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Report on "The Decline of American Capitalism: Prospects For a Socialist Revolution"

By Jack Barnes

The general line of this report was adopted by the
National Committee plenum on May 2, 1975.

If there is a central thesis in the Political Resolution, it is the judgment by the Political Committee that we are entering a new stage of the radicalization. We are at the beginning of the radicalization of the American working class. A corner has been turned in the objective circumstances, and the door has been opened for a new step forward in class consciousness and in the transformation of the political consciousness of American labor.

In many ways comrades may feel that we've been pointing to aspects of this process for some time. We have pointed out time and again that the earlier stages of the radicalization had an impact on the working class as a whole. Individual workers and groups of workers, far from being immune, were affected in the same way others were affected by the struggles, social protests, mobilizations, and changing attitudes of the earlier stages of the radicalization. This was certainly true from the late '60s on.

We added another point over a year ago. We noted the confirmation of our judgment that a whole spectrum of radical attitudes was being picked up by young workers especially. Among other things, our view was verified by the Yankelovich survey and similar studies. [See *SWP Party Builder* Vol. 8, No. 2 in 1974.] This was basically an extension of the first stages of the radicalization.

We think the depression of 1974-75, the one we are still in, caps a four-year period, a period beginning in August 1971 with the wage freeze, going through the brief speculative boom, the meat and oil shocks, the double digit inflation, and culminating in the depression. Something new has happened that is more than just a quantitative extension of the attitudes of the young radicals and young protesters penetrating the younger layers of the working class. The working class as a whole is being affected—and gradually beginning to think they are affected—as a class by the new economic situation. The depression and its attendant uncertainty affects every worker. Over and above the impact of the political protests and changing attitudes, the impact of the depression—the direct pressure on the workers as producers, as workers on the job, and as working-class consumers—has begun to alter their consciousness.

We are not talking in this resolution about tempo, about how fast this development will take place. But we think the fact that it is occurring is unassailable.

The evolution on a world scale of the economic, social, military and political contradictions which led to this new stage of the radicalization is also the very thing which precludes the ruling class from charting a course which can fundamentally reverse it.

We don't predict in this resolution what the tempo will be, or what precise forms coming struggles will take. But we are convinced we will not see a definitive reversal of the development of the radicalization of the working class before a showdown battle. The period following the 1975

depression and "loss" of Vietnam is going to be quite a bit different than the period following the 1948 recession and the "loss" of China in this country.

If this is true it follows that not only new struggles, but new forms of struggle, not identical to those of the last decade, are on the agenda. There are new political opportunities for the American revolutionary party in the mass movement, and in the organizations of American labor. There are new opportunities for the party, necessitating a *turn* in our attitudes, consciousness, priorities, and modes of functioning. If there is a turn in the objective circumstances it is not enough to note it; the turn has to be reflected in the organizational functioning and priorities of the party, and the focus of its campaigns. That is what we will discuss under the Tasks and Perspectives report.

Preparing for the Convention

In evaluating the new situation at this plenum, we want to look ahead to the party convention. It is important for the National Committee to discuss this here, to see if we have agreement on our fundamental analysis. We must then take this discussion back to the party. Our number one job in the next three months is discussing the new situation and the tasks that flow from it, so that the party as a whole can think things through and prepare all the practical conclusions necessary to go forward from the convention, taking further advantage of the new opportunities.

In preparing for the convention we also think it important to read and study a number of things along with the draft political resolution. Most important is the document, "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," the general line of which the party adopted at our December 1973 convention. [See *Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, pp. 111-188.]

We should review the political resolutions and reports adopted by our conventions in 1969 and 1971. [See *Towards an American Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder, 1971, and *A Revolutionary Strategy for the '70s*, Pathfinder, 1972.] The acquisitions codified by those documents laid the basis for this current resolution. There is a continuity in our analysis from 1969 to 1975 that should be studied and discussed.

And, in addition, it will become clear to comrades in the branches, as it was to us as we worked on the draft, that a rereading of the Transitional Program, along with Trotsky's conversations with the American comrades about the program, takes on an added educational value in light of what we see unfolding.

Pathfinder Press just published a new edition of the Transitional Program which now includes all the discussions with Trotsky on the Transitional Program, both before and after the final draft was adopted. These discussions give significant attention to the program's

application to the United States. [See *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Second Edition, 1974.]

Finally, there are two other things which would be valuable in helping to understand and absorb the resolution. The Educational Department plans to publish an educational bulletin entitled *The Revolutionary Perspective for the United States* by James P. Cannon. The bulletin will include the 1946 American Theses, the speech on it presented to the 1946 party convention, the speech on it given to the Political Committee beforehand, Jim's letters to the NCers in the '50s about it, and some of the sections from Trotsky's writings on the American revolution, its characteristics, tempo and perspectives.

In addition I would suggest that a second reading of Farrell's Teamster books, with their case study of how a revolutionary union came into existence and what it did, will reveal several things missed the first time around. Comrades may have read the first two volumes on the Teamsters when they came out but a re-reading will be valuable. One of the central themes we want to grapple with in our discussion is the comparison between the present, and the last big radicalization of the working class during the 1930s, as well as the present and the 1940s, which saw the process of radicalization begin to be reversed and the initiation of the period of conservatism that lasted until the new radicalization.

In this new resolution we have also tried to incorporate some of the fundamental programmatic alterations and clarifications that the party has adopted in the last decade.

We include in the resolution the perspective that we discussed when we changed our governmental slogan from "for a workers and farmers government" to "for a workers government" in 1967. [See SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 26, No. 7.]

Second, we include in the resolution the modification of our proletarian military policy as adopted at our 1969 convention. [See SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 27, No. 2.]

Third, we include the perspectives on proletarianizing the party which were spelled out in the organizational resolution adopted at the 1965 convention, and which were further explained and developed in the talks on "The Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party" which Farrell gave at the 1970 Oberlin gathering. [See SWP Internal Information Bulletin, No. 7 in 1974.]

Structure of the Political Resolution

I want to outline the basic structure and some of the key ideas of the draft resolution.

The first two sections of the resolution root our conclusions in the objective situation on a world and national scale. We could call the first two sections together, "Our Perspectives for the Radicalization of the Working Class Are Rooted in the Contradictions of World Capitalism."

There is one point on which I want to put special emphasis. What we face in the world capitalist economy is the exhaustion of the internal sources of the great boom after World War II. It's not simply a cyclical recession. It's not just the effects of a war adventure in Vietnam. It's not just the exhaustion of the effects of the massive reconstruction after the destruction of World War II. Rather, the basic internal sources of the long boom have themselves been exhausted, and new contradictions bode a long wave

of stagnation of the world capitalist economic forces, as opposed to the expansion which we saw for a quarter century.

This puts every new dip, every new cyclical turn, every new financial crisis, in a new light. As the resolution states, the ups are going to be lower and shorter and the downs are going to be longer and deeper. And we are not the only ones who are beginning to sense this.

We list three real perspectives of the American ruling class, ones they cannot avoid in the coming period.

One is the continued tendency to become involved in military adventures. The ruling class cannot allow the process of world revolution to unfold without attempting to intervene to reverse it, with all that implies.

Second, they are compelled to try to lower the standard of living of the American workers. There is a decline in the relative productivity rates and relative rate of extraction of surplus value compared to their biggest competitors, especially Germany and Japan, and ultimately, growing long term pressure on their rate of profits.

And finally, what this clearly implies over time is the attempt by the rulers to restrict the gains and rights—economic, human, and even democratic rights—of the American workers, with the heaviest blows aimed at the oppressed minorities and women. This is the necessary political counterpart of forced economic belt-tightening.

Changing Attitudes Among the American Workers

Section three is in many ways the most important because it states the fundamental theme of the resolution; the changing consciousness of the American working class. Some of the bourgeois sociologists, at least the more perspicacious ones, have been trying to analyze the same things that we have.

Comrades remember the Yankelovich survey which we discussed at our last plenum when we discussed the changing attitudes of the young workers. Well, he did another one about a year after that in which he tried to explain to the ruling class the dreadful thing he sees happening. [His conclusions are published in the Fall 1974 issue of *Dissent*.] For a decade in this country we saw what Yankelovich calls a growing crisis of *moral legitimacy*. More and more people, including more and more young workers, began doubting the legitimacy of the government from a moral point of view. It was not doing the just thing; it was not doing the fair thing; it was not doing the correct thing—to the Black people, to the people of Vietnam, or to others who were demanding their rights. It was a crisis of legitimacy, but a restricted one, of moral legitimacy.

But then Yankelovich says something new began happening after 1971. What is added is what he calls in his jargon a crisis of *functional legitimacy*. What functional legitimacy means in simple terms is that the system is no longer producing as it should. Even if you are not affected by the moral inadequacies of a system; when it can't produce and give you security, that is another blow to its legitimacy.

He points out that when people reach that conclusion, and hold it long enough, when it comes on top of a crisis of moral legitimacy, it can lead to an even bigger problem for the ruling class. People may decide that there is really a crisis of *institutional legitimacy*, that only the changing of the institutions of capitalism can solve the problem.

Fortune also ran a special issue last month [April 1975] entirely dedicated to "The American System." You would expect it to be a celebration of the bicentennial. But the titles of the articles don't seem to celebrate very much. They run like: "Reshaping the American Dream;" "Ever-increasing Affluence Is Less of a Sure Thing;" "Battered Pillars of the American System: Religion, Education, Science;" "Black America: Still Waiting for Full Membership;" "Color the New Generation Very Light Green;" "Putting the Cuffs on Capitalism;" "The Revolution of Rising Entitlements."

"The Revolution of Rising Entitlements," by Daniel Bell, is the most interesting. His thesis is quite simple: Over the past twenty years the American working class has come to believe that they are *entitled* to certain things that the working class did not look upon as rights before. This began without anyone knowing it. It began as things that used to be dreams became realities and then became necessities. We shouldn't forget that necessity is a historical concept. What was not considered a necessity by a working person in one epoch can become a necessity in another. But the promise of plenty, Bell says, has been transformed into a revolution of rising entitlements, of rising expectations. The period of long boom got this going, and it has been discounted forward. In other words, workers began expecting not only that they should have what they were getting, but they should continue to receive more at the same pace. In Bell's opinion, the hard truth and fundamental fact of American life is that this is no longer possible in the coming period.

This same issue of *Fortune* has drawings which depict *Fortune's* version of working people. It runs across the bottom of five pages—just a mass of angry people carrying picket signs with demands. This is the nightmare of *Fortune*, all in living color: "Jobs for Navajos," "More funds for Senior Citizens," "Preserve the Wilderness," "Free Colleges Are a Necessity," "Don't Cut Funds for Medical Research," "Save the Dunes," "We Need Decent Pensions," "Gay Pride," "Consumers Need Protection," "Tax the Polluters," "Equal Opportunity for Blacks," "Extend Unemployment Benefits," "We Demand Low-Income Housing," "New Yorkers Need Daycare Centers," "More Money for Mass Transit," "We Can Afford Better Schools," "No Time to Cut Food Stamps," "Chicanos Need Jobs," "Support Student Aid," "Equal Pay for Women," "Decent Housing Is a Right," and there are many more.

In other words, *Fortune* is saying: "Fellow rulers, we have a wicked contradiction." And they are right.

The expectations of the working class—what they believe to be their right to a decent living and a decent future for themselves and their families—are at their highest level in history. This coincides with a basic turn in the world and American economy. The depression of 1974-75 comes down on at least a quarter of a century of upward curves in rising expectations.

We exclude the possibility of a new "New Deal" adequate to fundamentally satisfy these expectations of the working class and decisively reverse the process of radicalization. In our earlier discussions the Political Committee thought that it was important to make one point in this regard clear. We do not say that a "New Deal-type" Democratic administration is impossible. In fact, in my opinion that is the most likely next thing on the agenda. Something like a Kennedy administration appeal-

ing to the mass of the American people with promises for this or that reform is certainly possible. We do not preclude an administration, in any single upturn of the cycle, taking some of the fat, which the American ruling class still has, and trying to buy off, channel, diffuse sectors of the population they judge the most susceptible. But what we preclude is an extended period of reform that is *adequate* to meet the demands and *expectations* of the working people and reverse the process of drawing labor toward a radicalization that began in 1971.

This is fundamental. We see in the future a revolutionary perspective, not a perspective of massive reform.

American Capitalism's "Revolution"

Sections four and five are "The Changing Character and Composition of the American Working Class," and "The Radicalization and Mobilization of the Allies of the Proletariat." American capital has concentrated, centralized, expanded, and brought entire new layers into the work force; industrialized whole sectors of agriculture; automated and computerized whole sections of industry; and transformed the character of industry, technology and labor in the United States. In many ways American capital has been the "revolutionary" factor, not American labor, for a couple decades. What we are trying to look at in these sections—in the structure of the American working class, its composition, the changing character and weight of the potential allies of the proletariat—is what this tremendous explosion of the American economy and the growth of monopolization of capital have wrought in the last thirty years.

The growth of a massive credit structure and of international trusts were prominent features of the great boom. This process wrought a change from the 1930s and the 1940s. Section five, comrades will notice, looks like a repetition to some degree of section four. There is a repetition and it's intentional. To drive home the point we look first at Black Americans, Chicanos, women, youth, etc., as components of the American working class. We look at them as workers. And then, we re-look at them through different eyes, as social groupings—with their own independent needs and struggles and demands—who are potential allies of the working class.

These great economic, demographic, and social changes have altered the composition of the American working class, and we try to show what the effects on the union movement have been. This is a different working class, with different features and a different composition than the class we have seen in previous radicalizations in the United States.

We try to cut through some of the myths and fakery of the bourgeois sociologists and the so-called economic statisticians who try to blur class differences. They say there are no more classes, just plain folks who are better-off or worse-off. Or they peddle the theory of the petty-bourgeoisification of the working class. We try to indicate that this is not true; that there has been a change in the structure of American industry, but there has not been a merger of classes. To the contrary, the distinction and difference between the working class in all its sectors and the owners of capital, large and small, is wider than it has ever been before.

The intentional confusion in the statistics is manifold.

For example, government statistics count all service workers as “non-blue collar workers;” anyone who works for the government is listed as a “non-blue collar worker;” the wife of a steel worker who is a key-punch operator or checks out groceries is listed as a “white-collar salaried employee,” not part of the working class. All this fakery has covered up the realities. That is, far from the transformation of the workers into a new petty-bourgeoisie, we have seen instead the proletarianization and alienation of new layers of the workforce in the United States.

Some of the changes have been striking. Even after the Second World War began, the majority of Blacks lived on the land—as late as 1941. These kinds of facts give an indication of the scope of the change in the working class in the United States in a few decades.

American Labor's Historical Allies

The second way we look at these same workers—in section five—is as the allies of the proletariat. Here the resolution does a number of things. We look at the army, at the student movement, and at the traditional allies of the proletariat on the land; and we take note of the changes they have undergone. We re-look at some of the important weighty allies, the Blacks, Chicanos, the women, and we examine their potential in the coming American revolution.

We also look at the middle class, and its shadings into the working class. Here we try to do several things. We try to differentiate potential friend from potential foe in the middle class. We try to differentiate those we are not going to win over from those we are, from those we can and must win over to the struggle for a humane socialist society. We try to indicate who it is most likely we can win, who we can neutralize, and who will be our foes. We point to the difference between a cop and a computer programmer. We try to indicate how the working class can present demands for sections of the middle class which meet their own self-interest, and which point to their role in the future workers state. We try to counter some of the divisions that the ruling class tries to perpetrate and play on, claiming the poor farmer and the worker have divergent interests, that the public worker rides on the back of the industrial worker who pays crushing taxes, etc.

The second thing we look at is the question of the so-called middle class character of the working class itself. Here we discuss a process which we think is of great historical importance to the American socialist movement. It can be called the de-petty-bourgeoisification of the American proletariat. Historically the American proletariat, until relatively recently, was a working class which came out of, was involved with, and went back and forth between being farmers, independent artisans, small owners, and workers.

The central allies of the early socialist movement were the farmers. A worker's uncle or aunt or nephew, brothers or sisters, were often on the land, or owned their own tools as artisans, or their own shop. A worker would often be the first of a family of a generation in industry, in a factory, in an office. It was a common idea to think about saving enough out of wages to someday go back to the farm or to buy a little shop or to buy enough tools to become self-employed, like you remember your father or uncle was. Of

course, the less privileged had fewer dreams of this sort. But the tendency was to look in this direction for a way out. That ideology has been greatly weakened.

Compare how many of our parents' kin were on the land with how many there are in our own generation, and think about your younger nephews and nieces. Many of them have no relatives on the land. Many have no relatives who are small shopkeepers, small artisans, small farmers, nor do they talk about returning to the farm, etc., as a way to survive. That's not where they look; that's not their way out. That's not the *realistic* way out. From this point of view the American working class is less petty bourgeois than ever before. Even for many of the skilled mechanics facing the reality of the industrialization of their trade, the way out is not to become a small artisan; the way out must be elsewhere—with the working class, not out of it.

What this means is that one of the barriers to class consciousness—which was not simply the relatively high standard of living of the American working class or the chicken they had in the pot or the Ford they began driving, but the particular structure of the working class itself—has been eroded. The proletarianization of millions more who must organize as workers if they are to find a way forward—that is a fundamental change, a change that has accelerated tremendously since the war.

This process must be differentiated from the so-called middle class standard of living of the American working class. Petty bourgeois ideology was an obstacle, an obstacle to class consciousness, an obstacle to the organization of the American working class. It was not an insuperable one; a large enough revolutionary leadership in the '30s would have solved it quickly. But it was an obstacle. The “middle class standard of living” of the working class is not the same obstacle; in fact as it is attacked by the rulers, it will become a motivating factor in the American revolution. Standards of consumption that are decent and expectations that have risen are not obstacles to class consciousness. Rather they become goals to fight for as the crunch intensifies. This helps explain a fundamental theoretical point raised by many Marxists, especially from afar, including some of the masters, who realized that the standard of living of the American workers alone was not and could not be enough to explain the lags in and the character of class consciousness among the American workers.

The resolution makes another differentiation. We differentiate between the bureaucracy of the American labor movement—a petty bourgeois social layer that will have to be defeated, divided, broken up—and what you might call the labor aristocracy, the better off, the more regularly employed and skilled layers of workers who face the same problems fundamentally (taking into account their relative privileges) as the rest of the working class: unemployment, inflation, speed-up, decline of standard of living. Far from being identical to the labor bureaucracy, it is among these aristocratic layers that some great struggles will break out.

The Myth of American Democracy

The resolution contains a section called “The Prospects for American Bourgeois Democracy”—that's the least imaginative title for any section. If comrades can come up with a better one, good. An alternative title could be

“Prepare for the Rules to Change.” If what we say is true, we are heading into a period of increased class struggle. And like night follows day, increased class struggle is accompanied by increased class polarization. Just as there will be moves toward independent working class political action and class struggle wings and currents will grow—fascist and rightist groups will also develop with *their* answers to the crisis of American capitalism. This is the logic of future developments.

When the ruling class talks about nationalizations and economic planning, such programs have a different logic than when fought for by workers struggling for more and more control over their work and lives. They have the logic of restrictions on union rights and broader democratic rights. The rise of expectations or entitlements, whatever one wants to call it, if it cannot be adequately controlled with the carrot, will be met by restrictions on democratic rights, by probings, and confrontations along these lines. Thus the American workers themselves will see the other face of capitalism, the one that was always clear to Native Americans, slaves, the Caribbeans, and semicolonial masses around the world, the one that has periodically been seen by the working class. The other face of the American ruling class offers something else than concessions, steady work, and steady, even if modest, increases of the standard of living.

