conflict with the bourgeoisie, be it in elections, a strike, or in a war.

But the problem is that this party and candidate represent only a tiny fraction of the working class. And while the SWP and Warren claim to be for a break of the unions with the Democratic Party, they are not campaigning for the unions to break with the Democratic Party as an immediate task.

They are campaigning for a whole series of things in which unions breaking from the Democratic Party appears as one question among others, when in reality resolving all workers problems depends upon this.

At the same time they are miseducating workers as to the true nature of socialism. They claim to be socialist and support the revolution in Central America, yet they say that the Polish workers have gone too far, they have "gone beyond the limits of

criticism of communism."

This refusal to defend the Polish workers, this identification of socialism and the Central American revolution with the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow, will only alienate workers in Chicago from the revolution and damage the cause of the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Thus we do not think that the SWP's campaign is capable either of organizing a union break from the Democratic Party in these elections or of training youth and workers as revolutionaries in the process.

We call on all youth, workers and working class organizations to join us in a fight for a union candidate in these elections. Even if only one local were to put forward a candidate this campaign would go farther in two weeks than the SWP will ever go because the working class wants and needs a large struggle that involves the entirety of its ranks, not just a fraction of it. At the same time, this will enable revolutionaries to form the kind of leadership necessary to mobilize the full power of American workers.

And we demand that all organizations that claim to represent the working class join this struggle, above all the SWP. If the SWP is indeed for a break of the unions from the Democratic Party in Chicago, then why not fight for the unions to put forward a candidate to confront the machine? Surely the SWP will admit that such a candidate will be far more capable of tapping the workers power than the SWP is at this moment. Or is it that the SWP does not think such a candidate is possible? . . . or desirable?

The fight for a union candidate for Chicago mayor means a confrontation with these politics, aimed at mobilizing the full power of the Chicago working class. Down with the Democratic Party Machine!

A Union Candidate for Mayor!

M.G.

US Makes War on Nicaragua

In the last month, the conflicts between the Nicaraguan people and counterrevolutionary bands led by ex-members of Somoza's National Guard, and camped inside Honduras along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border, have escalated into virtual full-scale warfare.

In early December counterrevolutionaries prohibited Nicaraguan soldiers from saving seventy-five people when the helicopter that was being used to evacuate them from the area crashed.

Over the New Year's Eve holiday, forty counterrevolutionaries *kidnapped* sixty-seven peasants, virtually the entire

village of Siuse, and forced them to go to Honduras with them.

Refugees from Nicaragua are being murdered and the villages are being burned.

As numerous publications, even bourgeois publications, have admitted, the US is behind these attacks. It has taken this route because it has been unable to stop the advance of the revolution in Nicaragua as the increasing demands of the masses to expropriate the factory owners and landowners show. The US hopes that by waging war on Nicaragua that it will succeed in forcing

the Sandinistas to submit as it forced the PLO to submit.

The Trotskyist Organization/USA supports Nicaragua and the Sandinista leadership without conditions against the US and Honduras in this conflict. The solidarity movements and the unions in the US must pass to action to defend Nicaragua — concretely a boycott of US puppet dictatorships in Guatemala and Honduras; arms to the rebels in El Salvador.

M.G.

The Global Conflict

Off the Rope?

The latest news to be spread all over the world, especially in such respected publications as *The Reader's Digest*, is that the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR, using the Bulgarian secret police, was behind the 1981 attempted assassination of the pope.

The actual assailant, the right wing Turkish terrorist Mehmet Ali Agca — having had a long time in jail to reflect on his situation — is rumored to be the source of this hot information. Amazingly, this revelation coincides perfectly with what Vice-President George Bush announced right after the attempt — it was all a KGB plot.

Let us say that, while the Kremlin has no scruples about murder, there is only one problem with this little scenario hatched by the "anti-terrorist" agencies and journalists in the West. *No motive!*

The reason presented by these eminent figures for the attempt is that the "Polish pope," was standing firm

against Russian tyranny in his homeland, even threatening to go there to stop an invasion (on the wings of the Holy Ghost?). Therefore, the KGB (whose then-chief Yuri Andropov, is now head of the USSR) got orders to waste him.

Minor details, like the fact that Agca was a Moslem fanatic who broke jail in Turkey specifically to kill the "infidel" pope, are being suppressed — the better to peddle the official version.