One point was put in the resolution in light of the experience the comrades had in the past with fascist movements. This is the phrase, referring to the fascist threat, “whatever its American camouflage.” That is important. Having gone through the Hague and McCarthy experiences we know that the American fascist movement, a serious one, will not conveniently identify itself. We should be knowledgeable about the camouflages used by American fascist movements in the past. We should also note one of the differences between Europe and America concerning this question, and that is the color question. Black Americans will be the fundamental target for American fascism.

One thing should be made very clear here. We are not talking about a conjunctural perspective, what is around the corner tomorrow. We don’t see the rise of a fascist movement or a fascist threat on the immediate agenda. We are the last ones who want to talk in such a way as to be misinterpreted in this respect. But we state that the perspective is of deepening class struggle and that means that there will inevitably be class polarization along with it. By stating this clearly and openly we underscore the need for a revolutionary centralist party, based on fundamental programmatic homogeneity and loyalty.

The Program for Socialist Revolution

The programmatic section is entitled “Labor’s Strategic Line of March.” Here we try to deal with the two big questions that Trotsky kept hammering away at in his discussions with the American comrades around the Transitional Program. That is as he said, the American workers must learn to think socially and act politically.

They must learn to think socially, to see more and more that the problems they face cannot be solved on an individual level but only on a social level. They must learn that the big questions which they may not think are “their” questions—the problems of oppressed nationalities,

of women, etc.—are “their” questions and are intimately tied to the solution of the growing crisis they are facing.

Second, they must learn to act politically, to find a road to their own political instrument, a party of labor, an *independent* party of labor, based on the powerfully organized union movement, that can begin to operate in the arena where all questions will be settled, the political arena.

The resolution brings the role of the allies of the proletariat into this politicalization process, and relates it to the logic of a class-struggle left wing arising within the union movement and struggling to transform the union power that exists today into a revolutionary force fighting for all the oppressed.

We have a long-term perspective in this section also. The decisive thing for us is not whether American capitalism comes out of this current depression or when. The odds are of course overwhelming that it will come out of the depression, and the “when” will probably not be that far down the road. But any single business cycle, any single crisis is not decisive. What is decisive is the growing uncertainty, growing insecurity caused by the ups and downs, more and more out of control, and the unexpected and sudden crises and breakdowns. As the past period of relative stability and prosperity—in which you more or less knew where you were going, what you could have, what you could plan for yourself and your children—begins being ripped apart, the uncertainty of the cyclical ups and downs of the value of the currency, of the crises, begins to dominate. The class collaborationist ideology and perspectives of the labor bureaucracy will emerge as more and more out of tune with—contradictory to—the living reality that millions and millions of workers face.

We tried to go through the key sections of the Transitional Program, putting our demands in language that makes sense given the American workers’ experience and the current stage of the radicalization.

Down with the War-Makers

The first of the three programmatic sections deals with the struggle against the imperialist war machine. Here we tried to incorporate the fundamental lessons of the Vietnam war period and the adjustment in the proletarian military policy that Farrell drafted and we adopted at our 1969 convention. We look at the utilization by the ruling class of xenophobia, nationalism and chauvinism that accompanies each threat of war. We look at the central role of the youth and the role of the army in this period.

We try to focus on two things. One is the permanent threat of the nuclear destruction of humanity, and we incorporate the demand for unilateral disarmament into the revolutionary program. The second is the permanent war budget and its massive size which not only threatens the life and limb of the worker used as cannon fodder, but more and more is seen as a vicious and unjustifiable drain on the resources and products of our labor in a period when our living standards are under attack.

In addition we look at one other small thing—what for lack of anything else I call the role of television. The American ruling class faces a difficulty in fighting a war and implementing an imperialist foreign policy right in front of the American working class. Today they must fight their wars on TV. They must fight their wars in the

newspapers. They must fight their wars with whole layers of their intelligentsia divided and exposing their aims and methods. They can no longer restrict the brutal reality of war to the families of those who are killed and maimed. The families of everyone who may grow up to be killed or maimed also have war made more real for them. The pace of communications and the widespread understanding of at least major aspects of the realities of imperialist war and foreign policy are something new and something favorable for revolutionaries.

The Starting Point of Workers Struggles

The second section of the programmatic part is entitled "In Defense of the Working Class," and this we could have titled "The Fight for Workers Control." The central idea here is that the starting point for all struggles is the fight to defend the workers' right to employment and to maintain their standard of living, against the bosses and their government. Fundamental demands of the Transitional program are incorporated here—a sliding scale of both hours and wages and our other basic demands.

We have incorporated economic rights which workers feel they have—the right to know what's going on; the right to veto decisions which affect their lives, limbs, and the health and welfare of the community; the right to organize everywhere; the right to have veto power on the job. We put forward demands that encroach upon the rights and secrecy of the bosses and their government, demands whose logic leads toward workers control, planning, expropriation, etc. This is very important. What we try to do is put these latter demands in the framework of the class struggle road, not make them an abstract presentation of goals. Planning, nationalization and so-called job enrichment—all these in and of themselves have no value whatsoever. The question is "job enrichment," planning, nationalization, by whom, for what purposes, controlled by whom, achieved along what path of struggle. We always place the logical line of march of labor toward control, toward planning, toward expropriation, in the unfolding of the class struggle and the development of a class-struggle wing in the mass organizations.

If you read the discussions between Trotsky and the Americans, Shachtman just couldn't seem to get the meaning of workers control in the Transitional Program. He kept saying that it didn't make any sense to the American workers. This workers control will never make any sense to them. Other things they'll get, but this workers control is way ahead of its time. You know, if we reread the discussions and rethink what has been happening and how we utilize this concept, not necessarily as a slogan but as a concept, we'll see that Trotsky was more right than Shachtman about workers control and the American workers.

For the Class Struggle Unity of the Oppressed and Exploited

The third section of the programmatic section in "Labor's Strategic Line of March" is titled "Human Rights, Not Property Rights." Here we deal with a fundamental question, the question of the divisions in the working class that are imposed by capitalism. The revolutionary bridging of these divisions and the mobilization of the whole class is decisive to the success of any

revolutionary thrust. We try to note the three most important divisions.

The most fundamental division of all is the division between the employed and the unemployed, those with a job and those without a job. In a deep enough depression over a long period of time the ruling class tries to use this division to turn millions and millions of workers into a demoralized pariah section of the class which is no longer looked upon by their coworkers as part of the working class.

The second great division is that fostered by the ruling class through the historic role of racism and racial discrimination.

And the third one is discrimination by sex, the attempt to keep women a reserve and highly flexible source of labor to be used when capitalism needs them and then thrust out of the labor market when capitalism does not need them, and to have women viewed as different from male workers in this respect.

The key to our approach is the integrity and unity of the working class itself. Against individual solutions based on any sort of privilege, and for social solutions based on overcoming the divisions in the working class that we don't foster but that are fostered by the ruling class. These historical divisions exist; we must work to overcome them. This can be done only on the basis of class-struggle unity, by putting the human rights of the class as a whole and its oppressed sectors above the relative privileges, divisions and hopes for individual solutions that the ruling class breeds. Maybe it's another way of saying, "Workers of the World Unite!" Tariffs, "Buy American," deporting foreign-born workers, setting workers against the working farmers, blaming public workers for higher taxes, blaming Blacks, women, etc.—all these chauvinist and divisive views are put forward by the bosses and nurtured by their ideology. Without this ideology the ruling class can't rule; capitalism can't survive.

In this way we try to show how the battle for jobs, for a decent standard of living for all, goes hand-in-hand with the battle against discrimination and against beating back by even one inch the gains made by the doubly oppressed and exploited layers of the working class. We try to show how yesterday's dream has become today's necessity, and how the rights that Malcolm X so aptly called "human rights," that go beyond the grudgingly given civil rights, are put forward and fought for.

We try to show that the logic of these struggles is the thrust toward direct democracy. In the course of struggle, committees—factory committees, strike committees, neighborhood committees, mobilization committees, action coalitions, whatever they are—are thrown forward and become the decision making bodies, if for the moment, of struggles. The rise of these committees must go hand in hand with drawing the most oppressed into struggle. These must become the arenas where more and more decision making power is fought for and more and more decision making power is taken—taking power away from the government to declare war or to decide on nuclear tests; taking power away from the bosses to pollute, to make decisions on the job. On an institutional plane the logic of this is the fight for direct democracy, for councils, for soviets; against subordination of struggles to parliamentary institutions, their commissions, their appointees. Of course, this is the logic of the struggle of the united front, the united front tactic.

The CP Program—By Comparison

One thing we might do as we discuss the resolution in the preconvention period is compare it to the program of the Communist Party. The CP is going to adopt their program on June 29 in Chicago and will immediately publish it. We sent a copy of their draft to all the members of the National Committee and organizers. It is very revealing to go through the CP's program section by section, step by step, section of the working class by section of the working class, and see what the class collaborationist program is, compared to the class struggle program. Take the two programs side by side, the program of the Socialist Workers Party for the American revolution and the program of the American Communist Party, and compare them. There are some useful things to discover.

For instance we find that they think the real problem is to remove the power of war-making from the hands of the executive branch and to place it in the hands of the congress! We say put it in the hands of the people, let the people vote on war. You'll see that contrary to any illusions arising from Gus Hall's "lame duck" pamphlet, the road to independent working class political action by necessity goes through the Democratic party. You'll discover that in fifteen pages of discussion of women and the rise of women's struggles and the importance of women in the American revolution, neither the equal rights amendment nor abortion are ever mentioned. You'll discover many good statistics on the exploitation and double oppression of the oppressed nationalities, its historical roots, and then you will find that the answer to this does not include preferential hiring, upgrading, or quotas. You'll even discover a new slogan, called "equal upgrading."

You'll discover that détente can be won only if the ruling class is divided and the anti-monopoly forces are won over. The struggle to win détente can institutionalize détente, and that would open the road to American socialism. I've never seen the peaceful coexistence road to socialism more clearly and disgustingly presented.

You'll find that nationalization is called for but under "democratic" control, not under workers control. This nationalization will not be the culmination of the revolutionary struggle of the working class for more and more control over the American economy, that is, expropriation of the exploiters, but the result of demands on the "antimonopoly" sectors of the American ruling class who see the necessity for nationalization under "democratic" control.

The same day I read this CP program I read that the California Democratic Council came out for nationalization of the energy industry under the democratic control of a public energy control board. I suspect a drafter of that resolution read the CP's resolution first.

Section for section, stage of the class struggle after stage of the class struggle, two views of the strategic line of march for the American working class can be counterposed, a Trotskyist view and a Stalinist view.

The Revolutionary Party

The final section of the resolution is on the revolutionary party. In the past few years we have often compared and

contrasted the current radicalization with the previous radicalizations in the Debs period and the 1930s. There is another comparison that should be noted if we are correct in our analysis. In many ways we are reminded of the depth of the contradictions growing in the period before the Civil War, the second American revolution.

While we recognize that there can be big fluctuations in the tempo of the unfolding struggle, and sudden explosions, and while no peaceful transition to socialism is possible, there is also no hopeless situation for the ruling class. The outcome depends ultimately on the subjective factor, the degree of consciousness, homogeneity, combativity, experience, and class consciousness of the working class, and the existence of an adequate leadership—that is, a revolutionary mass party able to lead the workers to power.

Trotsky repeats over and over that it is this subjective factor that has been missing in so many otherwise promising situations. In *Europe and America* he discusses Europe in the 1920s and he points out: "What then has been lacking is the final subjective precondition, the awareness of the proletariat of Europe of its position in society, and its corresponding organization, its corresponding training by the party capable of leading it." [p. 6]. That is what was lacking. What was the price the working class paid for this lag? The price was the first imperialist war. But on the other hand, the imperialist war played a gigantic role in impelling this consciousness forward.

And in many ways that is what happened in this country. The price the American workers paid because of the weakness of the subjective side, the lack of a sizable enough revolutionary party to lead them to power, was the second imperialist slaughter and the subsequent period of quiescence, conservatism and the great expansion of American capital in the last thirty years. But this had another side to it. It bred a new working class, and imposed a new series of problems and contradictions that have begun opening doors for the resolution of the problem of the subjective factor.

Where are we at in the process of building the party? We have to be clear on this, so that we don't try to jump ahead of ourselves.

Maybe we can say there are three basic stages in the development of a revolutionary party. One is a propaganda nucleus. Second is a cadre group capable of initiating propaganda actions. And third is a party of mass action. In the first two stages a group is able to change the relationship of forces within the vanguard of the working class and its allies where relatively small forces are involved, if they react in a timely way with the correct line to new developments, new protests, new crises, with the right kind of initiatives, the right kind of action campaigns, explanations, with fusions, regroupments, and consolidation of cadres. Such initiatives help the party grow, develop its cadres, gain relative to its opponents. But such groups are not yet able to change the relationship of class forces.

We can say we are crossing the bridge from the first to the second stage, to a cadre nucleus capable of initiating propaganda actions. In a period of radicalization a group's ability to function realistically and correctly can prove in practice, on a limited scale, that it is the most capable of competing organizations on the left. This is what we did in the antiwar movement, and in other movements. This helped in the accumulation of cadres and in changing the

relationship of forces on the left.

The third stage cannot come until the radicalization of the working class is deepened to the point, and the revolutionary party is developed to the point, where we have displaced the domination of opponents in the mass movements to the degree that we can lead mass struggles that in and of themselves begin affecting the class relationship of forces. To recognize this and be clear about it is not to belittle our accomplishments to date, but to see clearly where we are, what we can do, and not do, in moving ahead toward the next stage.

There is always a little danger when we present a program or resolution that looks further ahead than the conjuncture. Comrades want to take the objective possibilities that the resolution shows are unfolding and act as if we were a much bigger party. This we cannot do. But if we act realistically, we will become a larger party much faster. Concerning this point it is worth rereading and studying the fifth section of the resolution, "World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," the section called, "The Maturing of the Subjective Conditions for Revolution." All of our experience on this question over the past decades is drawn together here.

The Proletarianization of the Socialist Workers Party

Another thing the resolution takes up is the question of the proletarianization of the party. It's important to recall something that I think got passed over a little bit. Comrades will remember that when we adopted the organizational resolution in 1965, the party's attention focused on drawing the organizational lessons of the Wohlforth and Robertson splits. But the comrades on the committee who drafted it—Jim Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, and George Novack, who were assigned by the National Committee to draft it—included a section about proletarianizing the party. The new codification of our organizational principles called for us to look forward to penetrating all sectors of the mass movement. Paraphrasing the lectures on the organizational character of the party given by Farrell in 1970, this includes labor organizations within industry; the unemployed; the movements of the oppressed nationalities, the Blacks, the Chicanos, the Puerto Ricans and others that were becoming radicalized and in which workers, by the way, predominate; the college campuses and high schools; and new movements, especially the women's liberation movement which was just beginning to develop. The opportunities and rewards of implementing this perspective are greater than they were five or ten years ago.

The Continuity of American Trotskyism

One final thing, under this section on the revolutionary party, is worth discussing, and that is the character of the American Trotskyist movement. It is important for the younger comrades to absorb a little bit of history about what kind of party they are inheriting.

What kind of party is it that for almost five decades, including long stretches of reaction, imperialist wars, prosperity and isolation has been able to maintain and develop the revolutionary program and the nucleus of the revolutionary cadres of the American revolutionary party? It is useful to look at a few of the factors that made this possible.

First, the original cadres of American Trotskyism came out of the leadership of the American Communist Party, which in its time had regrouped the best of the revolutionary and internationalist minded cadres of the early American socialist and syndicalist movement.

Second, these founding cadres as a team had exceptional leadership abilities—that's clear from history—as politicians, theoreticians, organizers, and as mass leaders. They had the additional advantage, a unique historical advantage, of working with and learning directly from the central cadres of the Russian revolution, both in their participation in the leadership of the Comintern and later in a long period of close and direct collaboration with Trotsky.

The cadres of the party were never decimated by war, victorious fascism or Stalinist assassination, as so many of the nuclei of the International Left Opposition and the Fourth International were. This has meant continuity of cadres, an overlapping and collaboration of generations, and a balanced preservation and transmission of the principle lessons, organizational experiences, and class struggle experiences of decades of revolutionary struggle.

The SWP throughout its history has been largely proletarian in composition and leadership, as well as in orientation. And one of the advantages accruing from the advanced character of American capitalism has been, and will be even more, the yield of a relatively high percentage of revolutionary organizers, politicians, and intellectuals of proletarian origin.

Because of its internationalist origins and inspiration, the party was from its very inception conscious of its responsibility as a key component in the leadership of the Fourth International. In its first formative decade the Trotskyist movement was solidly grounded in class-struggle principles and when the formation of the party came in 1938 and the split with Shachtman and the war came in 1940, the basic cadres and the basic traditions of the party had been formed.

Following Trotsky's death, the party showed a capacity to react to new developments that made a new theoretical challenge. The overturns in Eastern Europe, China, Yugoslavia and Cuba; the rise of Black nationalism, of the women's liberation movement, of the youth movement; the new problems of strategy and analysis posed by the development of American capitalism—each of these theoretical challenges has been met.

And we have been able to show over decades a Leninist understanding of political and organizational practice commensurate with the tasks before the party of the American revolution. It is a fortuitous but historic circumstance that such a nucleus of the revolutionary party exists in the decisive country for the world revolution.

Sometimes newer comrades take all this completely for granted, as if it is just in the course of things that when you become radical that is the kind of party, cadre, and tradition you join up with. But maybe as we consider this resolution and perspective it outlines, it would be good to note the unique historic opportunity represented by the existence of the SWP.

So our job here is to discuss the draft as thoroughly as we can, and prepare a better draft to present to the party for discussion between now and the convention, to prepare what will be an important convention in the history of our party.

I also think that if we do a quality job on this resolution there will be interest in it around the world, among comrades trying to come to grips with and discuss out the place of the United States in the perspectives for world revolution.

Summary

The discussion has been a step forward both in homogenizing our thinking on the draft resolution and in gathering the suggested changes that will improve the resolution so that it can do the job we want it to do in advancing discussion in the party.

It's worth going back over some of the key themes of the resolution. These are richer after the discussion.

The Turn

The first question is what is new, what is the turn we are talking about? Lynn [Henderson] addressed himself to this and so did Art [Sharon].

We begin with the objective fact that a fundamental turn has now definitely occurred in both the world and American capitalist economy, and as a result we see the beginning of a turn in the consciousness of the American working class. We do not simply mean an additional quantitative penetration into the working class of the attitudes engendered in the first stages of the radicalization which we have discussed before.

The qualitative turning point of this combined process is the 1974-75 American depression, which is part of the first world capitalist recession since 1937-38. We could not have made the same judgment at our last plenum, a year ago. It is not only the stagnation and lowering of real wages; it's more than that. 1971-1975 was a period in which a process occurred, but it was the depression that culminated the process.

Starting roughly in 1965—as Art mentioned—there was a decade-long stagnation of the real income of the American working class. Not a drop, but a stagnation.

With the turn in capitalist policy signaled by Nixon's wage freeze, trade war, devaluation speech in August 1971, something new occurs. On top of stagnation comes the lowering of real wages, and then the first of the big shocks and crises that the workers are completely unprepared for, and which send tremors through their consciousness.

For instance, all of a sudden there is a shortage of meat, in the United States. I can remember when I was a kid back in the '40s, we still only had meat several times a week, but after the mid-1950s it was there—almost like the water or the air. For young workers, a shortage of meat, soaring prices for meat—by god, take away meat!—it's something abnormal.

The whole country runs on oil and suddenly there's a giant oil crisis. You have to line up to get your tank partly filled!