The problem is that the Catholic Church and the Stalinist bureaucracy have been *working together* in Poland against the revolution; something we have drawn out in *Truth* from the very beginning. As a reward for this scabbing, Archbishop Glemp, head of the Polish hierarchy, has just been named a Cardinal.

In addition, the Stalinists themselves have leaped to the defense of the Catholic Church from the attacks made on it by our Polish comrades. And, as pointed out in the latest issue of *The*

Fourth International, it has tried to make use of another attempted assassination of the pope (in Fatima, Portugal) to smear Solidarnosc *and us*.

No, complete independence from this latest scheme by imperialism to pressure the Kremlin, probably to reinforce its collaboration with the Church, is the road for workers and youth.

On This, Walesa's Right

In a telephone interview with a Detroit Polish radio program host (translated and published in *The Detroit News*; January 7, 1983), Lech Walesa made a statement in regard to the indictment of Solidarnosc leaders that should guide us here:

"All workers should stick together in such situations. We have to, because we never receive anything free. We always had to fight for everything. . .

"We have to count on your solidarity," he concluded, adding that he was asking for political support from US unions.

The Fight for the Workers Party

CWV on the Fourth International

We are reprinting some very limited extracts from a letter to us from Chicago Workers Video. For reasons of space, we cannot reproduce the entire text.

It will be obvious to readers that there are extensive differences between CWV and ourselves on the International. In part, these questions are taken up in the series on the Workers Party now running in Truth.

We want to continue this discussion, but the number and extent of the points raised will not permit us to do so in the format of Truth.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

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The following are our remarks on the response of Truth to our statement concerning your Call for Hamburg . . .

The Fourth Communist International must be built as an international, and not merely as a federation of national sections. However, although these two conceptions represent two poles in methodology, they should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Without the building of national sections, the international cannot have any life, as there is no mythological soil that is called "International-land." On the other hand, the national sections cannot politically develop without their subordination to the international as a center, and without the orientation of viewing themselves as expressions of the existence of the international . . .

We feel that the problems of rebuilding the Fourth International cannot be so simply resolved by declaring "The Fourth International is Rebuilt!" (your Fourth World Congress, January 1976). It is one thing to view this statement as expressing intention, but, if the circumstances of its declaration become adopted as exemplary methodology, it encourages various idealist mechanisms. Material history is grappled with through proclamations. On this level, at least, your methodology resembles that of the RWL: . . .

Although we agree with your deft attack against the RWL's contradictory position that national sections may not need a clear program although the international should have one, we have yet to read any serious discussion from your tendency on the problems of the methodological and philosophical struggle against idealism.

It was on this philosophical level that the Healy International Committee began to degenerate, thus opening the floodgates to the pressures of bourgeois idealism, expressing itself through an entire spectrum of positions and methods, only one of which was bourgeois nationalism. It was not simply the emergence of bourgeois nationalism (petty bourgeois anti-colonialism and federalism within the IC) itself that was the cause, so to speak, of its degeneration. The emergence of idealism, of course, within the IC did not evolve out of thin air, but out of the struggle between the classes within the objective, material world, of which the IC was a part.

We would also like to comment on some points that were made in your response that did not appear to us as being carefully considered. In particular, we felt that your use of the expression "to toy around with the idea of having an International" in describing the intentions of other Trotskyist tendencies was not well chosen. The document "The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle," by the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee is a serious document that analyzes the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism and the importance of building a Trotskyist international amidst the Pabloist and nationalist degeneration of the USFI and the IC. Yes, TILC has not yet taken the path of declaring itself the Fourth International rebuilt; but this document seriously confronts major political questions . . .

To close, we thank you for your time and interest, as we too find this discussion enlightening and helpful . . .

Comradely,
Larry D.
Chicago Workers Video

By DAVID HEFFELFINGER

When the October Revolution is once again renewing itself in Poland and Stalinism is experiencing the deepest crisis since World War II, when imperialism and the Kremlin are gearing up their machines of blood and war to meet the revolution in Europe, America and elsewhere, in short when the old order is in shambles — it is high time that Trotskyists declare themselves clearly and resolutely on the struggle for power and the party to lead it. This series in Truth is intended to do just that.