We're used to relatively stable prices, but inflation, which began with the Vietnam war, all of a sudden begins soaring. And this is one of the two most debilitating things that can happen to a worker. What will the dollar be worth tomorrow? What can I buy? How far ahead can I plan? Can we do the things we planned on doing? *Tremendous new uncertainty*. We were used to a little creeping inflation, a little bit in the '50s and early '60s, but not like this.

We had the warped speculative boom in 1971-72 as we came out of the wage freeze. But it was an odd boom even when it was happening. It was a boom that was accompanied by accelerated inflation that soon reached double-digit proportions. There was great unevenness in the boom—the increase in employment didn't come close to keeping up with the money increase in Gross National Product. The boom seemed to consist of a tremendous export of wheat, the first fruits of the successful Nixon-Connally international offensive; and then the crash. The payoff for the big inflationary boom was the crash. And the crash marks a new stage.

The depression brings—not just to the youngest, not just to the most oppressed—but to the *working class as a whole* the uncertainty about whether or not you'll have a job. Whether or not you can work and make a living. That's the greatest pressure of all on our class, which even if skilled and white, has only its labor power to sell.

It is this combination of things culminating in the depression that marks the turning of a corner on a world scale and in this country, as Lynn discussed. It has begun affecting the working class in a new way. The April 26 march on Washington for jobs, the smaller-scale protests that preceded it, are reflections of this. Workers as workers, as unemployed and as unionists, marching on the question of jobs—that's new. And it was a popular march. It was a march that reflected the feelings of many people. I liked Frank Boehm's comments on this. It was a march that raised the idea that it would be a good thing for the public employees in New York to repeat such a march where the Beame team hangs out. This new situation is the result of something in addition to the stagnation and then lowering of real wages. Today real wages, what you can really buy with your paycheck, are below what they were in late 1964. The government admits that; those are the facts, and any worker can tell you that.

But we could not yet have said that we were at the beginning stages of the radicalization of the working class at our last plenum, because it was not yet true. We were still at a stage—it turns out the end of a stage—in which we were anticipating this radicalization. Then we were looking at sectors and industries like construction and auto that began to crash first. We were looking at the attack on the workers' standard of living and their expectations and quality of life. We were looking for the blow from American capitalism that would generalize the turning point in the crisis of capitalism and do it in such a way that the American workers would *know*.

And we got it with the depression. Now we can say a turn has occurred, and there is the beginning of its reflection in a new consciousness in the working class. About that there can be no ambiguity in the resolution.

Once we came to this conclusion, we found it useful to look at a few other things. What is this critter, the American working class?

So we go back and look at what capitalism has wrought in the last thirty years, and we see quite an animal. In numbers and size, in racial and sex composition, in age, in combativity, in attitudes and expectations, we see a whole series of changes from a previous period. And we look also at the powerful allies of the working class, to make our analysis and projections precise. What are the forces that are going to be the powerhouses of the coming battles, as

we enter a period in which we can anticipate new class struggles and new class consciousness? We tried to answer that question, and that's why we looked at the structure of the working class and why we looked at the powerful allies.

In this resolution we look at these questions from a new vantage point. Many things in this resolution have been said in this or that place before, in the *Militant* or in previous resolutions, but not from the point of view of beginning with the changing character and structure of the American working class and the radicalization and mobilization of labor's allies. That's looking at this process from the point of view of charting a strategy of *labor to power*. That's the vantage point from which we look at the allies of the working class in this resolution. We'll look at the most important ally of the working class differently in the next report on the agenda. There we'll look at Afro-Americans as an independent component of the American revolution. But in the political resolution we intentionally have a different viewpoint.

Let me take the time to read two paragraphs of the summary of the report by Trotsky to the Third Congress of the Comintern that I referred to briefly and tried to summarize. It's foolish to try to summarize Trotsky's words; it's better to read it.

"The question, which is raised by many comrades abstractly, of just what will lead to revolution: impoverishment or prosperity, is completely false when so formulated. I have already tried to prove this in my report. One Spanish comrade told me in a private conversation that in his country it was precisely the prosperity which came to Spanish industry through the war that produced a revolutionary movement on a large scale, whereas previously stagnation had prevailed. Here we have an example that is not Russian but Spanish—an example from the other side of Europe, Comrades! Neither impoverishment nor prosperity as such can lead to revolution. But the alteration of prosperity and impoverishment, the crises, the uncertainty, the absence of stability—these are the motor factors of revolution.

"Why has the labor bureaucracy become so conservative? In most cases it consists of weak creatures who live on a moderate scale, whose existence is nowise marked by luxury; but they have grown accustomed to stable living conditions. They have no fear of unemployment so long as they can keep themselves within the framework of the normal party and trade union life. This tranquil mode of existence has also exerted its influence upon the psychology of a broad layer of workers who are better off. But today this blessed state, this stability of living conditions, has receded into the past; in place of artificial prosperity has come impoverishment. Prices are steeply rising, wages keep changing in or out of consonance with currency fluctuations. Currency leaps, prices leap, wages leap, then come the ups and downs of feverish fictitious conjunctures and profound crises. This lack of stability, the uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring in the personal life of every worker is the most revolutionary factor in the epoch in which we live."

That comes close to being a description of the period which we have entered.

It's worth repeating what several comrades said. For the overwhelming majority of the members and leaders of this party, our entire political lives have been in another period, a period different from the one we are now

entering. So I'm not worried about throwing the party off the tracks by calling this a turn. We're a homogeneous party, a party with a competent cadre. I'm most concerned about making the turn in everyone's consciousness, and on a nationwide scale, to prepare ourselves on all planes for the new situation. That's the first job.

Think Socially and Act Politically

An important theme in the resolution is taken from Trotsky's discussions with the American comrades, in which he says several times, "The American workers must learn to think socially and act politically. There will be no revolution, there will be no revolutionary upsurge without those two factors." At least three times he makes that point in the discussion.

Act politically. What is involved here is quite simply the fact that labor's first giant step did not move on to the political plane. The organization of another million, two or three million workers is not decisive, not in relation to the necessary next giant step forward for labor. What is decisive now is the political organization of the working class. A tool must be found, and there is only one—an independent political party—to take the struggles that lie ahead beyond the trade union plane and generalize them on the political level.

In the report I discussed the *Fortune* article by Daniel Bell about "The Revolution of Rising Entitlements." He raises another problem that the ruling class is trying to grapple with. More and more these expectations are formulated in demands aimed at the government. More and more working people are beginning to feel that only on the governmental level can these pressing problems of life be solved. The next step for the workers is to generalize and organize their struggle on this level, the political level. That means a labor party.

It's not a question of promisory notes. We don't guarantee that the labor party stage won't essentially be bypassed by a tremendous revolutionary upheaval and the rapid growth of the revolutionary party. If that is in the cards, so be it, that's great. But we start with the historic problem, and with the size of the SWP. There is massive power in the union movement. Frank Lovell described that organized power. There is massive power there, but it is blocked, at best, or tied to the employers' parties on the political level. It must move onto the political level. We don't propose a reformist or centrist program for this labor party. The program we propose for this labor party is in section 7 of our resolution; that's our program for a party of labor based on the unions. But the working class must take this step of organizing itself politically. And the most likely variant on how this step will first be taken is the organization of a labor party based on the unions. And it must be fought for. Without this step the development of the class struggle toward posing the question of what class will rule will not have passed to the essential level of politics.

Think socially. Cease thinking that there are individual solutions. Cease thinking that there are solutions to your major problems on a plant level. Cease thinking there are solutions for you if you are relatively privileged, while many others are being driven down. Cease thinking the problems and solutions are solely national as opposed to international ones. Learn to think socially. Learn that the struggles of the oppressed outside your union, outside your

plant, outside your neighborhood, outside your class, even, are *your* struggles and not only because they are right and just; but because without the forces of these layers joining with you, this horrendous capitalist society cannot and will not be changed.

The struggles of the Blacks, the Chicanos, the Puerto Ricans, the women will teach the labor movement to think socially. Everyone is going to be fighting for jobs. Maybe more Blacks and more women will be fighting for work, but job struggles are going to be broad struggles cutting across race and sex lines in American labor, as crises hit deeply. And a white male worker is going to find himself in the same boat with Blacks, women and others once it hits him. Especially if he has been living high off the hog (relative to his own previous standards), and his family's expectations are high on the hog, it's going to hit even harder in some ways.

But on this question of learning to think socially the women and oppressed nationalities will take the lead, because by definition their struggles raise broader social questions. This is one of the things Nat [Weinstein] was pointing to when he stressed the historic tasks of the proletarian revolution, and how they can't be bypassed or postponed to the Greek Kalends; you can't cheat on them. Because what may look like historical tasks become the tasks for the moment, as a social crisis deepens on its way to a revolutionary situation. Not for moral reasons, but because of the need to mobilize enough clout to take power away from the capitalists. Labor can't cheat on this; because only if the oppressed nationalities, the women, these sectors of the working class, these allies, are mobilized in a gigantic struggle will the forces that can settle things in this country come forward. It's another way of saying that there is no way around principled politics.

Our refusal to subordinate the struggles of the most oppressed sections of the working class—whether they are fighting as super-exploited workers or as an oppressed nationality or sex—is not some moral, utopian thing to make it look like we are a good party for all the oppressed. It is the realistic road, the class-struggle road, the *only* road to the mobilization of the forces that can transfer power from the capitalists to the workers.

What we are talking about here is not the same thing as the program a workers state will carry out in the process of the construction of socialism. When we talk to women, to Blacks, to young people, to people who are worried about the ecology, to gay people, to all people whatever their attitude or situation in life, that find this society unbearable, we tell them only a socialist society, a society that gets rid of classes, and the necessity for racial and sexual discrimination, can solve these problems. But the *essential first step* to reach that society is to fight together to establish a workers government, a dictatorship of the proletariat, abolishing the tyranny of capital. We need a new class in power to sweep the old crud aside to begin the humane reconstruction of society. Unless the working class can be united around this perspective it will not be able to become a social and political fighting force. And without this perspective as part of its program, there are great limits to how far a class-struggle left wing in the unions can go.

In this sense the combined character of the American

revolution refers to the struggle for power, not simply to the tasks of the revolution itself.

Against Racist and Sexist Job Discrimination

Now, if organizations like CLUW can't get straight on the question of discrimination in layoffs, they can't get anything straight and they don't deserve to exist. There's a reason we support a Coalition of Labor Union Women. We're not for dual unionism. We support CLUW because labor union women face some additional concrete historical forms of oppression, exploitation, discrimination, that labor union men don't. Right? We don't propose a coalition of labor union men. Some may—Shanker, Meany—but not us. It is the Coalition of Labor Union Women. And the one thing about which there can be no ambiguity is that it fights for labor union women, to eradicate and overcome the centuries of discrimination and special oppression of women. That's why its exists.

This has been very thoroughly discussed yesterday and today and I'm glad we're in solid agreement on this. This party is opposed to the bosses or capitalist government using layoffs to chop back any of the gains Blacks or women have made. Can you imagine what kind of party we would be if we didn't have this position? Here's a party that is for affirmative action, preferential hiring and upgrading during the big economic upswing when jobs are plentiful. We say, yes we're for it, not because it's an isolated problem here, but because it is a historic problem of discriminatory education patterns, racial and sexual discrimination on the job, in hiring and upgrading, etc. We say the bosses foster this discrimination because more than anything else they need the working class divided in order to maintain their rule. We say the road to equality can only be the rectification of past discrimination, through preferential methods. Everything else is fake liberalism. That's what we say when times are good.

And then when times are bad, what if there were any ambiguity in the stance of the SWP? What if we should say, well, cool it now, Blacks and women, seniority comes first. That would be read as bowing to the grossest prejudices emanating from the privileges of white male job-trusts and the union bureaucracy. And if that position were maintained over time, it would be. It would be.

The key thing is to turn this on the bosses and the employers. What we say is the boss cannot use his temporary monopoly over the means of production—which we are going to take away from him someday but haven't yet, unfortunately—to reverse gains made by women and the oppressed nationalities. I think the formula we use in the resolution is not one percentage point less. Don't lower by a single percentage point the proportion of Black or women workers through discriminatory layoffs.

Within this framework we can educate and take on whatever confusion we have to take on in the ranks of labor. If in some places seniority is used by the bosses to cover discriminatory layoffs, well, we say, this is a higher principle than seniority and we figure a way to present our position. But we are always concrete. As Jean [Tussey] correctly said, what we don't do, is we don't get the two things mixed up. You don't go to a group of unorganized workers and say, brothers and sisters, one of the reasons to join the union is you won't have seniority.

Our opposition to *discrimination* in layoffs is completely different from our demand for jobs for all, for a sliding

scale of hours, which is our platform for fighting against the massive layoffs of capitalist depressions. But until we can win jobs for all, there not only will be layoffs, but millions of discriminatory ones, and we are opposed to the bosses using them to reverse by one iota job gains made by the oppressed. On this we totally differentiate ourselves from the ultra-left workerists and the straddling Stalinists.

The State of the Unions

Do young workers look to their unions for solutions to their problems? Fred [Halstead] made the point that most do not today. But we should note the unevenness in relation to this, in the different industries, in different parts of the country. It's not true that miners who have problems don't look to their union. Obviously many of them do. It's not true that layers of workers in several unions, different industries, different parts of the country don't look to their unions. They do.

More important is that they must. Because there is rather an awesome question before the American workers, which they aren't aware of yet. In the epoch we're in and the period we're entering, the unions will be transformed into revolutionary instruments of class struggle that can lead social and political fights forward, or they will simply be turned into the police agencies for the bosses and their government.

The alternative we have before is is the alternative that Trotsky posed most strongly in "Trade Unions In the Epoch of Imperialist Decay." That is the alternative that American workers face on a broad scale. It's not an optional question. It's a life and death struggle of the American working class to take from the bureaucrats the power and organization of the labor movement. The unions are many things to many people; they have been many things in the past. The CIO was a great social movement in the beginning, not just a union movement as many younger comrades think of it. And it will be many different things in the future.

We make no promises on this either. Whole sections of the union structure will be knocked down and new formations will come up. Whole sections will not meet the test. The problems of privilege, the problems of class collaboration, the problems of racism and sexism that Harry [Ring] pointed to that run so deep, can destroy certain unions. We don't offer promisory notes on this. What we offer is a commitment and a program to struggle, to struggle to transform these unions which belong to the workers, not to these bureaucratic cretins on top of them. They belong to the workers, and their power belongs to the workers, and they have to move forward to use this power. The American ruling class has not taken head-on the union movement at this stage of the crisis. They still try to skirt around it, go after its weakest links, probe it. But this can change rapidly and these questions will be posed.

At this stage we can only propagandize around the points of our program for the unions. Comrades asked me, well, are you proposing organizing class-struggle left wings in the unions? Well, the answer is yes, in a certain sense. That is what we should be doing. Yes. What can we do to organize class-struggle left wings at this stage? Well, mostly propaganda. Mostly explain. But there are many workers ready to listen, more ready to listen today than yesterday. We explain clearly and we keep explaining.

That's part of organizing. You don't have to wait. We can't hot-house it but a class struggle left wing won't come full-blown from the forehead of Zeus. It won't blossom without the participation of revolutionists.

The Program for Socialist Revolution

Finally there is the programmatic section. There wasn't much discussion on this part because comrades are comfortable with it. But we should go over that section carefully during the preconvention discussion, because we say some things in there in new ways. It's an attempt to apply aspects of our transitional program in ways that make sense for the coming period, in ways that we have not presented before.

It's worth repeating that it will be valuable during the discussion to reread the discussions with the Old Man on the transitional program. Reread the world political resolution which we adopted in December 1973. And reread Farrell's books. These books are the story of a revolutionary union, its rise and fall, what it did and how it was different from other unions. It's worth looking at these books from that point of view. How do you approach the question of thinking socially and acting politically? How do you approach the question of the pariah sections, the unemployed and oppressed? How did 544 see its mission? How did its leaders think? How were its ranks mobilized? How was it different from what you see in unions today? How might the story of this union look to some young workers as the coming period of radicalization deepens?

We have not been talking about the immediate tasks and perspectives of the party under this point. One of the immediate tasks and perspectives of the party is to absorb this resolution if we agree on it and to make a turn in our thinking, to begin to come to grips with the fact that we are entering a period different from that most of us have lived through. We'll have to act differently, think differently, move in a different way. We'll have to have a different atmosphere in the party. We'll have to recruit in a different way. We won't recruit only people who are already professional revolutionists out of the YSA. I don't mean to jump ahead to the Tasks and Perspectives Report and discussion. But we cannot accept the fact of this turn, make the turn in our thinking, and not prepare for the other turns that logically follow.

Let me say something about the word "turn." There was a discussion in the Political Committee concerning the term "turn." Joe [Hansen] pointed out it could be misinterpreted to mean something like the French turn where you throw whole cadres into a new arena like the Socialist party in 1936 because something has suddenly opened up. Or a comrade could get the wrong idea that the turn means colonization of a certain industry that we're going to throw people into, something like that. Joe pointed out that it's an accumulation of a quantitative process that's outlined in our world political resolution. We don't want to misinterpret the word "turn." In an uneven way the changing objective situation is already reflected in the work of most branches. We're not missing many opportunities.

But from a fundamental point of view it is a turn. When we've gone through a period very different from the one opening up it's always useful to think this way. And we need it. There's an unevenness in the party. We need to use the preconvention discussion and convention discussion

and workshops to pull the whole party together.

We're not talking about a narrow "union orientation." We say we are at the beginning of the radicalization of the *working class*; we are talking about throwing forces into important openings—reacting as a campaign cadre party to struggles such as unfolded in Boston. We're talking about the growing possibilities of penetrating the mass movement, of the mass movement changing in all its sectors, of applying the proletarian orientation of the party as spelled out in the 1965 organizational resolution and in Farrell's explanation of it at the Socialist Activists and Educational Conference in 1970. We're talking about working to make this party and its leadership more Black, more Chicano, more Puerto Rican, more female, as well as more working class in composition.

We are convinced we can recruit over the coming period more workers, more Black fighters, more Puerto Ricans, more Chicanos, more women, more young people. And we intend to do so, because we will be fighting in the struggles that will be occurring and maximizing the chances of doing so.

We should be cautious about the concessions that can be made by the ruling class. Layers of the working class can win concessions; there may be a series of concessions. I thought George Breitman added a point that was valuable. It wasn't simply or primarily the New Deal that blocked the development of the radicalization of the American working class in the '30s. More importantly it was the war and the turn the ruling class was able to make in extended preparation for the war—suppressing democratic rights, whipping up patriotism, utilizing war production, etc., this blocked political action by the labor movement. But the working class still could have done the job with the right leadership.

Given the changed composition, character, structure of the present working class, this radicalization presents even a better opportunity than the 1930s.

We shouldn't underestimate what the party section of this resolution says. This resolution would not mean a damn thing, we'd be talking through our hats if over the

last period we had not developed a cadre party that can implement this resolution in the years ahead.

How rich the opportunities are compared to what we would face if we had only a handful of members, or if we had not been through the struggles of the past four decades, or if we had not begun a transition in leadership, or if we had not had any experience in any sectors of the mass movement, or if we had no broad continuity. We have a cadre armed like very few cadres in the world have ever been.

We're not going to leap over ourselves and transform ourselves into a mass party overnight. No. But we think every single member of this party is going to make this turn, and we are going to enjoy making it. What did we join the party for? It wasn't to join a circle of friends, although there are pretty good people here and they are more interesting than most. That's true even when things are slow; but that's not what we joined for. We joined to participate in the next steps we see coming in the class struggle, to be part of them and to be part of the leadership of the mass movements.

We can add the point Fred Halstead made on the quality of life capitalism offers. He said, what do the capitalists really have to offer? Even the reformers. The *best* thing they have to offer, even if things go well, is another twenty years like the last twenty years years of "prosperity." Another twenty years like that and we'll hardly be able to live in this country! This is the strongest capitalist power on the face of the earth, with the highest level of capitalist development, and that was the best they could do. The very best. And more and more workers in this country will come to see that.

One final thing. Comrades have made many suggestions for editing that will make the resolution stronger. If the Committee approves its line, we'll take the resolution and incorporate the changes proposed and then submit the edited resolution and report in the name of the National Committee as drafts to start the discussion in the party as a whole.

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- Marty Jan 2014

Party Tasks and Perspectives Report

By Barry Sheppard

The general line of this report was adopted by the
National Committee, May 2, 1975.

The purpose of this report is to look at the present conjuncture and some of our tasks in light of the political resolution.

I'd like to begin by repeating some of the conjunctural conclusions that we've already discussed under the point on the political resolution. In past resolutions at Party conventions and National Committee plenums, we have discussed how the various movements of social protest that characterized the first stages of the radicalization had an impact on the working class. We also noted the turn in capitalist policy with the announcement of the wage freeze in 1971 and what that would mean. We discussed the impact on the working class of inflation, the shortages, cutbacks in social welfare, and other economic shocks; of political shocks, like the developments around Watergate; and of the racist offensive on education, housing and jobs against the minority sectors of the working class.

Now, with the impact of the depression, the development of the radicalization has reached a qualitatively new point in terms of the consciousness of the working class. Today growing numbers of American workers sense that they are faced, not just with a temporary conjunctural economic depression, but with a more enduring social crisis. And given the economic and political perspectives of American capitalism that were outlined in the political resolution, the layer that feels that way is going to grow.

It is one thing for workers to go through temporary adversity and feel that, "Well, we may be in a depression now but it's all going to work out in the future and we'll be able to make up for it." It's another thing to begin to think that, "No, I'm not sure at all about the future, or whether I can maintain my standard of living over the long run." That consciousness has begun to develop in layers of the American working class, on top of the deep distrust in the government that developed previously.

As workers begin to feel that the system cannot adequately deliver the goods, their whole fundamental outlook shifts. That is what we're beginning to see. So, we're at the beginning of a new stage in the development of political consciousness in the working class.

The resolution also points out that we're not yet at the stage where a class-struggle left wing has begun to be formed in the unions. That is, we do not yet have the leadership formation crystallizing in the unions that could chart a course of labor leading social movements and breaking politically with the parties of the capitalist class. We're at the beginning of the radicalization of the working class. But it's a new beginning; it's not merely an extension of what we have talked about in past resolutions—of the impact on the workers attitudes of the various social protests occurring in society—but a new and different stage that we've just begun to enter. And while we do not predict the tempo of the development of the radicalization of the working class, the clear direction is that it's going to get deeper.

The party has already begun to orient to the new tasks posed by this new stage. This can be seen in the work of

the branches, although it's uneven between one branch and another, and in different aspects of work within any one branch. It is shown in the nature of some of the election campaign meetings we have had. Branches on the East Coast and some of the Midwest branches oriented towards the big action for jobs on April 26. There are a number of good examples, where more trade union fractions have begun to do more party work. And the desegregation struggle in Boston is one of the clearest reflections of the new openings that exist and the ability of the party to throw itself into the new tasks.

What we've got to do now is to consciously generalize what we have begun to do and to understand the turn we are making.

We are in the process of making a turn in party activities, in branch priorities, and in how we organize our work. In one way this turn will seem to be a continuation of the things that we have begun to do already. But it is correct to call it a turn because we are talking about consciously organizing this work in a new way and generalizing it to all the branches.

This turn is based on all the work we've done up till now. We're not saying we've made some big mistakes that we have to correct. It's not that kind of turn. It's a turn toward new opportunities based on what we've done up to the present and what we can anticipate coming in the future. And it's based upon the cadres that we've accumulated and trained through the work we have done in the first phases of the radicalization. They will be able to play a new role in the next stage as the working class begins to radicalize.

The key thing to be stressed is not how much we do right away between now and August in implementing the turn, although there are going to be some adjustments. Our first task is to prepare the whole cadre, through the preconvention discussion, so that we can come out of the convention as a united party that understands the new stage of the radicalization, understands the new tasks and is ready to carry them out in the way we do everything, as a united campaign party.

What the turn is not

Maybe it would be best, in discussing what this turn is, to begin with what it is not. We're not proposing a colonization in the unions of the type that was carried out after the 1940 fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition. We have no internal problems such as exploded in the party at that time. As a matter of fact we have a rather healthy and united cadre.

Nor are we proposing some special, esoteric "tactic" for the next stage as workers begin to radicalize. We do not say that now we've got to sit down and think of some special gimmick, "tactic," or shortcut for building the party in the period ahead.

We're not saying that there is a big opening in any

particular industry or union that we should throw ourselves into, at this point. We make no predictions about when or how fast such things will happen; when they do I think we'll know how to respond to them.

We are not proposing a narrow union orientation, turning our backs on the struggles of Blacks, women, or other layers, or concerning ourselves only with economic questions. As the political resolution points out, all of these struggles are essential aspects of the coming big battles of the working class.

What the new stage means is that we have increased opportunities to do political work, party building work, in wider sections of the working class including the unions. This is the opposite of economism or workerism. You know, one of the positive features of the way in which this radicalization has developed was reflected in the party. We were able to deal politically with workerism as a current before we reached this stage of the radicalization. That's valuable. If we hadn't we would be obliged to have a different kind of discussion here, one that would be much more confusing, and we wouldn't be able to concentrate, and center our attention on the real opportunities and real tasks that we have before us. One thing that has been reflected at this plenum is basic agreement over the programmatic section of the political resolution, a very important section. So we have the advantage that workerism is not in our way now.

We should sweep out of our minds any false notions of the turn we are making, and look at the real opportunities before us.

I want to read a paragraph from the political resolution that paraphrases the 1965 organization resolution on our proletarian orientation. It says, "The proletarian orientation means concerted, systematic work to root the party in all sectors of the mass movement and to recruit the most capable cadres to the party. It means work in labor organizations, in industry and among the unemployed, in the political organizations of the oppressed minorities, in the struggle for women's liberation, and in the student movement." Then the resolution points out that our work among students is carried out through collaboration with the YSA, and there is a continuing and deepening potential for the YSA among students.

The new stage of the radicalization means that the party has new opportunities to deepen its work in the much wider mass movements, among Blacks, the unemployed, in the unions, in industries—in the whole working class. This means taking our general party work, the party campaigns as they develop out of the issues that are raised in the class struggle itself, into sectors of the wider mass movement.

Our work in the unions is going to help lay the programmatic foundations for the future development of a class-struggle left wing in the union movement. That is, our work to build a class-struggle left wing in the unions is at the stage of propaganda, not agitation or organization. The work that we will be projecting will help step up that propaganda activity, make it more systematic, looking forward to the formation of a class-struggle left wing in the unions.

The campus and high school fractions are key to building the YSA. The YSA doesn't have a special "campus tactic" in its work. The campus and high schools are the main arena of YSA work. That's the arena where

the YSA is recruiting and carrying out its political campaigns; that's the milieu it's taking its campaigns into, and the means of doing that are its fractions on the campuses and high schools. To the extent that campus fractions can be built, the YSA's work in that milieu is strengthened and organized. In the same way, building party fractions in the unions, at places of work where we have comrades but there are no unions, in the Black and Chicano struggle, among women, in other mass struggles, will help the branches carry out the party campaigns in the coming period, and prepare us for bigger struggles to come.

There are many examples in the party of increased opportunities for political work in the unions in the recent period. For example, in Chicago we have a small fraction in an AFSCME local. Our comrades became known as builders of the union in some fights in the past period. These comrades helped organize a union committee to support the fight in Boston against the racists, and got a union bus to come to the December 14 demonstration; sold our press and subscriptions in that local, brought contacts to educational conferences, and won campaign supporters to Willie Mae Reid's mayoral campaign. They were even able to organize an informal discussion for Willie Mae in the cafeteria where the workers eat.

We have another small group of AFSCME comrades in Philadelphia who were recently able to help organize union buses to go to the April 26 action. Our comrades on the job in other branches have been able to do similar kinds of things, taking aspects of the different campaigns the party is involved in—from selling of the press to PRDF work to the desegregation fight, demonstrations for jobs, the election campaign, recruitment—into their unions or to their places of work.

The branch organizers and executive committees should consider how they can help guide comrades seeking jobs into important unions and important industries in their cities. They have to think through the industries and union structures in their areas, and decide where we can do political work in the coming period. We have to pay close attention to this job. Where we have comrades in work places or unions we want to form fractions so they can meet and discuss what they can do, even if all they can do at first is sell the press.

They should meet and discuss how best to do that. It will lead to taking other campaigns of the party into their unions and work places.

The norm should be for branches to have trade union work directors; some already have found this useful. This is going to help the branch organizers. In addition to helping fractions, it can be a special help to comrades who are working alone someplace but who are in a position to carry out important activity. They might be able to sell the paper, make contacts, bring people to this or that function or raise a motion on the May 17 demonstration in their union, etc.

Now taking these organizational steps will not be of any value if the branch leaderships don't make an adjustment in their thinking and organization so that they pay political attention to the functioning of these fractions and help the trade union director. So we have to take some organizational steps, change some political priorities and give greater attention to organizing the systematic

political guidance of our work in the unions and at workplaces.

We don't project any great, spectacular leaps forward immediately in this kind of work. We'll make contacts, begin to recruit, and begin to develop our work. We're talking about the beginning of a turn that will develop further in the future. Remember, it takes the YSA a lot of time and hard work to build up its campus fractions. We don't rule out sudden explosions or new opportunities where we may be able to do more work in the unions. But it will take hard work and it will take time to build up these fractions and get them functioning more and more as party political fractions in the mass movement.

CLUW

We should see helping to build CLUW from this vantage point. Several months ago Linda Jenness sent out a letter describing the character of CLUW in different cities. She broke it down into three categories, depending on what kind of problems CLUW had with the ultralefts or the bureaucrats. That evaluation of the general problems remains accurate. However, CLUW has continued to develop. It hasn't disappeared, and in fact in some cities it has made some leaps forward. It retains its importance, given everything we talked about in our political resolution, as a Coalition of Labor Union Women. It has big potential as a part of the developing radicalization. And we want to see it grow.

While we've got to pay attention to the citywide meetings, CLUW will be built and will realize its potential to the extent it becomes a real organization in the unions themselves, and that's the direction of our work. CLUW will be built by reaching into the unions themselves and building a real base of women unionists. Sometimes this can mean trying to build a women's committee in a particular union situation, even if the citywide CLUW is stagnant.

There was an example of this in Denver recently where one comrade in a teachers union helped build a women's committee of about fifty or more. In that situation, where the citywide CLUW is not the best, one comrade was still able to take this campaign of the party into her union.

Job Protests

We've seen the first signs of reaction and action by workers to the shock of the depression. This has taken the form of various marches throughout the country, protests demanding that the government do something about jobs. Many of these have been rather small, some have been a little bigger. We have just heard the report of the demonstration of teachers in Texas which drew 25,000. And then, of course, the biggest was the April 26 march, a very militant, spirited march that was the first action by large numbers of workers in response to the depression.

These marches do not signify a political break with the capitalist parties, nor do they signal the formation of a class-struggle left wing in the unions. But we do see the

first signs of a new willingness to engage in action. They are indicative of the mood that's developing in wider sections of the working class, especially among those hardest hit, but not limited to them—that is, especially among Blacks, Chicanos, other oppressed minorities and women. Where these protests occur we want to be identified with them; we want to throw ourselves into them even when they are small, because we want to be known among whatever layers of workers are attracted to them, or think about them, as people who are for action; who want to do something about their situation. We want to reach with our program those workers who are the first to move around these questions.

We had a rather good response to our propaganda at the April 26 march. When workers are in a situation like that they are generally more responsive to listening to new ideas and to considering our ideas. One of the good things about that march is that all those tens of thousands of workers had to run the gauntlet of all the political tendencies and begin to think about the things the different tendencies were raising. We're not going to escape that, you know, as the workers begin to radicalize; we're not going to escape all our other opponents, from the Workers League all the way up to the Communist Party, from real screwballs up to the important opponents. People are going to take leaflets from them and are going to be interested in what they have got to say. We are going to be a part of that political discussion.

There are other developments in the unions that we want to keep an eye on, indications of changes from the past period. One example is the development in the miners' union where the entrenched, encrusted, Boyle machine was overthrown by the reform-minded Miller leadership. This has had an impact among other workers who are interested in developments in the UMW, especially as it has raised social issues. UMW unionism is now a bit different than the unionism most workers are used to. The *Militant* has done a good job in covering this development and utilizing it for general propaganda purposes, like the article we had on the miners who ran independent of the Democrats for local office. That was a limited experience but we were able to use it to make general propaganda points, along with other articles we've had on developments in the UMW.

Another indicative thing was the Sadlowski victory in the Steelworkers. Although much more limited than the Miller victory since it's in one local area, it's indicative of shifts in moods, things we should watch for propaganda activities.

Desegregation

In the past period we've made important steps forward in the Black struggle, largely through the desegregation struggle. This is a fundamental part of the turn we're talking about, part of the turn the branches are already beginning to make towards broader layers. This issue of *de facto* school segregation is a major social issue in the country. The fight is centered around busing. It is a national issue, on the agenda in many cities. At present,

the chief battleground for this fight is Boston, but it will flare up in other cities. The potential exists in Milwaukee and Los Angeles, and in other places. Racists have been organizing around this question for some time, and not only in Boston. A concerted racist campaign in Detroit led to the 1974 Supreme Court decision that was a reversal for Black rights.

The resolution points out that as the working class radicalizes, there is also going to be a polarization. To a certain extent a polarization has already begun around the busing question. Some right wing cadres are being organized in this fight. Against the racists, our line is the countermobilization of the Blacks and their allies. That is the basic line that we press.

Comrades in the discussion have mentioned some of the responses to this fight from the other tendencies. I'd just like to go over a couple of them, because every single one of our opponents has defaulted or capitulated to white racism to one degree or another on this question.

There is the outright capitulation of the Revolutionary Union which provides "socialist" cover for racism.

Recently there was an article in the New American Movement's publication that straddled the issue. It sat on the fence between the white racists and the Black community. They saw a "progressive thrust" to the demand of the South Boston community for control over its own schools—that's an anticapitalist struggle, they said.

The Communist Party has been less formally wrong on the question, but has backed away from the need for a countermobilization. At the Student Coalition founding conference the CP demanded that April 4 had to be a key day of action. On April 4 they pulled back from the fight against racism, refused to join actions organized by the NAACP and NSCAR. They held their own sectarian demonstrations, in which the busing issue was absent, and which took up only the question of jobs. Of course, we are in favor of fighting for jobs; that's not the point. The point is that the YWLL and CP counterposed and *substituted* the fight for jobs to the fight against racism in Boston.

Our role has been very important in helping get a countermobilization going. If you look back to where we were in September and October when the racists attacked, you can see how far we have come. It took a little time and a lot of work. But we played an important role—from the December 14 demonstration and teach-in, the formation of the student committee, the conference of the student committee, to building for the May 17 march.

This struggle is going to heat up, in Boston and elsewhere, as the schools open in September.

Under the youth report point on the agenda we had a good discussion of the National Student Coalition. NSCAR is basically a student and youth group; that is, it is attracting non-student youth as well as students. Helping to build NSCAR is a major task for the YSA. But it is also a task for the party, because of the role this group is playing within the whole desegregation fight. It is the only group consistently projecting the proletarian line of mass mobilization. And the party's got to pay attention to it; we've got to help build it as a broad action coalition. That's part of the proletarian orientation we've been talking about. NSCAR can reach beyond its own forces to the NAACP, and other forces in the Black community especially.

This fight is the biggest single, immediate opportunity for the party. In addition to the increased contacts we've made in the Black community through our participation in this fight, we've also greatly increased our potential recruits. As we recruit and get more and more involved in this fight, the composition of our movement will change, and the party will be seen more as a part of the Black community, as a leader in the fight for Black rights.

Abortion and the ERA

Concerning the women's liberation movement, I want to point to two things in addition to CLUW. First is the attempt by reactionary forces to try to roll back the abortion victory registered in the Supreme Court decision. The conviction of Dr. Edelin has been the most important of these attempts recently.

Another struggle developed in San Diego around this bishop who has excommunicated Catholic women who favored the right to abortion. One of the things we should note is that NOW is taking an interest in this, has organized some actions, and has at least talked about organizing some national actions around the abortion question—a step forward for NOW.

Another issue that some of the branches have been involved with is the struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment in those states where it hasn't been passed. And this has brought us into contact with a whole layer of women. The Atlanta branch has recruited out of work around the ERA in Georgia.

Part of our work has been the promotion of Evelyn Reed's new book and her speaking engagements. I understand that she is scheduled to take on the head of the anthropology department at UCLA soon in a major debate. Her tour next fall will not only be financially important and help push her book; it will help enhance the party's position amongst serious feminists.

Chicano and Puerto Rican Struggles

I'm just going to say a couple of words about the Chicano and Puerto Rican movements. The Chicano movement remains uneven in different parts of the country, and like the Black movement, suffers from a crisis of leadership. Raza Unida parties still exist and the strongest and most interesting developments are taking place in the Texas party.

And as in the Black movement, there is a growing interest among Chicano activists in socialism and Marxism. Again, as in the Black movement, some individuals and tendencies are confusing Maoism with Marxism. At this point these tendencies are not generally joining any of the national established Maoist groups. We can take part in this debate about socialism as we discussed under the Black report, discussing the relationship between the class and national struggles, and discrediting Maoism. The reports we have received indicate that we have opportunities for winning more Chicano recruits in the next period.

These same points about Maoism and Marxism, and growing interest in socialism can also be made about Puerto Rican activists in this country. This is further influenced by the existence of the island-based Puerto Rican Socialist Party. Four struggles or events indicate the

continued radicalization in the Puerto Rican community in the last year. One has been the continuation of the District One fight; two has been the various Puerto Rican student struggles, at Brooklyn College and other places; three was the big pro-independence rally held in New York last fall, the largest Puerto Rican action ever held in the United States; and four, the demonstration against police brutality in Newark last fall. We've been involved in one way or another in such events and struggles, and in New York have recruited some Puerto Rican activists.

I want to say a word about the interrelation between some of these aspects of our work. One example is the fact that the rightist forces in Boston who have been behind the racist offensive on busing, have taken on other issues, like breaking up a pro-ERA meeting there. Our comrades are going to have to prepare a defense guard for the march this week in defense of Dr. Edelin because of these characters. But this has made it easier for women who are concerned about the abortion struggle to see the importance of also supporting the desegregation struggle and countering the racist thrust; they can see more easily that the racist offensive has a whole reactionary dynamic that spills over into other questions. It is also easier for Blacks to understand the importance of the abortion struggle. Defense of Dr. Edelin will undoubtedly be a feature of the May 17 march. Comrades report that the issue of the cutbacks will be part of this march. Another indication of growing awareness of the connections between these various fronts of the class struggle is the success of two buttons at the April 26 march for jobs. We sold 1400 of the SWP's "Jobs for All, Not One Cent for War." That reflected the real mood in the crowd; it was an antiwar crowd. Second, NSCAR sold about 1,000 buttons advertising the May 17 march.

In all our arenas of work we have three basic propaganda tasks. We've talked about these before—the suit we have launched with the YSA against the government in defense of our democratic rights; the election campaign; and our press. I want to concentrate a bit on the suit, because this is a newer area and there are new developments in it that have increased its importance.