Beginning from the demand for the Workers Party or Labor Party, which is becoming more popular every day in the American working class, we will show that the clarification of the program and the nature of a workers party necessitates a new revolutionary leadership against Stalinism and pseudo-Trotskyism. In particular, in the future parts of this series, we will take up the necessity, precisely in order to build a Workers Party, of rebuilding the American section of the Fourth International in a Trotskyist Congress against the Barnes leadership of the SWP, which is today nothing better than a pro-Stalinist tendency masquerading as Trotskyist.

Part II

"When the workers begin to make a break from the capitalist parties toward a labor party, it is quite possible that they will not give it the reformist connotation which has been associated in the past with the labor party, but that it will symbolize to them, even if vaguely, a break with the whole regime and a move for a new one, a regime of workers' power." (J.P. Cannon, "Remarks on the Labor Party Campaign," 1942)

★ ★ ★

In Part I of this series we showed that the whole fight of Trotskyists for a labor party was always aimed at the construction of the Leninist revolutionary vanguard party. That the tactic of the labor party was always a means to put before masses of workers and their struggles, the necessity of building a revolutionary leadership.

Why then put forward the construction of the workers party at all?

We have said that today the demand for the workers party is becoming more and more popular. In the 1982 elections, one of the most successful campaigns of any working class organization, was that of Labor and Farm Party candidate, William O. Hart, for Senator from Wisconsin. It was supported by AFSCME and Hospital Workers District 1199, and succeeded in garnering 2% of the popular vote and secured a place on the ballot for future elections.

And this victory itself is only a partial expression of the real movement for a workers party. The Socialist Workers Party always identifies the movement for a labor party with the official pronouncements of "left" bureaucrats, and with trade union resolutions and endorsements, etc.

But these forms, sanctified by the treacherous union bureaucracy, are only the most defensive expressions of the real movement.

The real movement is much more. It is the sum total of workers' strikes and demonstrations, which increasingly take on more militant expressions, clashes with the cops and armed thugs, and which take on ever deepening independence from the bureaucracy and a company vs. union struggle, toward confrontations with the bourgeois state and Reagan's government.

And that is precisely why we are for the construction of a Workers Party — because the party concentrates the real struggle for power.

For the Trotskyists, when half a million workers marched in Washington on Solidarity Day shouting the slogans of the Polish workers, when young workers marched against Reagan's policy in Central America on May 3, 1981 and California longshoremen refused to

handle arms to El Salvador, this was the basis for the construction of the Workers Party.

During the 1980 elections numerous unions, the International Association of Machinists, the executive board of the California AFL-CIO, adopted vague resolutions calling for a "discussion" on the labor party. These resolutions were adopted before the 1980 Democratic primary in face of the complete crisis of Carter's government. After the Democratic primary, which showed a deep split in the Democratic Party, the bureaucrats dropped all the talk about a labor party and called for unity around the Democratic candidate — which as we now know resulted in a massive working class abstention and a victory for Reagan.

In other words, the bureaucrats' call for a "discussion" on the labor party was a defensive reaction to the working class offensive. In the absence of a strong revolutionary leadership, and with the orientation of opportunism toward the "official" labor movement (meaning so-called "left" bureaucrats like Winpisinger of the IAM and Henning of the California AFL-CIO), this call for a labor party became just the opposite — a reinforcement of the bureaucracy and its real allies in the capitalist Democratic Party.

At the same time, another tendency, ours, the Trotskyist Organization/USA, put forward a fight for a Workers Candidate, including a proposal for a common candidate with the SWP, in 1980 and in 1982. Our campaign was always oriented toward the mass actions of the workers, as in the Detroit Mayoral elections and the recent 1982 congressional and gubernatorial elections where we used the elections to fight for a general strike.

Thus the fight for a workers party is not just a clever tactic, it is a tactic subordinated to the tasks and objectives of the mass struggles of the working class — which for socialists is leading these struggles all the way to the seizure of power.

Nevertheless, the road to power has many twists and turns in it. The American working class is going to have to overcome the obstacles on this road — the class collaboration of their unions, the union framework itself, and illusions in the "democratic way."

There are two ways of detouring the working class as a whole from traveling this road. One is allowing it to become caught up in the traps of the purely trade union framework and trust of bourgeois parliament; the other is to avoid the obstacles altogether, to isolate and insulate oneself from the mass struggle.

In every instance where the opportunity has presented itself to make the question of the program and nature of the workers party appear in a powerful mobilization of the working class, particularly in the recent elections, the

Socialist Workers Party has put forward the most passive orientation. In 1976, in the midst of a national strike of auto-workers, the SWP put forward Camejo and Reid on a platform for a "Bill of Rights for Working People." The content of this was no where better expressed than their proposal for " . . . rewriting union contracts, and a political fight by labor for a revision of the federal wages and hours law." (The Militant, October 8, 1976)

In 1980, under the pressure of the workers offensive against Carter, the Communist Party came out for a labor party. But, said Gus Hall, "We do not think such a party can or should take a stand for socialism." Hall's mentor, and the SWP's great proletarian revolutionary, Castro, put the policy more bluntly — support Carter and the Democratic Party against Reagan.

While in 1980, following the "progressive" bureaucrats, the CP took up the slogan of the labor party in order to head off the development of such a movement in a revolutionary direction, in the 1982 elections, when there was a movement against concessions in the trade unions, which threatened to form a link with the revolution in Poland and El Salvador against imperialism and Stalinism, the CP once again supported the Democratic Party.

At the same time, the SWP put forward a pale and miserable election campaign, a campaign that failed to differentiate itself from the CP and its support to the Democratic Party, neither advancing a mass movement in the trade unions toward a break from the Democratic Party, nor serving its alleged purpose of "socialist education."

What is behind the SWP's passive election campaign? As often happens, the true designs of "big shots" in politics are revealed by yapping underlings. David Finkel, writing in the journal Changes, which represents the viewpoints of the near defunct International Socialists, blurts out:

. . . A labor party or labor party movement in America will undoubtedly represent what Lenin calls "trade union politics" . . . the major responsibilities for American socialists . . . is not and cannot be, a struggle for revolution. Nor can it be a struggle for a revolutionary party.

Now Finkel and the IS long ago abandoned any pretense to Trotskyism. But this makes Finkel's conclusions, which match so well the practice of the SWP, all the more striking. The workers party in America must be reformist, and there is no hope for building a revolutionary party.

Those who are incapable of seeing the revolution, are incapable of seeing today that the struggle for a workers party in America can and must be the axis of the formation of a revolutionary leadership.

But in the last analysis, the line between opportunists and revolutionists, between Stalinists and Communists, is not drawn by tactics, but rather on the question of a party to lead the working class to power. That is why for us, the struggle for the workers party is completely bound up with the forging of the Leninist revolutionary party. While for others, neither one nor the other is even conceivable.

To build a party, as Cannon said, will symbolize " . . . a break with the whole regime and a move for a new one, a regime of workers' power," requires a leadership of the stature and vision that the SWP and its leadership once represented.

That is why we believe that the first step toward the construction of the workers party, certainly the most decisive step, will be the rebuilding of the Trotskyist party of the Fourth International in America.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITED:
THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
ENGLISH EDITION - NO. 103 - OCTOBER 1982 - 164
Organ of the Executive Committee of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Demonstrate in the Streets of Gdansk!
December 13, with the Polish Workers, in the Name of Solidarity,
Against the Stalinist Unionization of Workers Power

JUST OUT — WRITE TRUTH!

Handal: Reorientation or Stalinist Coverup?

By MARGARET GUTTSALL

At the recent convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, Jack Barnes, leader of the Socialist Workers Party, announced that the SWP intends to seek fusion with official Communist Parties (CPs) that still openly associate themselves with the Kremlin and that the SWP is no longer Trotskyist.

Barnes claims that the official Communist Parties, at least in Central America, have changed — they are now for the revolution — and offers as proof of his assessment, and thus of the SWP's course, Salvadoran CP leader, Schafik Jorge Handal's pamphlet, "Power, the Character and Path of the Revolution and the Unity of the Left."

In reality, this pamphlet proves the opposite: the necessity to build workers parties independent of the Kremlin and its so-called Communist Parties to insure the victory of the revolution against imperialism; to rebuild the Trotskyist party, the US section of the Fourth International, as the only tendency in the workers movement capable of leading this fight.

This pamphlet is not a balance sheet of the CPs' "errors" and a reorientation of the CPs as the SWP claims. It is a classic Stalinist coverup, aimed at maintaining the same counterrevolutionary policy and party, albeit in a different form, one appropriate to the present conditions of open warfare between the oppressed and the exploiters in Central America.

Handal says that the CPs' opposition to the revolution in this hemisphere was simply a "rightist error" that has now been corrected.