PRDF

The suit supported by the Political Rights Defense Fund is an important initiative in the context of the impact of Watergate, to expose the real Watergating that the capitalist government carries out against us, against the whole left, against the Black movement, against the labor movement. Of all the tendencies on the left, we've taken the lead in this situation. We saw the opportunity and took the initiative. This has already attracted people to us who see the party taking the lead in an important fight for democratic rights; it's a fight for everyone. And we've already had unprecedented results. Never before has the FBI been forced to turn over some of its files on what they do to socialist organizations. And in spite of the fact that the material is highly selected and censored, it is very damaging to the government.

More than that, this material shows what kind of party we are. That's one of the issues that naturally gets raised in this case. The FBI admits it vamps on persons like Andrew Pulley. What kind of person is Andrew Pulley; what kind of people are in the Trotskyist movement? The

FBI tries to get Fred Halstead beaten up in Saigon as our presidential candidate in 1968. What kind of person is Fred Halstead? In this week's *Militant* there is a story about Clifton DeBerry. The FBI thought they really had something when they attempted to smear Clarence Franklin when he ran for office in New York City. What did the FBI try to use? The fact that Franklin went to prison; he was a Black man who went to prison in this society. They don't want people like that running the government.

The trial that will consider our suit is going to be of historic importance. For a long time the government utilized the Attorney General's list as their justification for victimizing our members and supporters. But in the aftermath of Watergate, they have officially abolished the Attorney General's list, and they have a problem in publicly stating why they deny us our democratic rights. This trial is going to force them to state publicly what they claim they can do to us and why. And they don't like to state things like that publicly; they don't like the books open on questions like that; they'd rather just do it and not have it come out publicly. The trial, just like the stories on the Cointelpro papers, will necessarily have to go into what the SWP is and what our ideas are. That's clearly going to be the thrust of the government's attack. The government's going to attack us for our internationalism, for example. Many of the same kinds of issues that were fought out in the Smith Act trial are going to be brought out in this one too. But this time we are suing the government. They are the defendants, not us. The trial is going to be important in helping to explain what the party is and what the party's program is, why the government is going after the SWP. It's going to show the party not only as a fighter for democratic rights, it is going to necessitate explaining our history and our program.

The 1976 Presidential Campaign

I think the response we're already getting to the presidential election campaign, the response Peter, Willie Mae, Ed and Linda have received, reflects the deepening general radicalization and the beginning of the radicalization of the working class that we've been talking about. They are reaching wider audiences, finding a wider response at street rallies, at unemployment lines. We want to continue these sorts of campaign activities in addition to others, including plant gate meetings, speaking before union meetings, etc. We've already distributed campaign material rather widely, especially the "Bill of Rights for Working People." Our first printing of a quarter million is gone; most have been distributed to working people, and it has met with a good response.

Willie Mae Reid's campaign in Chicago also indicated the potential and possibilities we have. This campaign was able to reach significantly more people on the streets, with sound trucks and other devices. I hope some of the Chicago people will discuss this because I think all the local campaigns can learn from the Chicago experiences.

The election campaign is one of our major tools to raise the program of the party before many, many more workers, Blacks, Chicanos, women, and students than we could otherwise do. We can't look at the campaign routinely and simply repeat how we've organized past campaigns. We have to meet the potential to reach out to

wider audiences with this campaign, given the general situation we've been talking about. People brought around the campaign can be involved in campaign committees and campaign work.

The Militant

Our other weapon is our press. Through the sales campaigns we've made important progress in improving our sales to Blacks and other oppressed nationalities in the past period. The letters column also shows the continued impact the *Militant* has had in prisons as the process of the radicalization there continues, and among GIs. An area of improvement which we now have to pay serious attention to is the regularization of sales at workplaces and unemployment lines, in addition to keeping them up in the Black community and other places. This is something we must work on.

Through our sales campaigns we've make real gains in regularizing our sales and utilization of the press. But the branches should keep in mind the goal of these campaigns. The goal is not to see how many we can sell by stretching every single nerve and muscle of the comrades. The goal is to establish regular high levels of sales in each branch—but realistically set levels, taking into account total branch activity. Over and above such regular sales, of course, there will be times when we make special efforts around particular issues.

In addition to the *Militant* we have another important weekly weapon in our arsenal, and that's the weekly English and Spanish language magazine reflecting the views of the Fourth International, *Intercontinental Press*. Since it was established as part of the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement, *IP* has played a central role educating and building the international movement. We want to increase the circulation of *IP*. In the first place, *IP* represents one of the most important contributions that we are able to make in helping to build the world Trotskyist movement. Increasing the circulation will help to keep the costs within reason.

Second, it's important for our own party, for our own education and development. It can attract people on a level which is something different from the *Militant's*. It adds the firepower of a weekly international newsmagazine to our arsenal. This is unique. There is no other radical organization in this country or internationally that has anything like it, anything near to its level. I'm sure comrades found it very useful in the past period of fast-breaking events in Vietnam, for example, to have both the *Militant* and the *IP* coming out weekly, a few days apart, to be able to help understand what was happening.

Rightwing Attacks

Now I'd like to turn to some other tasks. In the recent period we have become the targets of some ultrarightists and small fascist organizations. We can expect that as our visibility grows and our activity increases we are going to draw more attention from these forces, especially as we become more and more identified as leaders in the fight for Black rights. That is a key question with the ultraright in the United States. The racist attacks provide fertile ground for some ultraright and outright fascist organizations to develop. They feel they have some wind in their sails, and some support behind them. They have begun to single us

out. One of these groups is the Nazis. We don't think the Nazis are the future of American fascism. American fascism is not going to be based on German nationalism; it'll be based on American nationalism. The serious American fascists won't be so thoughtful as to identify themselves so easily. Nevertheless, this group has developed in the past period in quite a number of cities and is trying to recruit on campuses. And it's dangerous, as the attack on our Los Angeles headquarters illustrates. We have to take effective steps against them and against the other rightist terrorists who have launched attacks on us or made threats against us in the past period. In addition to the Nazis, we've seen attacks by the gusanos and threats by the KKK.

We've got to mobilize the broadest possible defense against these attacks. Our ability to do this, again, helps project the party as a fighter for democratic rights. At this stage our central thrust is to mobilize support for our demand that the authorities put a stop to these criminal activities and attacks and threats. We can't allow this character in Los Angeles who calls himself a Nazi to openly brag that he can bomb the left all he wants and the cops aren't going to do anything about it. We've got to build the heat under Bradley and the other guardians of law-and-order in Los Angeles. We have to assure that statement proves to be false. We've got to do the same thing to them that we did to the Klan in Houston when they attacked us some years ago.

Our exposure of the complicity of the cops and the other agencies of the government in these right wing attacks ties in with our suit. An example is the recent exposure of the ties of the police and the army with the Chicago Legion of Justice which carried out a number of violent attacks against us in the past. The Chicago cops helped organize the Legion burglary of our headquarters; they sat across the street as lookouts and were ready to come to the Legion's aid if they ran into any trouble.

This defense work is important and must be pursued in a professional way, because we can't allow these groups to attack us with impunity, we must organize to put a stop to such criminal attacks.

Another important area of work is our efforts to help USLA to defend Latin American political prisoners. The USLA tour of Juan Carlos Coral was quite successful. Especially in reaching out to Chicanos and Puerto Ricans and other people of Latin American descent. USLA hopes it can follow the Coral tour up and take advantage of some of these gains with a tour next fall by Hugo Blanco.

Opponents

Concerning our opponents, I just want to make a few brief remarks. The political report points out that the social democracy is split into two wings. Some years ago social democracy in this country was a pretty isolated current. But it has managed to greatly expand its connection with the labor bureaucracy. The two wings of social democracy represent two wings in the labor bureaucracy. The Social Democrats U.S.A. (they're well named—they are the Social Democrats and of the United States of America) have become the political spokespeople for, speech-writers for, tacticians at Democratic party conventions for, the Meany-Shanker wing of the bureaucracy. Their youth group YPSL anticipated our plenum by

a couple of days and put out a leaflet in New York. They said the Socialist Workers party is making a turn to the working class, but the SWP is no friend of labor. The proof is that the SWP is against the leaders of the American labor movement. The SWP opposed the strike by teachers at Oceanhill-Brownsville. (That's the 1968 racist strike that we did oppose and tried to smash.) The SWP isn't for Shanker. It supports the Por los Niños slate in the District One elections. Well, that's the Social Democrats USA.

The other social democratic grouping, headed by Michael Harrington, is allied with the Wurf-Gotbaum wing of the bureaucracy. We should note that the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee has taken something of a friendly attitude to the May 17 demonstration and is less sectarian in regard to supporting things like PRDF and civil liberties issues we're involved in. The fact that both these groups have made this connection with the labor bureaucracy increases their importance. A debate was recently held between two ex-Shachtmanites on each side of the split, Harrington vs. Gus Tyler, at AFSCME's District Council 37 headquarters. It was on what to do about the big economic problems of today, and several hundred workers attended. We can expect DSOC will be a little more attractive than the Social Democrats USA, because it is more open, and appears to be more left and more "socialist" than the other.

Our major opponent remains the CP, which has deeper roots than we do in several sectors of the Black and labor movements. As we do more in these areas we can expect them to begin to squeal more, as they did around the party's work in the Boston desegregation struggle. We can expect that, and will be trying to find ways to take them on. They are going to grow in this next period, and their influence is going to grow. But we are in a good position to compete with them for radicalizing students and workers in the next period.

Just as the Soviet revolution retains an attractive power, which newly radicalizing people can misidentify with Stalinism of the pro-Moscow variety, so the Chinese revolution is an attractive power which the Maoist Stalinists can capitalize on. The Maoists are not as organized as the Communist party; they do not have its roots or money, but they are going to continue to attract, generally among the youth.

The Preconvention Discussion Period

In the past few months the party has been engaged in a tremendous amount of activity. Every branch organizer, I'm sure, knows that. We've had national mobilizations coming to Boston. We've had a big mobilization of the East Coast and many of the Midwest branches coming to April 26. We had the Vietnam activity, big sales campaigns, many comrades had to be mobilized to help USLA in the defense of Coral; we launched the election campaign; we were immersed in all kinds of local campaigns of various types; we've mobilized to stop the right wing attack in Los Angeles, and many other things. Plus all our regular activity, forums, etc. So we've been in a period of extremely intense activity which will culminate with the May 17 actions.

Now we are going into a different period in the rhythm of party life, a period of preconvention discussion. The party emphasis shifts now, and we *slow down* on activity

and *step up* the important work of comrades reading and discussing in preparation for the convention. This is part of the process of consolidation of our cadre, and of course, in making the decisions that will guide our work after the convention. The discussion in the branches of the documents and the tasks and perspectives we are discussing at this plenum will be useful in the education of the party. In this regard comrades should consider discussing the resolution on the world political situation that's contained in the book, *Dynamics of World Revolution*, that was presented at the last world congress and whose general line we adopted at our last, special convention of the party. This resolution provides the framework for understanding the political resolution—the one flows from the other—that the National Committee adopted yesterday for submission to the party.

In the course of our activity I think few comrades have had the opportunity to study this world political resolution; and we can utilize this resolution for the education of the cadre. Many comrades have already made a point of how educational the discussion on the political resolution will be. We should think through the organization of the discussion with this educational purpose in mind.

With all these campaigns that the party is involved in, it can become difficult for some of the smaller branches to juggle them all and keep everything in the air at one time. From time to time smaller branches can't do it; they have to lay an egg down on the table before it falls and breaks. When this kind of adjustment is needed it should be made in consultation with the national office. That is, branches don't approach the national tasks that we have like a kind of smorgasbord where branch executive committees say, "Well, we like this campaign, and that one seems pretty good, but we're not interested in that one over there."

The branch executive committees are sometimes like short-order cooks, with a lot of things on different burners. This week we may have to concentrate on a tour, so we've got to put the tour up on a front burner and turn up the gas on it, and that means we have to shift sales back and turn down the gas there—but sometimes it is a little too much, and an adjustment has to be made in consultation with the national office. I hope you can keep all these metaphors straight about juggling the eggs and smorgasbord and cooking. Don't break the eggs; consult with the national office when there has to be a major adjustment on a national campaign, and we can come up with realistic ways to do that.

But I want to reemphasize that in the next period, the activity slows down, the discussion steps up.

The Financial Picture

I want to go over the national party finances for a second to make sure comrades have the picture. In the first place, the general, regular party finances are doing well and they're up. Sustainers from the members to the branches are up as are sustainers from branches to the national office. At a meeting with branch organizers in St. Louis last December we outlined that we do have a financial problem, and that one of the ways we could try to overcome it was to try to raise the sustainer from branches to the N.O. We set a goal of increasing the sustainer by a thousand dollars per month total, from all the branches, by the convention. Well, we've already passed that goal. The sustainer base went up by \$1300, and other branches

who haven't yet participated in this effort have made plans to increase their sustainer, so that we can set a new goal of a \$1500 per month increase by the convention. This effort has helped in the national financial picture. In addition the party and YSA members have contributed substantially to the collections taken at our national educational conferences and conventions and at the YSA convention gatherings. The response to the special rebate fund has been good. These special funds have helped take up part—but only a part—of the slack caused by the fact that the larger individual contributions to the expansion fund are not coming in at the same rate they were in the past period. It is this fact, (and not our general financial picture, which is improving) which has necessitated some substantial cutbacks in the functioning of the national organization. We've generally cut back the same in all areas of work—all the publications, international work, everything has been cut back. The biggest cutback, however, came in the rate of production of books. We are still putting out books this year, but the rate of production had to be cut back.

The perspective is that the cutbacks we have made at this moment are sufficient to meet the situation and we can operate at the current level. We'll review the situation at the convention to see what projections we have to make coming out of it. But we seem to be safe at this level for the next period.

Geographical Expansion and Recruitment

Flowing from the political situation we have been discussing we can expect to find a favorable situation for the party in most cities in this country. Our general perspective as we move into this period is that we're going to be having smaller branches—we'll be dividing larger branches more, and we'll be building new branches in more cities around the country. The limits on our geographical expansion now are limits on our own ability to free up the cadres and resources necessary to move into new areas. Since the last convention the Milwaukee branch has been chartered. There are four important cities where significant YSA expansion should be noted: Baltimore, San Jose, San Antonio, and New Orleans. The first three are places where our opponents have a foothold, especially the CP. At this time we make no projections of where and when new branches should be built, but we will continue to help the YSA develop in these places and some others where the party can expand in the near future.

The steps we are discussing in consciously organizing and stepping up our political work in industry, in the unions, and among the oppressed nationalities, will have many facets and ramifications. One of these concerns recruitment. We're not yet at the stage where we can sign up workers and other new members easily. We're not yet at that stage in the development of the radicalization that recruitment is easy. We don't predict when that stage will be reached; it could be some time off. What we have seen in our campaign and other work this spring though (and it's one of the signs we've been watching) is that we have been generating more contacts from all areas of our work than we have in the recent past. This includes people who don't want to join the party but are good sympathizers, as well as others who would be recruits. Most of the branches

report the same thing. There are new possibilities of bringing around more contacts from our work in the desegregation fights, from our work in the unions, and from our election campaigns.

Many of these contacts are YSA-age and attracted to the YSA. But a significant and growing number, though still a minority, are direct party contacts. Some are in their late twenties and thirties. Some are younger workers who, given their life situation, are direct contacts of the party regardless of their age. We can expect some contacts like this are going to be more comfortable in coming directly to the party and not the YSA. A worker who is nineteen, has a family, has been working two years and is attracted to our movement through union activity won't necessarily join the YSA.

To take maximum advantage of these opportunities for recruitment we have to take steps in the branches to better organize our recruitment and contact work. It's still hard to recruit. We're recruiting by ones. It takes time, and it takes effort, and it takes organization. It takes talking to people over a period of time to convince them and bring them in.

We don't want people coming around us to slip away, so we must organize this work. The branches should establish recruitment directors or recruitment committees. The job of the recruitment director or committee is not merely to compile a list, although it is important to keep track of all the contacts. The work of the recruitment director or committee is to organize the work of recruiting and winning sympathizers, because we want to build our periphery also. Comrades have to be organized to talk with contacts. Thought has to be given to the kinds of discussions that are necessary for particular contacts, what political questions they do not yet understand or agree with us on. What activities should a particular person be urged to participate in? And so forth. There should be regular reports on contacts and recruitment to the executive committee. You've got to discuss it. Comrades on the executive committee are going to have ideas, like what kind of class should be organized for a particular group of contacts. And there should be occasional reports to the branch meetings.

For the last 15 years our basic recruitment to the party has been from the YSA. This aspect of our recruitment will continue to be important. Since the YSA serves in this aspect as both a training ground and a screening process, when YSA members join the party we are recruiting people who have already decided they want to be professional revolutionaries. They go through a process in the YSA that helps them make up their minds. They've learned something about our program, methods and organization. It's going to be different when we begin to recruit larger numbers of people who are coming directly to the party. We should not succumb to the temptation to automatically put all recruits in the YSA. Sometimes I think we've done that, precisely because it's a good training ground. What we have to begin to think about is that people we recruit directly to the party have not yet made the same kind of commitment, nor do they have the same kind of training as someone who has gone through the YSA. Recruiting comrades like this means that we have to offer that training and develop that commitment inside the party. That presents a different problem, another organizational problem that we have to deal with. It means that when people join, special attention has to be paid in integrating

them into party work and teaching them.

We're a party of activists, and we want to build an activist party. Within that framework, we have to understand that recruiting from a wider layer is going to entail some adjustments. We have to be flexible and realize that different people have different personal obligations and can make different contributions to the party. The atmosphere we want to develop in the party is that all who want to pitch in and build the party are welcome and are encouraged to join.

The work of the recruitment directors and committees is not work that stops with the direct contacts of the party nor with paying attention to those who should be recruited from the YSA. One of the decisions that will have to be made in consultation with the YSA, for example, is whether a particular recruit should go into the YSA or not. That will be one of the things we'll have to work out with the YSA and it will vary from one concrete situation to another. But also the recruitment to the YSA is party work and the party recruitment directors and the party leadership have to help in this work and think about it.

Flowing from this plenum the thing to remember is that

the central immediate task in making the turn we are projecting is to discuss it thoroughly in the preconvention discussion. It would be wrong to think that the way to make this turn is to jump in the sailboat, grab the rudder and yank like hell on it. You might find that the boat gives a violent lurch, the boom comes across, knocks you in the back of the head and into the water, and while the rest of the comrades are trying to pick you out of the water and bring you back up into the boat, the boat is floundering around in the wind with no direction at all. What we want to do in making this turn smoothly is to take the whole boat with us.

So our key job is not so much what we can do immediately in implementing and generalizing the turn we have been discussing, but in absorbing it and discussing it. As the leadership of the party we must take the political discussions we have had here at the plenum to the ranks of the party, study the resolution, and thoroughly discuss exactly how to make this turn. We want to come out of the convention as a really united cadre that understands the new situation, our new tasks, and is confidently prepared to carry them out in the fall.

THE JANUARY 1975 PLENUM OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

By Mary-Alice Waters

World Movement Report Adopted by the SWP National Committee, May 4, 1975

The framework for this report from the Political Committee is an evaluation of the meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International that was held at the end of January 1975.

Reports have already been given in every branch, so I will not take time to repeat the details of the meeting or go over each point on the agenda. Instead I will concentrate on two key items, first the debate on political perspectives for our work in Argentina, and second, the organizational crisis in the Fourth International.