He claims that the CPs failed to fight for power because they were burdened with a conception of "two revolutions," the first being a democratic revolution in which the CPs should necessarily play little role. Hard as it maybe to believe, Handal says he does not know where this idea came from.

To respond to the question of why the Communist movement of Latin America and other regions of the Third World stopped having the struggle for power central to their activity is a complex subject . . .

I don't know where this idea came from, but our Party, and it seems to me many other communist parties of Latin America, have worked for decades with the idea of two revolutions . . .

Thus, the democratic anti-imperialist revolution looked to us like a "path of approach" that could be achieved while leaving the "progressive," "anti-imperialist," sectors of the middle classes and even of the bourgeoisie, in the forefront.

This idea, whose origins are such a mystery to Handal, came from Stalin who opposed the Bolshevik-Leninist struggle to extend the revolution that had begun in Russia to other countries and the theory and policy of the permanent revolution that guided it.

The theory of the permanent revolution, initially advanced by Trotsky and later endorsed by Lenin and the entirety of the Third International, held that only the working class can carry out the tasks of the bourgeois, democratic or national revolution and that because the interests of the working class cannot be confined to democracy or to one country, that the revolution cannot be confined to democracy or one country. It must go over to socialism and be extended internationally.

Stalin counterposed to this revolutionary policy the counterrevolutionary policy of "socialism in one country," Russia, and, as a natural complement to this national isolation of the revolution, the policy of the two-stage revolution or two revolutions, the first being the bourgeois-democratic revolution in which the working class does not fight for power, in other countries.

On the basis of this reactionary pro-imperialist policy, Stalin destroyed the Chinese revolution, the Spanish revolution, the revolutions that broke out after World War II and all the revolutionary

uprisings that took place in Latin America from the 1930s on. Indeed it was precisely because of Stalinist support to imperialism in the "first stage of the revolution," that Trotskyism grew so rapidly in Latin America long before the Cuban revolution. All the parties of the Kremlin in Latin America were forged on the basis of this policy in opposition to the Trotskyists, especially in Latin America.

Thus the Kremlin parties' opposition to the revolution, to the workers' seizure of power, is not an "error" but a conscious policy in the service of the Kremlin, which will be wiped out by the extension of the revolution.

Nor has this alleged error been corrected as Handal claims.

He goes out of his way to appear revolutionary, orthodox, Leninist; says that the democratic revolution can only be completed by the socialist revolution; talks about armed struggle, "snatching power," the unity of the left, a Marxist-Leninist party. He even mentions Lenin's "April Theses" in which Lenin says the Bolsheviks must seize power.

There is only one problem. The working class is missing.

Throughout this long document there is absolutely no discussion of the mobilization of the working class, of the construction of its councils, its power, its party. Indeed, Handal refers to the "conception that the Communist Party is by definition the party of the working class" as dogmatic and implies that other social layers can

furnish equally revolutionary parties, which should all eventually merge into a single "Marxist-Leninist Party."

Handal's bastardized version of the "permanent revolution" in which the democratic revolution proceeds to the socialist revolution without the working class and without the workers party has the same origin (Stalin) and the same purpose (blocking the proletariat's struggle for power) as the theory of two revolutions.

In 1928, Stalin claimed to have seen the error of his capitulation to imperialism, initiated the "theory" of the "uninterrupted revolution," and, on this basis, all sorts of adventures, particularly "struggle for power" without the working class, in Germany, China, and elsewhere. At the same time, he imprisoned, exiled and assassinated Trotsky and other comrades of the Left Opposition in order to give himself a free hand to collaborate with imperialism. We call this the "Third Period."

At the moment when Stalin decided that the defense of his bureaucracy required an open alliance with imperialism and thus an end to such adventures, all those who had been so "revolutionary" during the Third Period did not lift a finger to stop Stalin and his liquidation of the revolutions in process. They became equally ardent champions of the Popular Front.

Today, in Central America, Stalin's heirs in the Kremlin and its parties, find that they can no longer prevent an armed confrontation with imperialism. Thus they

now see the "error" of their past ways and are ready to enter into the armed struggle.