The presiding committee would like to propose that under this point we give voice to the members of the IEC who are present as guests at this plenum, and that we give the floor first to comrades Charles and Bart, with up to equal time to present their views on the world movement.

In our opinion the last meeting of the IEC represented a victory for those forces within the Fourth International and in fraternal sympathy with the Fourth International who are striving to prevent further steps along the road toward a split which they consider to be politically unjustified and striving to reverse the course that has marked the last six years. In our opinion, the forces opposed to a split constitute the majority of the international. They include the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, and they include a good portion of the International Majority Tendency.

The outcome of this IEC meeting was a blow against the minority within the international which considers that the forces supporting the LTF today are reformist in political line and "Stalinist" in organizational methods, and have no place in a revolutionary international.

None of the members of the Political Committee of the SWP are privy to what went on inside the International Majority Tendency caucus at the IEC meeting. But it was our impression that the split forces within the IMT came closer to achieving a further institutionalization of the split than they did even at the World Congress in February 1974.

The fact that a split was avoided is all the more significant.

This also illustrates one of the central political points we have been making about the organizational conceptions of the majority leadership of the international for quite some time. To be a member of the International Majority Tendency you do not have to agree with its political line documents. We know this from the documents of the IT, as well as from observing the composition and functioning of the IMT. You must simply agree to vote for IMT documents, to keep your differences inside the IMT, and to accept the "discipline" of the International Majority Tendency. This has meant that since 1972 at least, many big political differences were sharply debated, not in front of the international, where democratic norms would assure that every comrade could have an effect on and influence

the outcome of those debates, but inside the IMT caucus, which some consider to be the "real" international. The purpose was to hide these differences from the international. This kind of "tendency" which is in reality an unprincipled combination, creates a very real danger of a *minority* being able to precipitate a split. At every gathering of the international there is a danger that a political *minority* within the international can win a majority inside the IMT and, through "tendency discipline" and a desire to keep the IMT together, impose a course of action against the will of the great majority of the international.

At this IEC meeting, a qualitative new deepening of the split was avoided because we were able to arrive at four agreements.

One was to continue the "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity of the Fourth International," the nine points adopted at the last world congress, and to apply the same formulas to new situations that have developed since the world congress in countries like the United States, Portugal, Greece. That is, where there have been splits and more than one organization exists, no one is excluded from the international, and in countries where two or more groups exist the united moral authority of the Fourth International will be brought to bear for the earliest possible fusion of the groups on a principled basis.

In relation to the IT split from the SWP this meant that those who had split would continue to receive the International Internal Discussion Bulletin and be able to participate in international gatherings. As in other countries where splits have taken place, consideration will be given to reuniting the forces on a principled basis.

The second agreement was the recognition that when it comes to determining membership in any of the sections or sympathizing organizations of the international, there are no "higher bodies." Again, in relation to the IT split, this meant recognition of the fact that there are no bodies outside the SWP, none "higher" than the SWP with any rights to determine who are and who are not members of our party. And this would be the case even if the SWP were affiliated to the Fourth International.

The third agreement was a reversal of the course that has been followed by the IMT leadership since the last world congress—the course of excluding the PST from the United Secretariat, excluding the LTF from the day-to-day leadership of the Fourth International, and refusing to recognize the right of tendencies to decide who will represent them in leadership bodies.

Fourth was the agreement to reopen political discussion in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin on all questions. This was not a formal motion adopted by the IEC; it was unnecessary because the last world congress

voted to reopen discussion on all questions at the end of one year. There was no objection to this. Included, of course, is the political debate on the organizational question which underlies the leadership crisis in the International.

Before taking up the major disputed points at the IEC, I should mention one other central point of agreement. The IEC unanimously adopted a resolution on the world economic crisis [for the full text, see *Capitalism in Crisis*, by Dick Roberts, Pathfinder, 1975]. The fact that comrades of the LTF and IMT leaderships were able to draft a common document assessing the deepening crisis of world imperialism offered new confirmation of the opinion we expressed at the World Congress and the 1972 IEC. The differences between the IMT and LTF do not stem from divergent views of what the IMT likes to call "the character of the period."

Everyone agrees that we are entering a period of deepening class struggle in which every political tendency that claims to lead the working class will be put to the test in a decisive way. Our differences are over the way in which a small nucleus of revolutionary Marxist cadres should respond to the objective openings created by the deepening economic, political and social crisis of capitalism. Our differences are over *how* to transform our tiny groups of cadres into mass revolutionary parties that lead the working class.

In any case, we considered the unanimous resolution on the world economic situation to be a positive development and the evolution of the capitalist economic crisis since January 1975 has confirmed the correctness of the evaluations we made.

Which Road for Argentine Trotskyism

The major political debate at the IEC was over the correct line for Argentine Trotskyists; it was on the agenda at the insistence of the LTF. Comrades recall that immediately after the last world congress the IMT leadership, prodded by the rapid disintegration of the PRT-Red Faction that had also been recognized by the world congress as a sympathizing group, launched a new campaign against the PST. This soon culminated in a public denunciation of the PST leadership, which was charged with having joined bourgeois parties in signing a series of documents expressing a class-collaborationist line and of engaging in other impermissible actions that were an open break with the revolutionary Marxist concept of the united front. The PST replied to this first public attack, clarifying that they had not signed any of the documents the IMT attributed to them and clearly spelling out their class-struggle line for the current situation in Argentina.

The PST and the rest of the forces supporting the LTF hoped this would end the affair, at least publicly. But the IMT responded with a second public attack on the PST. They admitted they may have been wrong about all the "facts," on which the first attack was based, but held that this was irrelevant. According to the IMT, what is involved is the whole political line of the PST, which is one of support for bourgeois political institutions, which slips "imperceptibly" into support for the bourgeois state in Argentina itself, and which leads the PST to try to create a multiclass bloc through which to concretize this support.

The second public denunciation of the PST was

published barely a month before the IEC meeting took place, and the PST leadership in collaboration with the rest of the LTF leadership made a considerable effort to reply rapidly so that their answer could be available before the IEC.

The reply from the PST executive committee, the general line of which was approved by the LTF steering committee, is an extremely powerful document. If any comrades have not yet read it carefully, I would urge you to do so, because it is one of the most educational documents to come out of the extended political debate of the last years.

"In Reply to the IMT's Open Letter No. 2" places the dispute over the current line of the PST in the context of the six-year-long debate over the Trotskyist orientation for Latin America, in which the IMT has followed a fundamentally ultraleft line. Since 1969 the comrades who are today leading the IMT have held that democracy in the colonial and semicolonial countries is so weak and transitory that the masses have few illusions in it. While revolutionary Marxists defend democratic rights of course, it is wrong, they contend, to give high priority to such a task. That's not the real problem. Since any periods of bourgeois democratic rule will be ephemeral, the real task is to concentrate on preparations for those periods when there is no bourgeois democracy of any kind at any level. That means preparing for armed struggle, as that is the only way to protect and advance the mass struggle under conditions of brutal dictatorship. In view of this "problématique," for revolutionary Marxists to put defense of democratic rights and institutions at the center of their struggles and to fight to codify these democratic rights, to strengthen them, to resist reactionary attacks on them, is—in the IMT's opinion—equivalent to fostering illusions in capitalism and supporting the bourgeois state based on bourgeois property relations.

This position has been consistently developed by the IMT leaders since 1969, and it is in total harmony with—indeed an integral part of—their ultraleft, substitutionist, minority-violence, pro-guerrilla-warfare line.

The general line of the PST, and of the LTF, is quite different. It rejects substitutionist actions by small groups and adventures in minority violence. Its starting point is not one of trying to stimulate action by some ill defined and politically heterogeneous "revolutionary vanguard," but one of advancing mass struggle, often in opposition to the line of the "revolutionary left." With this perspective, the defense of democratic rights becomes a crucial part of our program, one of the elementary starting points for the mobilization of the working masses.

Secondly, the PST's document reiterates the basic Trotskyist position that we defend even rotten and decaying bourgeois democracy against fascism. As long as the forces of the revolution are not strong enough to replace those decaying institutions with the institutions of proletarian democracy, we defend them against the onslaught of reaction. We fight for our (bourgeois) democratic rights, we fight to codify them, to "institutionalize" them—if you want to use Argentine terminology—to extend them as far as we can. They are part of the historic gains, not limits, of the bourgeois democratic revolutions. They are part of our heritage. They create better conditions for the workers to organize and fight. They are the starting point for the extension of democracy into economic and social relations which will constitute the flowering of democracy under socialism.

Thirdly, "In Reply to the IMT's Open Letter No. 2" explains and develops the Trotskyist position on the tasks facing Marxists in colonial and semicolonial countries. It reiterates what has always been a commonly held position, that there are three different sectors in the world revolution and different tasks related to them. The PST reply explains the interrelationship of the struggle against imperialist superexploitation and the fight for democratic rights in the colonial and semicolonial countries. It explains how the phenomenon of the consistent defender of democratic rights, the bourgeois democrat who is willing to rely on the masses and mobilize the masses, sometimes, under exceptional conditions, emerges in the semicolonial world. The case of Castro and the Cuban revolution are offered as a case study.

Fourthly, the document reiterates the PST's fundamental line of class against class, of class independence and class struggle, and mobilization of the masses in their own interest.

Fifthly, it takes up a dozen specific accusations leveled against the PST by the IMT leadership and refutes them one by one:

- The charge that defense of democratic rights is tantamount to support for a bourgeois state and bourgeois property relations. The document points out, for example that the SWP's defense of the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the American Constitution, does not imply support for the American Constitution or the bourgeois property rights codified in it.

- The charge that they have formed an inter-class bloc against all who engage in violence. The document challenges the IMT to come up with a shred of evidence anywhere that would support such an accusation.

- The charge that the PST has a line similar to Stalinist popular frontism as a defense against fascism. The document asks for substantiation of the charge that the PST subordinates independent mobilizations of the masses and working class independence to any bourgeois force or formation.

- The charge that it is impermissible in the present context to participate in confrontations with leaders of the Peronist government in public meetings. The document defends such confrontations as being useful means of explaining our revolutionary positions to the Argentine masses and helping to build our party.

All of these and many more of the specific accusations are refuted.

Finally, the document outlines the main aspects of the Argentine situation today and a revolutionary strategy to deal with them.

The Debate at the IEC

It is difficult to say a great deal about the debate at the IEC because the positions of the IMT are still not available in a written form. The IMT indicated that there would be a reply to the PST-LTF document presented at the IEC, but that is not yet ready. While the IMT adopted a document of their own at the IEC, the post-plenum editing took three months and we received a copy only two days ago. We have not had time to read it let alone translate it.

Nevertheless, I would like to make several observations about the discussion at the IEC.

First, the main discussion tended to center on the PST's

alleged "support" for bourgeois democracy and bourgeois institutions.

In reply to the IMT's charges, we pointed out that the document never advances a line of support for bourgeois democracy. It does something quite different. It argues for defense of bourgeois democratic rights and institutions that are under attack by reaction. And that's an essential difference. We don't support bourgeois democracy; we think it is pretty poor. We do not support bourgeois democratic institutions. For example, we think bourgeois democratic electoral systems are inherently undemocratic. But we defend those rights and institutions when they are under attack from reaction and fascism. We fight to prevent them from being crushed by reaction and fascism. That was the nub of the debate at the IEC.

There seemed to be some considerable surprise at the IEC meeting when it became known that the LTF had approved the general line of the PST's reply. Many comrades in the IMT had apparently become convinced that there were deep divisions inside the LTF on these questions and that their campaign against the PST would be able to split the LTF. There was some excitement when this estimate turned out to be wrong. But it did lead to some very interesting discussion.

We are keenly awaiting the IMT's reply to the PST-LTF statement. In the course of the discussion at the IEC, the LTF's positions were characterized by various speakers as being the same as (1) the popular-front position of the Stalinists in the 1930s; (2) the Stalin-Bukharin position in 1927; (3) the Menshevik position of 1917; (4) the pre-1914 Social Democratic position; and (5) Kautskyite. We are curious to see which of these tails will be pinned on the donkey or if it will bear all five!

The entire discussion at the IEC focused on *our* political line. There was not a single IMT speaker who took up the question of the IMT line for Argentina. Aside from the reporter for the IMT, no comrades of the IMT even mentioned what they thought should be done or how they evaluated the splintering of their own forces in Argentina. Despite this glaring weakness on the part of the IMT, it was still one of the most fruitful discussions on Argentina that we've ever had at an international gathering, and our impression was that the Argentine comrades who were representing the positions of the IMT were seriously interested in advancing this debate.

Various comrades of the IMT told us that the document they adopted at the IEC represents an elimination of the last hangovers from "Santuchoism" and other errors contained in the ninth and tenth congress documents. We would welcome any positive moves in that direction, of course. But the whole ultraleft character of the IMT's arguments against the LTF's line of defending bourgeois democratic rights that are under attack leaves no doubt that deep divisions first codified in the ninth congress document remain within the international.

The fourth point to be emphasized is the continuing importance of the Argentine question in the world movement. After the last world congress many comrades thought: What more is there to say on the test of two lines in Latin America? After all, it is about as clear as it could possibly be. That stage of the debate is over and now the focus will shift elsewhere, probably to Europe. I tended to think that myself. But it's not so simple. The debate keeps returning to Argentina, precisely because the continuing

test of two lines is so decisive and so clear there. The balance sheet continues to haunt the comrades of the IMT.

We plan to collect the entire public debate and publish it in an Education for Socialists Bulletin soon so that comrades can study it carefully. [See *What Course for Argentine Trotskyists?*, Education for Socialists Bulletin, June 1975.]

The Crisis of Leadership

I want to turn now to the organizational side of the leadership crisis in the international, and in that context take up the IT split.

First, I want to review briefly the major developments that marked this crisis between the close of the world congress in February 1974 and the January 1975 IEC.

A chain of events was set in motion after the world congress—or more accurately, several chains—that stemmed from the frustration of those in the IMT who would not have been unhappy had a split been consummated at the world gathering. The main thing that held them back was reluctance to accept responsibility for a split; they saw no way to shift the responsibility onto someone else's shoulders.

Whatever their intentions, the IMT leadership came out of the world congress acting in a way that failed to take into account the virtual 50-50 division in the Fourth International. Under the pretext of upholding "centralism" and "asserting authority" they set up leadership bodies that, far from being able to exercise the authority of the majority leadership, had no authority whatsoever in the international as a whole. They deepened the factional practices that had obliged the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency to transform itself into a faction to defend democratic norms within the international. In short, their concept of how democratic centralism should be applied in the international today continued to place the unity of the international in jeopardy.

This was concretized in a number of actions with which the comrades are familiar: the IMT restricted the size of the United Secretariat; refused to allow the LTF to select its own representatives on this body; excluded the PST from the United Secretariat; excluded the LTF from the Bureau. Excluding the largest party in the international and the major Trotskyist force in Latin America from the United Secretariat, excluding the SWP leadership from day-to-day consultation for the first time since reunification; excluding half the international from any participation in day-to-day leadership bodies—such actions had implications and results that were not well thought out and led rapidly to a total leadership crisis.

A second chain of post-world-congress events were those that led to the IT split convention last May and the IMT's complicity in that course by refusing to inform or collaborate with the SWP leadership in calling the IT to order. Once again they proved unable to place the interests of the Fourth International above their narrow factional considerations.

The third series of moves were related to the IMT's attempt to publicly read the PST out of the world Trotskyist movement. That we have already discussed.

In our opinion, the July 4 action of the SWP Political Committee slowed the IMT's factional offensive against the organizational norms of the Leninist movement. The

statement issued by the SWP Political Committee put the spotlight where it belonged, that is, on the role and responsibility of the IMT leadership. We stated that in our opinion the gravity of the leadership crisis demanded exceptional measures and we called for a special world congress where the full membership of the international could discuss the organizational norms of the world movement. The IMT leadership rejected such a full and democratic discussion and the result was the IEC meeting that took place.

The thorough political discussion in the ranks of the international is still to come.

What the IEC Decided

Comrades have all seen the minutes of the IEC and the motions that were adopted. [See Appendix II.]

As the motions themselves note, findings and recommendations of an International Control Commission have no disciplinary or binding effect on the SWP, of course. They do nothing more than voice a moral opinion. But we are appreciative of such expressions of opinion.

The motion adopted unanimously by the IEC first of all incorporated the three recommendations of the International Control Commission which were the following:

"1. To make the recommendation that the SWP act in good faith and consider without delay the collective application of the IT for reintegration in the SWP.

"2. We note that the IT states it wants to participate in public activities supported by the SWP. We note that the SWP does not object to this. Until the situation is resolved, we recommend that when the IT and the SWP are involved in the same activities they seek to maintain a cooperative attitude avoiding public attacks on one another.

"3. The problems dealt with in our investigation lead us to the conclusion that it is necessary that the IEC initiate a discussion on the organizational norms of the movement."

The IEC motion also added several points. It continued the nine-point agreement of the world congress and applied it to the IT. It reversed the exclusion of the PST from the United Secretariat and reversed the exclusion of the LTF from the Bureau.

In our opinion the adoption of this motion was a lesser evil. It was certainly not the optimum resolution. For our part, we would have found it much more encouraging had the comrades in the IMT leadership been capable of recognizing their responsibility for the IT split and taken steps to correct the miseducation on organizational questions they have fostered throughout the world movement. But under the circumstances, the motion adopted was the only way to establish a framework in which the unity of the international movement could be maintained, the political discussion reopened on a broad range of topics, and collaboration reinitiated. Like the nine-point agreement at the world congress, it established a framework that prevented a further deepening of the split which a majority of the International feels would be unjustified in light of the political differences as they have been clarified.

Concerning the IT, the opinions expressed by the IEC were very straightforward. This plenum of the SWP National Committee was urged to consider the collective

application of the IT for reintegration. Two members of the SWP Political Committee indicated they would encourage the plenum to weigh favorable implementation of the proposal.

Comrades from the Political Committee who were present at the IEC explained our view of this question to the IMT leadership on several occasions.

We explained that we considered it likely—though by no means certain—the National Committee would concur with the recommendations unanimously adopted by the IEC. We indicated we would urge such a course. We think the NC and the party as a whole are quite capable of being objective, of acting in good faith, of honestly evaluating the actions and statements of the IT members.

We also explained that we would not and could not recommend the rapid reintegration of the members of the Internationalist Tendency. That would be the most damaging, explosive course conceivable. Suspicions and hostilities are too deep. Rapid reintegration would only lead to new conflicts, bringing new disciplinary measures. That would not be in the best interests of the Fourth International or in the best interests of building a revolutionary party in the United States.

We have differences with the IMT leadership on this question, obviously. They have their evaluation of the IT members and we have ours, which we have stated and documented on several occasions. But the reason that any perspective of rapid reintegration of the IT would be disastrous is quite simple. Our evaluation of the IT members is based on a half decade (more, in some cases, less in others) of experience in a common organization with them. Both the ranks and the leadership of the SWP became convinced over that period of time, working with these comrades day-by-day, in branches all over the country, that the ITers were not interested in loyally building the SWP. Comrades familiar with the internal life of the Houston or Chicago branch in the year before the split, for example, were convinced that the ITers, far from being loyal builders of the SWP, were out to destroy the party as an obstacle in their path.

The IMT leadership contends this is not true, that our evaluation is incorrect, that these comrades do want to build the SWP. Those who at one time did not want to build the party have changed their minds, they contend.

Our only response can be, fine, we hope you're right. We would like that to be true. The last thing we want to do is to exclude anyone from our party who wants to build the SWP. With the tasks before us, such as we've been discussing at this plenum, we need every person we can get.