But they are still in a position to prevent the workers and oppressed from achieving victory in this confrontation. So they oppose themselves to the independent mobilization and organization of the proletariat and attempt to confine the struggle to the countryside. They oppose the construction of the workers party as dogmatic and instead advocate a coalition of petty-bourgeois organizations that will only prevent the workers from destroying the state and establishing their own power. Remember the Sandinistas "generosity" to the National Guard, the National Guard now spearheading the war on Nicaragua?

It is a matter of time before these converts to the armed struggle decide that it is necessary to abandon the armed struggle again and openly seek to liquidate the forces of the revolution, just as their Stalinist predecessors did.

As we have said in *Truth* before, the CPs have all come out in favor of an accord with the present Salvadoran junta in which the present army is maintained in tact. And the Sandinistas have come out in favor of placing "interposition forces" (remember them in Beirut?) between Honduras and Nicaragua.

That is why it is necessary to build parties independent of the Kremlin to lead the revolution against imperialism to victory and rebuild the Trotskyist party in the US to lead this fight.

Barnes Says SWP Not Trotskyist

From December 30 to January 2, the Young Socialist Alliance held its Convention in Chicago. We went there to fight for the rebuilding of the US section of the Fourth International. All that happened proved this was correct.

In his speech "Their Trotskyism and Ours," Jack Barnes, the National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, declared: "We are not Trotskyist." And in spite of the "explanations," this is exactly what he meant. He dreams of a "fusion" with the World Front in Solidarity with El Salvador (in reality, the Salvadoran Communist Party and the FDR/FMLN).

Using very militant phrases, he declared the Salvadoran CP to be "real proletarian Communist revolutionaries" and so is Castro and so is the FDR, etc. He said that the continuity of socialist revolution is in Latin America. At the same time, he said that the Polish workers striving to overturn Stalinism and run Poland through their own organizations have "gone beyond the limitations

of criticism of Communism."

It is absolutely clear that the whole intention is to dissolve the SWP and throw out its past in order to jump in bed with Stalinism — but who will have Barnes anyway?

Many YSA'ers think what is going on is a turn from "orthodox Trotskyism" to "real Communism." They expressed contradictory feelings about this, since all the years of pseudo-Trotskyism as practiced by the SWP have led the youth to search for something more militant, more revolutionary. Now Barnes is saying: "It is Castro and the CP with their 'new' face in Latin America."

We were there to show them that what is really needed is to reject Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary obstacle and rebuild the Fourth International on the ashes of the SWP, once the pillar of the Fourth International in America. We attempted to discuss common activity in the Chicago Mayoral elections to build a mobilization in the unions for a union

candidate against Byrne and, in doing this, draw a full balance sheet of the degeneration and betrayals of the old leaderships.

Strangely enough, Barnes' policy lines up with that of the Spartacist League, which had 30 members there. All along they have been saying defend Stalinism, that the Polish Revolution is counterrevolution and to join the "left-wing insurgents in Latin America." They are working together to destroy the SWP.

What is totally clear to us, and what we tried to convince the 19 YSA'ers who bought *Truth*, is that the SWP cannot be reformed, it must be rebuilt. We noticed many shaking their heads as Barnes spoke. We are also shaking our heads because there is nothing positive about dragging Trotskyism through the mud and nothing positive about drawing initiates into the hateful project of liquidation of the Fourth International.

BARBARA PUTNAM

PST-PORE Accord Under Attack

Despite the fact that the accord reached between the PST (Partido Socialista de Trabajadores de Spain, part of the International Workers League led by Nahuel-Moreno) and our Spanish section, the PORE (Partido Obrero Revolucionario de Espana) enabled both parties to do better than they would have done alone during the recent Spanish elections, the leadership of the PST has just broken off this accord.

The leadership of the PST claims that it did so as a result of an "incident" that took place at the recent convention of the PORE. However our Spanish section has just published a special edition of its newspaper that shows that this "incident" was more an excuse than a cause, that the real problem was the reticence of the PST leadership from the very beginning to enter into such an accord. It did not even publish the agreement between the two parties.

The Fourth International remains committed to such an accord in Spain and the US because we think that it can advance the construction of the workers

party in both countries.
M.G.

TRUTH, Bi-Weekly Organ of the Trotskyist Organization/USA

Editorial Board: Kevin FitzPatrick; Margaret Guttshall, Editor; David Heffelfinger.

Subscription Rates. North America. \$1 for six issues (introductory); \$6 for one year. \$15 for one year supporting subscription. Inquire for other rates, including institutional rates.

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