But there is a problem. The members of the IT are going to have to prove this to the members of the SWP. They are going to have to prove that our evaluation of them is no longer correct, that they are ready to build. In this process, words, declarations, letters with a copy to the IMT aren't going to count for anything. We've had a lot of words from IT members. When they were in our party we noticed, over an extended period of time, that their words and deeds did not always coincide. So it is by their actions that the ranks will judge them.

We don't ask for *mea culpas*, breast-beating self-criticisms, or anything else. All we ask for is concrete activity building the party. Obviously it is going to take time for attitudes to change, because the suspicions run very, very

deep.

In the meantime, we will put no obstacles in the way of IT comrades functioning in all public activities we are engaged in, building the May 17 desegregation demonstration, the April 26 jobs rally, the UFW support work, or anything else that comes along; selling the *Militant*; contributing regular financial sustainers to the party and helping special fund drives; distributing election material; and so forth. We welcome any help we can get in these tasks.

At the IEC we assured comrades we are not a religious organization. We don't believe in mortal sin, that once someone makes a serious error they're finished forever, with no hope of redemption. We think individuals can change. People can go through experiences that shake them up, cause them to rethink many things.

We are confident that the ranks of this party will be able to evaluate and judge the actions of the ITers objectively and in good faith. The leadership of the party will urge them to do so and help lead this process.

The Split in the IT

Since the IEC meeting three months ago one aspect of the situation has changed. We were informed by comrades Bart and Charles that a split took place at a recent delegated convention of the IT. The comrades recognized by the IEC as being in fraternal sympathy with the Fourth International are no longer members of a single organization. Moreover, the exact configuration of the groups and individuals that will eventually emerge from this split in the IT is still unclear. We've had a report from comrades Bart and Charles about the way they see the issues involved in this split, but we have not seen any of the documents, motions or resolutions, either those that were adopted or those rejected. We don't know what positions were taken on all these questions by the different individuals of the IT.

We have been told that some of the individuals and former members of the IT are still trying to make up their minds on the disputed questions. When it all shakes out, there may be as few as forty of the 130 IT members recognized by the IEC who agree with the platform adopted by the Internationalist Tendency (New Faction). We are informed that the ITNF is the largest single fragment of the former IT.

This creates an unanticipated situation for this plenum. We don't know the exact composition, platform or program of the bodies and individuals whose applications for membership we've been asked to consider. Nevertheless, we would not want to preclude the possibility of any one of the individuals recognized by the IEC as fraternal sympathizers of the Fourth International from consideration for membership.

This new situation is not an obstacle to accepting the recommendation of Comrades Barnes and Hansen and agreeing to weigh favorable implementation. Comrades in the branches and locals can still objectively and in good faith give careful consideration to the actions and activities of each comrade who requests membership—not just those who end up in one or another organized group, but all former ITers who apply for membership. Of course, any branch action on these requests will have to be deferred until the situation surrounding the former

members of the IT is made clear.

To summarize, the adoption of the general line of this report by the National Committee would include three specific points:

1. To uphold and commend the July 4, 1974, actions of the SWP Political Committee, both the procedures followed and the general line of the statement made by the PC evaluating the meaning of the IT split.

2. To accept the recommendation of Comrades Hansen and Barnes to weigh favorable implementation of the proposals commonly agreed on by the International Control Commission.

3. To assure objective and equal consideration of all former ITers, regardless of their current affiliations (the original IT referred to in the IEC resolution having broken up), to refer all requests for membership to the appropriate branch unit of the party.

Collaboration

The outcome of the last IEC meeting opens the door to improvements in leadership collaboration and a political discussion that could begin to ameliorate the deep crisis in the Fourth International. From that point of view the SWP leadership is in complete agreement with the motion adopted by the LTF steering committee following the IEC as a general guideline for the leadership of the LTF. That motion was the following:

"To charge the comrades of the Coordinating Committee of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction to function in such a way as to maximize the possibilities of relieving the factional tensions, of opening up a new stage of collaboration through the elected bodies of the world movement, and of advancing the discussion of the political questions facing the International." [See appendix I.]

Appendix No. 1

February 5, 1975

To the United Secretariat Bureau

Dear Comrades,

The Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction met January 25-26 and January 30-31, immediately preceding and following the plenum of the International Executive Committee.

Three decisions were taken during these meetings.

1. A motion was adopted to approve the general line of the PST Executive Committee's statement, "In Reply to the IMT's Open Letter No. 2" and to present it as a resolution of the LTF at the plenum of the IEC and for publication in the IIDB.

2. A new Coordinating Committee of the LTF was elected, composed of the members of the United Secretariat who belong to the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, plus an additional IEC member from the PST-Argentina and an IEC member from the Liga Comunista of Spain.

3. The following motion was adopted as a general guideline for the leadership of the faction:

"To charge the comrades on the Coordinating Committee of The Leninist Trotskyist Faction to function in such a way as to maximize the possibilities of relieving the factional tensions, of opening up a new stage of collaboration through the elected bodies of the world movement, and of advancing the discussion of the political questions facing the International."

Please print this letter as an attachment to the IEC minutes.

Comradely,
s/Mary-Alice Waters
for the Steering Committee of the Leninist
Trotskyist Faction

MINUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 27-30, 1975

Present:

IEC Full Members: Aubin, Fourier, Roman, Georges, Segur, Thinville, Ghulam, Jones, Ned, Petersen, Kurt, Mintoff, Claudio, Fedeli, Rudi, Walter, Carl, Duret, Jens, Frey, Valdes, Mikado, Jaber, Hovis, Almna, Marcel, Adair, Abel, Yip Nin (for Peng Shu-tse), Friedrick, Key, Martinez, Tito (for Tuco), Atwood, Celso, Galois, Johnson, Pepe, Stateman, Thérèse, Marcos (for Antonio), Karl, Sakai

IEC Alternate Members: Domingo, Werner, Brewster, Moss, Fred, Mogens, Metz, Sylvia, Hugo, Conway, Fireman, Anders, Maurice (for Pedro), Williams, Mitchell, Asgar, Hino

IEC Consultative Members: Ricardo (for Enrique), Miguel, Alejandro (for Ricardo), Marti (for Saul), Khaldoun, MacKenzie, Alva, Josef, Penta, Torben, Hans, Franz, Sven, Jorge (for Anna), Guillermo, Alfredo, Dunder, Martin, Otto, Cyrus, Hassin (for Ahmad), Josefina, Roberto, Carmen, Melan (for Raoul)

Control Commission Members: Tantalus, Hoffman, Anderson, Bundy

Invited: Miguel, Alexander, Dimitrios

Session 1. January 27. Opened 8:30 p. m. by Walter for the outgoing United Secretariat

- (i) Commemoration of death of James P. Cannon
- (ii) Commemoration of death of Jabra Nicola
- (iii) Commemoration of Argentine Trotskyists murdered by reaction, comrades César Robles, Oscar Dalmacio Mesa, Mario Sida, Antonio Moses, Rubén Bouzas, Juan Carlos Nieves, Inosencio Fernandez of the PST and comrades Mario Rodriguez, Adriana Drangosh, and Tomás Carricaburu of the LCR
- (iv) Message of greeting to Georg Jungclas unable to attend
- (v) Message of solidarity to Rohan Wijeweera

Proposed that the presidium be composed of the following: Dunder, Josefina, Ned, and Thinville.

APPROVED

Chair for first session: Dunder.

Proposed that comrades Key and Hugo act as secretaries for the IEC meeting.

APPROVED

Proposed that on all procedural questions there be one speaker for, one against, each with two minutes and decision made by hand vote.

APPROVED

Proposed agenda:

1. World Economic Situation
2. Argentina
3. International Control Commission report
4. Election of United Secretariat
5. Miscellaneous

APPROVED

1. REPORT ON WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION

Reporter Walter

Discussion: Fireman, Karl, Sakai, Valdes, MacKenzie

Summary: Walter

Motion by Walter: (a) To approve the general line of the report; (b) To refer the editing of the resolution to a commission consisting of Comrades Pepe and Walter

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Recess 11:45

Session 2, January 28. 2:45 p. m.

2. ARGENTINA

Chair: Ned

Reporter for IMT: Marti (1 hour 30 minutes)

Reporter for LTF: Guillermo (1 hour 30 minutes)

Valdes report: (20 minutes)

Recess 6:05 p. m.

Session 3, January 28. 8:30 p. m.

Argentina continued.

Discussion: Karl, Miguel, Roberto, Hovis, Martinez, Jones, Marcel, Alejandro, Otto, Georges, Abel, Walter, Josefina, Miguel, Key.

Recess 11:30 p. m.

Session 4, January 29, 10:30 a. m.

Argentina continued.

Discussion continued: Jorge, Marcos, Galois, Pepe, Domingo, Alfredo, Stateman, Ghulam, Thérèse, Melan, Livio, Celso, Fourter, Sakai

Recess 1:00 p. m.

Session 5, January 29, 2:00 p. m.

Argentina continued.

Summaries:

(i) Valdes

Motion by Valdes: To approve the general line of the Valdes resolution.

(ii) Guillaume for LTF

Motion by Guillermo: To approve the general line of the resolution presented by the LTF "In Reply to the IMT's Open Letter No. 2."

(iii) Marti for IMT

Motion by Marti: To approve the general line of the Argentine resolution presented by the IMT.

[The three Argentine resolutions will appear in a separate number of the International Internal Discussion Bulletin.]

Motion by Fourier: The IEC, meeting on the 29th of January, 1975, approves the declaration of the United Secretariat of December 1974 (which appeared in Inprecor No. 14/15) on the policy followed by the P. S. T. (which is set out in the two declarations of its Executive Committee.)

Voting:

(i) On the general line of the IMT resolution

	Decisive vote	Consultative vote
For	26	18
Against	14	21
Abstentions	2	

(ii) On the Fourier motion

	Decisive vote	Consultative vote
For	29	18
Against	13	21

(iii) On the general line of the LTF resolution

	Decisive vote	Consultative vote
For	12	21
Against	30	18

(iv) On Valdes motion

	Decisive vote	Consultative vote
For	1	0
Against	28	28
Abstentions	8	6
Not Voting	5	5

[Members with decisive vote are full members of the International Executive Committee and seated alternate members. Those with consultative vote include alternate members who are not seated to replace a full member, consultative members from sympathizing groups, members of the International Control Commission, and observers. Observers include members from organizations which owing to reactionary legislation in their own countries, like the United States and Argentina, are not able to affiliate to the Fourth International and cast consultative votes only.]

Recess 3:15 p. m.

Session 6, January 30, 12:00 noon

3. REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION

Chair: Josefina

Report submitted by Tantalus, Anderson and Brundy:

The International Control Commission (ICC) received the following unanimously voted motion of the September 7-8, 1974, meeting of the United Secretariat:

"The United Secretariat requests the International Control Commission to investigate the accusation made by the PC of the SWP that the 'leadership of the International Majority Tendency including elected members of the United Secretariat was involved in the split operation carried out by the IT. . . .' It requests that this body make a full investigation of all the facts and conditions leading to these accusations and submit a report to the next meeting of the International Executive Committee on the basis of its findings relative to all these facts and conditions."

The ICC also received appeals from members of the SWP against their "expulsion" from the SWP. We want to make clear that the SWP is barred by reactionary legislation from affiliation to the Fourth International; consequently the findings and recommendations

of the ICC have no disciplinary or binding effect on the SWP. The assessments of the ICC are intended to voice only a moral opinion.

The ICC agreed to approach the matter before it as of the utmost importance to the future of the world Trotskyist movement. The ICC agreed to try to act in such a way as to alleviate the tensions of the present situation in the movement. The ICC members did not reach agreement on a complete assessment of its findings. Assessments will be made in separate statements. The ICC members can, however, commonly propose the following to the IEC:

1. To make the recommendation that the SWP act in good faith and consider without delay the collective application of the IT for reintegration in the SWP.
2. We note that the IT states it wants to participate in public activities supported by the SWP. We note that the SWP does not object to this. Until the situation is resolved, we recommend that when the IT and SWP are involved in the same activities they seek to maintain a cooperative attitude avoiding public attacks on one another.
3. The problems dealt with in our investigation lead us to the conclusion that it is necessary that the IEC initiate a discussion on the organizational norms of the movement.

January 27, 1975

/s/ Tantalus, Anderson, Bundy

Discussion: Tantalus, Bundy.

Motion from Celso, Pepe, Thinville, and Walter.

I.

The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International accepts the following proposals commonly agreed upon by the International Control Commission in its investigation:

"1. To make the recommendation that the SWP act in good faith and consider without delay the collective application of the IT for reintegration in the SWP.

"2. We note that the IT states it wants to participate in public activities supported by the SWP. We note that the SWP does not object to this. Until the situation is resolved, we recommend that when the IT and the SWP are involved in the same activities they seek to maintain a cooperative attitude avoiding public attack on one another.

"3. The problems dealt with in our investigation lead us to the conclusion that it is necessary that the IEC

initiate a discussion on the organizational norms of the movement."

II.

In accordance with the "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity in the Fourth International," which was adopted by the last world congress, the status of the Internationalist Tendency is recognized as follows: Although it stands outside of the organizational structure and discipline of the Socialist Workers Party, it remains in fraternal sympathy with the Fourth International. Its members would be members of the Fourth International if they were not barred from this by reactionary legislation.

III.

Since such a division of the Trotskyist movement in a single country is abnormal, every effort should be made to bring them together in a single organization on a principled basis at the earliest possible date.

IV.

Two members of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, Jack Barnes and Joseph Hansen, have pledged that they will urge the National Committee at its coming plenum to weigh favorable implementation of the proposals commonly agreed on by the International Control Commission in its investigation.

V.

In considering the overall internal situation in the Fourth International, the International Executive Committee charges the incoming United Secretariat to do its utmost to lower tensions and to foster moves toward unifications where the movement is split.

To set an example in this, the composition of the incoming United Secretariat and Bureau have been broadened to include a consultative member of the IEC. To maintain the statutory distinction between sections and sympathizing organizations, the minutes of the United Secretariat will record only decisive votes.

The Bureau will undertake a series of projects to strengthen and expand the world Trotskyist movement to which all tendencies pledge solid backing and joint commitment to ensure their success.

Full Members: Adair, Aubin, Claudio, Crandall, Domingo, Duret, Fourier, Georges, Ghulam, Jens, Jones, Marcel, Martine, Martinez, Mintofoff, Ned, Roman, Rudi, Walter.

Fraternal Members: Atwood, Celso, Galois, Hovis, Johnson, Pepe, Therese.

Consultative Members: Juan.

The following list is proposed for the incoming Bureau: Aubin, Claudio, Duret, Galois, Jens, Johnson, Jones, Marcel, Ned, Roman, Walter.

Discussion: Sakai

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion by Thinville on behalf of the IMT:
The IEC recommends that collaboration begins as rapidly and closely as possible under the leadership of the SWP, between the comrades who are members of the Internationalist Tendency and the SWP, in view of making reintegration easier.

Discussion: Celso

Voting

	Decisive vote	Consultative vote
For	29	20
Against	12	21
Not Voting	1	

Statement by Karl:

I did not vote on the motion, because in reality this motion does not go beyond the common motion. I protest this motion because it means a beforehand interpretation of what "good faith" means for the SWP leadership.

Statement by Hovis:

The I. T. wishes to state once again, that despite its continuing political disagreements with our party leadership, and with its conception of democratic centralism, we are prepared to accept and work under the discipline of the SWP leadership in building the party in fraternal solidarity with the International.

Recess 1:10 p. m.

Session 7, January 30. 2:30 p. m.

4. ELECTION OF UNITED SECRETARIAT

Chair: Josefina

Statement by Celso, Pepe, Thinville and Walter:

The four comrades who presented the common resolution urge comrade Karl to reconsider his request not to be reelected to the United Secretariat. The only reason his name is not on the proposed slate is his request.

Statement by Karl:

With this I resign from the United Secretariat and ask the IEC to acknowledge it.

The outcome of the Vito case has shown to me that under the present difficult conditions, my membership in the USec cannot serve a positive purpose.

I was not nominated for the USec by the 3rd Tendency or the Kompass tendency at the World Congress, nor did these demand a representative in the USec. And I was not nominated for proportional reasons because for this the 3rd Tendency was too small. I had been included in the proposal for the USec at the IEC after the 10th Congress as a representative of the Kompass tendency, because at that time no majority existed in the leadership of the German section. Since the 1974 Convention of the GIM this reason no longer stands.

Under these two conditions, the outcome of the Vito case for the 3rd tendencies, and the changes of the German situation, I consider my withdrawal from the US to be acceptable for the IEC.

Declaration by Franz, Mintoff, Petra, Kurt

The members of the IEC and the CC of the GIM, German section of the Fourth International, signing this declaration, regret the step that comrade Karl -- longstanding member of the leadership of the GIM and representative of the Kompass Tendency -- took in not standing for re-election to the United Secretariat.

Comrade Karl's very criticism that the international leadership bodies function merely as a "parity commission" should lead to the opposite step: increased involvement in the leadership of the Fourth International.

This goes especially for the period we are entering: the decisions of the January '75 IEC Plenum are especially directed towards reducing factional tensions through increased integration of the tendencies in the United Secretariat and the Bureau of the United Secretariat.

In this sense we appeal to comrade Karl to use his right to attend United Secretariat meetings as an IEC member whenever possible. At the same time we appeal to all members and sympathizers of the Kompass Tendency to influence comrade Karl in the direction of revising his decision.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

Chair: Josefina

(All voting by hand)

A. Message from Peng Shu-tse unable to attend

January 4, 1975

To the Members of the IEC

Dear Comrades:

I regret not being able to attend the IEC meeting at this time but would like to submit some important proposals. They are as follows:

1) This meeting of the IEC should decide to hold a world congress next year to discuss the current policies of the International because many pressing questions have to be clarified and the present world situation might develop very rapidly.

2) This IEC meeting should decide to open discussion in the International for this coming congress in time to translate the documents into the major languages, namely French, English, Spanish and German.

3) The direction of the world economy seems to be developing into a crisis situation. In the very near future perhaps, a real depression might break out. In this context, what steps should we take?

First of all we should carefully analyze the evolution of the world economy as a whole. This will help us formulate the best policy to deal with the impending circumstances.

In my opinion the most significant developments will take place in Europe, particularly in Italy and Great Britain. The economic, social and political conditions in these countries seem to be growing more and more critical and in rapid pace. It is possible that revolutions will break out. We should consider the predicaments in these two countries and take action to grapple with the coming events.

I would like to propose above all and as primary, that all organizations and sympathizing sections of the Fourth International in Europe form a united front coalition with any and all other groups and organizations who claim to be Trotskyist outside the International. They should discuss united action especially within the working class. I consider this proposal paramount and urgent in dealing with this foreshadowing situation in Europe.

Of course, there are many other questions which the IEC should consider discussing at this meeting but I will not go into any further proposals at this time.

With Trotskyist Revolutionary Greetings,

Peng Shu-tse

B. Motion by Valdes recommending the dissolution of the factions in the Fourth International

[See Attachment A.]

Voting:

	Decisive vote	Consultative vote
For	1	1
Against	28	29
Abstentions	11	6
Not voting	2	1

C. Valdes Motion on James P. Cannon:

1. The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, meeting on January 30, 1975, pays homage to James P. Cannon, who died during the past year, one of the founders of the North American Trotskyist movement and the Fourth International.

2. The IEC resolves to recommend to the sections of the Fourth International that they publish in their respective languages the principal works of Comrade Cannon, for the political education of our cadres.

CARRIED

(Abstentions, 7

Not voting, 4)

Declaration by Ghulam:

I abstained on the motion related to comrade Cannon, not because of the first point, but because of the last point which, without concrete proposals is empty and meaningless. To vote for such motions only encourages further stupidities.

Declaration by Moss:

I did not vote because I consider the motion meaningless not because of a lack of regard for the great contributions of James P. Cannon to our movement. Also I feel that his writings should be studied as Marxists study all such works. But to vote for empty motions like this is to encourage further meaningless motions.

Declaration by Petersen:

I no-voted on the Cannon resolution because, although I am enthusiastically for the publication of comrade Cannon's books in as many languages as possible, a blanket recommendation without taking into account the problem of small sections is meaningless.

D. Argentina Defence Campaign

Motion by Martinez: To adopt the following statement:

The IEC calls on the world Trotskyist movement to organize an international campaign against the repression in Argentina under the following guidelines:

1. For repeal of the repressive laws and the state of siege.
2. For release of all the political prisoners and jailed unionists and students; and for dissolution of the special repressive groups.
3. Against the police, parapolice, and fascist gangs, and for bringing them to justice and punishing them for the murders they commit.

CARRIED
(Abstentions, 6
Not voting, 1)

Declaration by Mogens, Frej, Jaber, Karl (ICC), MacKenzie, and Sven:

Explanation of Abstention. The motion was presented orally to the plenum and it wasn't possible to clarify its precise content before the vote was taken. Our doubts surround the formulation of "trial and punishment" for fascist and parapolice terrorists. If this means that we in our propaganda advocate that such elements should be most appropriately dealt with through the bourgeois legal process, then it is at least debatable, particularly in light of the polemic on the PST's positions on bourgeois institutions. It goes without saying that we completely agree with the proposal to mount an international campaign in defense of Argentine political prisoners.

E. Spanish Political Prisoners Defence Campaign

Motion by Segur to adopt the following statement:

The IEC, in response to an appeal from several political prisoners -- including Trotskyist comrades -- jailed by the Franco dictatorship, recommends to all the sections and sympathizing organizations to develop the greatest possible campaign in their press, through agitation and by mobilizations in solidarity with the political prisoners who are the victims of Franco's repression. We should work for the realization of broad united actions with the goal of demanding the immediate release of all the political prisoners of the Spanish state.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

F. Letter to the IEC Plenum on an appeal concerning Comrade Vito submitted by Karl

Discussion: Alfonso, Karl

Karl postpones possible request for consideration of this matter to the next meeting of the IEC.

G. Appeal from the PC of the ICP of Greece

Agreed to concur with the recommendation of the Greek comrades to refer the appeal from the Greek comrades to the United Secretariat.

H. IEC Membership

Motion to accept the following substitutions in the membership of the IEC:

That comrade Martine replace comrade Said
That comrade Anna replace comrade Jules
That comrade Josephine replace comrade Scott
That comrade Silvio replace comrade Pedro
That comrade Marline replace comrade Segur as a full member of the IEC and that comrade Segur take comrade Marline's place as a consultative member.
That comrade Domingo replace comrade Thinville as a full member of the IEC and that comrade Thinville take comrade Domingo's place as an alternate member.

CARRIED

L. Status of the Liga Comunista of Chile

Motion by Domingo:

On the basis of the motion adopted at the Tenth World Congress which stated:

"The Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International has received a formal petition from the Chilean Communist League (Liga Comunista) asking to be recognized as a sympathizing organization.

"Even without an exhaustive study of the Chilean situation and detailed knowledge of the political and organisational reality of the Liga Comunista, the antecedents in possession of the International's leadership, recommend to the Congress taking a favorable attitude towards the formal petition formulated by this organisation.

"Nevertheless, the comrades of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Revolucionario), Chilean section of the Fourth International, have not ended their discussion in this matter among themselves and have not held the

indispensable discussions with the Liga Comunista Chilena in order to take a definite position.

"The Congress considers that, despite this, the petition of the comrades must be received positively and fraternally recommends to the PSR comrades to take the means in order to adopt a position in relation to the L. C. 's petition, in a favourable sense.

"The importance of the political developments in Chile during these last 4 years, the lessons that must be drawn by the revolutionary Marxists, not only in Chile, but on a world scale, imply a profound discussion in the International, especially about the activity of the Chilean Trotskyists during this period.

"The Congress mandates the new leadership in order to open the most rapidly possible a discussion with the Chilean comrades of the official section and the Liga Comunista, discussion which should lead to the unification of the two;"

and after having received the opinion of the PSR;

the IEC will work with the Liga Comunista of Chile as a sympathizing organization. It mandates the United Secretariat to take whatever measures are necessary to assure that the discussions now underway between the LC and the PSR should take concrete form through common activities and should aim to facilitate the unification of Chilean Trotskyists.

CARRIED

J. Campaign for Rohan Wijeweera

Motion by Alva, Ghulam, Sakai and Vergeat:

The IEC notes the vicious life sentence imposed by the Sri Lanka government (which includes the CP and the renegades of the LSSP). The IEC directs the USFI to prepare immediately an international campaign on Wijeweera's behalf similar to that waged in defence of Hugo Blanco in the sixties.

CARRIED

IEC Plenum adjourned: 3:30 p. m.

Attachment A

B. Motion by Valdes recommending the dissolution of the factions in the Fourth International

Whereas:

(a) One finds important differences after a lengthy analysis of the Tenth World Congress documents, but none of a strategic character that would justify the formation of factions within the Fourth International.

The existence of factions of this type over a period of five years is unprecedented in our movement. According to Lenin and especially Trotsky in his polemic with Shactman and Burnham, a faction is justified only for the two or three months prior to a congress and then only if fundamental political differences exist. This is permitted as a necessary evil to guarantee democratic rights. Once the congress has ended -- be it a world congress or that of a national section -- the factions should be dissolved, leaving only very loose tendencies with no organizational structure or internal discipline separate from that of the party as a whole. Otherwise, said Trotsky, the dynamic of the process leads to a split.

(b) The current factions have tried to avoid a split but they have done so on the basis of an organizational rather than a political agreement -- wherein the "higher ups" argue out the division of posts between the factions. This "summit" agreement has meant secret negotiations between the IMT Bureau and the minority faction without consulting the ranks of the International, as if such questions could be resolved in our organization by bilateral and parity methods. Through this procedure of agreements among the "elite" we run the risk of creating a tendency toward semifederalism in the International.

(c) The polemic has led to a dialogue of the deaf, unbelievable among responsible Trotskyist leaders, and to the kind of distortion of positions that only occurs between class enemies. In spite of the majority's self-criticism in relation to the Argentine PRT, the minority insists that the majority is focoist, guerrillaist, and militarist. Are the differences on the Chinese cultural revolution, the characterization of Egypt, or the construction of parties in Europe or other parts of the world of a strategic character that would justify a faction?

We cannot go on living in this factional atmosphere which is degrading the "old" comrades as well as the new ones who enter the Fourth International hopeful of finding in us the embryo of the "new man" that Che Guevara spoke of.

(d) It is a question of DETENTE OR COLD WAR. The continuation of this lengthy, prolonged, and

irregular -- very irregular -- cold war at this level of the debate is irreversibly leading toward the explosion of a multi-megaton bomb or, to be less dramatic, to a split in the Fourth International.

The only option for fulfilling the limited, joint agreements of the Tenth World Congress is DETENTE, an agreement for "peaceful coexistence" between the tendencies (different from other forms of peaceful coexistence in the world), not to put a brake on the process of constructing the world party but precisely to consolidate it upon a healthier basis for discussion.

(e) During this January 1975 IEC a new compromise formula for solving the problem of the IT in the SWP will be reached, but it will leave the problems of the factional crisis without a real dialectical resolution. And for this we delegates to the IEC have spent hours waiting between sessions for agreement to be reached at the "summit" by the bureau of both factions.

On the basis of these considerations, I propose the following:

MOTION

1. Dissolution of the factions.
2. Clear delimitation of the agreements and disagreements.
3. Publication of tendency differences in INTERNAL BULLETINS.
4. Integration of the current minority tendency in all the highest bodies of the International on the basis of its real proportional strength as determined by the number of delegates it had at the Tenth World Congress.
5. Very rapid reintegration of the IT into the SWP.
6. Commitment to take steps to unify the Trotskyists in those countries where there are majority and minority tendencies.
7. Opening a fraternal discussion on the main epicenters of the revolution in order to collectively elaborate a line and single out the priority sectors on the basis of our real forces in such countries, and, flowing from that, the joint adoption of practical measures for material and political support.
8. Drafting a discussion document on the current conjuncture and tasks and perspectives in LATIN AMERICA, going beyond the abstract discussion on armed struggle to provide our sections with a concrete

line of action.

9. Discussion on: the anti-imperialist united front the workers united front, and the revolutionary united front, and their application in the countries where we have forces; the correct tactics to fight for democratic rights; peculiarities of existing popular fronts and nationalist governments; the conception of the party and of work in mass organizations, and its relation to political-military activity.

Working together, elaborating the line collectively, and carrying out a common praxis, we will be begin to overcome the current internal problem and create the conditions for taking advantage of the exceptional situation facing the Fourth International.

If we continue as we have up to now, eating and sleeping in separate buildings and, at times, not even greeting each other as though we were enemies, there will be no "human detente." And, in the last analysis, it is men who make policy. If

they have mental reservations, there will be no guarantee of unity.

You members of the IEC, representatives of the ranks of world Trotskyism, have the opportunity to make the first step.

If we don't move toward a "thaw" and plunge into the swelling current of the river called "the mass upsurge," I want to emphasize that the outcome will be inexorable. HISTORY WILL NOT ABSOLVE US!

Then, at the next world congress will come the unfailing self-criticisms and repentant breast-beating, which will be of little use because for the honor of defending hypothetical, perfectionist tactical positions and carrying them to incredible factional extremes, the next upsurge of struggle of the world working class will have passed us by -- right under our very noses.

January 29, 1975

JANUARY 1975 IEC VOTING RECORD
(includes decisive and consultative votes)

NAME	Resolution on World Economy	Argentine		Resolutions		Celso, Pepe, Thinville, Walter motion	Thinville/ IMT motion
		IMT	Fourier motion	ITF	Valdes		
<u>Antilles</u>							
Phillipe (Almna)	F	F	F	Ag	Ab	F	F
Jean	not present						
<u>Argentina</u>							
Alfredo	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Eduardo	not present						
Guillermo	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Hector	not present						
Jorge	not present						
Luis	not present						
Ricardo	not present						
Saul (Marti)	F	F	F	Ag	Nv	F	F
<u>Australia</u>							
Alva	F	F	F	Ag	Ab	F	F
Dunder	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Ken	not present						
Martin	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
<u>Austria</u>							
Fred	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Penta	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
<u>Belgium</u>							
Marcel	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Phillipe	not present						
Rudi	not present						
Tantalus		F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Walter	F	F	F	Ag	Nv	F	F
<u>Bolivia</u>							
Huarte	not present						
Roca	not present						
<u>Brazil</u>							
Anna (Jorge)	F	F	F	Ag	Nv		
Fernando	not present						
<u>Britain</u>							
Adair	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Brewster	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Ghulam	F	F	F	Ag	Nv	F	F
Jeremy	not present						
Jones	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Ned	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Petersen	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Scott	not present						
Williams	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag		
<u>Canada</u>							
Abel	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Crandall	not present						
Fireman	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Gormley	not present						
Khaldoun	F	F	F	Ag	Nv	F	F
MacKenzie	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F

NAME	Resolution	Argentine		Resolutions		Celso, Pepe,	Thinville/
	on World Economy	IMT	Fourier motion	ITF	Valdes	Thinville, Walter motion	IMT motion
<u>Chile</u>							
Valdes	F	Ag	F	Ag	F	F	F
<u>China</u>							
Lee See Peng (Yip Nin)	not present F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
<u>Colombia</u>							
Carlos Otto	not present F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
<u>Denmark</u>							
Asgar Mogens Torben	F F not present	Ag F	Ag F	F Ag	Nv Ag	F F	Ag F
<u>France</u>							
Aubin Domingo Fourier Georges Hoffmann Jean Jules Marline Pierre Roman Ségur Thinville Werner	 F F F F not present not present not present not present F F F F	 F F F F	 F F F F	 Ag Ag Ag Ag	 Ab Ag Ag Ag	 F F F F	 F F F F
<u>Germany</u>							
Eduard Franz Friedrick Karl Kurt Mintoff Sylvia	not present F F F F F	 F Ag Ag F	 F Ag Ag F	 Ag F Ag Ag	 Ab Ag Ab Ag Nv	 F F F F	 F Ag Nv F F
<u>Holland</u>							
Hans Hugo	F F	 F	 F	 Ag	 Ag	 F	 F
<u>India</u>							
Kailas Chandra Mohan Gan T. T. Roy	not present not present not present						
<u>Iran</u>							
Ahmad (Hassin) Cyrus	F F	Ag Ag	Ag Ag	F F	Ag Ag	F F	Ag Ag
<u>Ireland</u>							
Conway Tim	F not present	 F	 F	 Ag	 Ab	 F	 F
<u>Israel</u>							
Mikado	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
<u>Italy</u>							
Alfonso Claudio	F F	F F	F F	Ag Ag	Ab Ab	F F	F F

NAME	Resolution	Argentine Resolutions			Celso, Pepe, Thinville, Walter		Thinville/
	on World Economy	IMT	Fourier motion	ITF	Valdes	motion	IMT motion
<u>Italy (continued)</u>							
Fedeli	not present						
Simon	not present						
<u>Japan</u>							
Hino	F	Ab	F	Ag	Ab	F	F
Kihara	not present						
Sakai	F	Ab	F	Ag	Ab	F	F
<u>Lebanon</u>							
Jaber	F	F	F	Ag	Nv	F	F
<u>Luxembourg</u>							
Josef	F	F	F	Ag	Ab	F	F
Metz	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
<u>Mexico</u>							
Josefina	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Miguel	F	F	F	Ag	Nv	F	F
Ricardo	F	F	F	Ag	Ab	F	F
Roberto	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
<u>New Zealand</u>							
Key	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Ronald	not present						
<u>Peru</u>							
Martinez	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Tuco (Tito)						F	Ag
<u>South Africa</u>							
Tom	not present						
<u>Spain</u>							
Carmen	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Enrique (Ricardo)	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Jaime	not present						
Jesus	not present						
Raoul (Melan)	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Roberto	not present						
Toni	not present						
Trude	not present						
<u>Sri Lanka</u>							
Bala	not present						
<u>Sweden</u>							
Anders	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Frey	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Jens	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Lars		F	F	Ag	Ab	F	F
Sven	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
<u>Switzerland</u>							
Carl	F	F	F	Ag	Ag	F	F
Duret	F	F	F	Ag	Nv	F	F
Guillaume	not present						
Roger	not present						
<u>Uruguay</u>							
Juan	not present						

NAME	Resolution	Argentine		Resolutions		Celso, Pepe,	Thinville/
	on World Economy	IMT	Fourier motion	ITF	Valdes	Thinville, Walter motion	IMT motion
<u>United States</u>							
Atwood	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Bundy	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Celso	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Galois	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Hovis	F	F	F	Ag	Ab	F	F
Johnson	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Moss	F	F	F	Ag	Nv	F	F
Mitchell	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Pedro (Maurice)	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Pepe	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
Susan	not present						
Thérèse	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
<u>Venezuela</u>							
Antonio (Marcos)	F	Ag	Ag	F	Ag	F	Ag
David	not present						

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original bulletin

- Marty Jan 2014

REPORT ON NATIONAL COMMITTEE PERSPECTIVES AND ELECTION OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE

By Jack Barnes

Presented to the National Committee Plenum, May 4, 1975

I'm sure all the comrades on the National Committee read carefully the recommendations from the outgoing Political Committee for the election of the new Political Committee, and the proposal to recommend to the convention the restructuring of the National Committee by eliminating the category of Advisory membership on the National Committee. The two proposals relate to each other, so the outgoing Political Committee thought it would be most useful for me to give the report on them together, with several separate motions. We can vote separately on the motions.

If adopted, these proposals would represent another step forward in the continuing process of transition of leadership in the party. In addition, they are part of our preparation for considering, at our coming convention, how to organize the entire leadership structure in tune with the perspectives we have projected at this plenum, and the increased political and administrative responsibility that will flow from those perspectives.

It might be helpful if comrades took out of their plenum kits the list of the members of the National Committee because I'll refer to it. [See Appendix A]

These proposals culminate the process initiated at the May 1972 plenum when the National Committee created the new category of Consultative membership on the Political Committee. A year later the National Committee concurred with the Political Committee's proposal that the PC elect a Political Bureau to which it delegated all the authority of the Political Committee but which was a smaller body and subordinate to the Political Committee.

These decisions resulted from grappling with problems that arose over time in the functioning of the Political Committee. From time to time the Political Committee has gotten out of step with the needs of party leadership. The changes within the leadership of the party, the changes in the transition of leadership, the changes in responsibilities, would leap ahead of the form, size and character of the meetings of the Political Committee as it was then constituted. It was in this way that the need for further alterations in the Committee and its functioning would come up.

George Breitman warned me in the Political Committee, "Now, don't take the floor in the plenum and tell the comrades everything has been just perfect on the Political Committee and all we are doing is taking another step forward in the transition of leadership." Everything hasn't been perfect. One of the ways we knew it was time for a new step was when things weren't working too well. Each time this happened, it would trigger a big discussion and we would come out of it with a proposal for the size and composition of the Political Committee.

The functioning of the Political Committee, of course,

can't be fundamentally the problem of this gathering. The National Committee has to elect the Political Committee with the knowledge that it is responsible to effectively organize itself.

The proposal for the new Political Committee is as follows. The motion is to elect a Political Committee of twelve members, and the nominations from the outgoing committee are Barnes, Breitman, Camejo, Al Hansen, D. Jenness, Lovell, Shaw, Sheppard, Seigle, Thomas, Waters, and a YSA NEC representative. There is another motion that the category of Consultative membership on the Political Committee be eliminated. These motions are in the April 22 PC minutes that were sent you prior to the plenum and are in the kits if you did not bring them. [See Appendix B.]

This proposal is a shift on several different levels. (1) It is a shift to a smaller Political Committee. (2) It's a shift to utilize as one of the criteria for membership on the Political Committee in this period not only residence in New York but also the ability to meet on call as a smaller Political Committee. (3) These shifts, if made, will then obviate the need for a separate Political Bureau.

Of course, none of these shifts are the most important new feature contained in these proposals from the point of view of the transition in leadership of the party. The main thing about this proposed Political Committee is that it is a Political Committee without Farrell Dobbs, George Novack, Tom Kerry, and Joe Hansen on it. In proposing to eliminate the category of Consultative membership on the PC, we are taking the step forward that the regular members of the Political Committee alone will be solely responsible for its functioning. This will be another big step in the process of the transition in the central leadership.

Comrades will remember the evolution of the Consultative category. For a while we had an informal set-up. If I remember correctly, it was Tom that was the first of these four central leaders to take Advisory membership on the National Committee. He did so at the 1969 convention. We said at the time that we wanted Tom to continue to attend PC meetings on invitation and we informed the NC plenum of that intention. But we didn't formalize this arrangement. Comrades all agreed that there was no need to formalize it. Then in 1972 when Farrell and George took the step to Advisory membership on the National Committee, there was a further decision to make. That is, we didn't want to just start informally inviting a growing collection of Advisory members of the NC to the meetings of the PC. We have to consider the form and pay attention to it. So at the 1972 plenum, about three years ago, we created the category of Consultative membership on the PC, for members who would have all rights on the PC except decisive vote. This was explicitly an extremely

limited category. We said at the time that the four candidates for it were Tom, Farrell, George, and Joe. And three of these four became Consultative members of the Political Committee at that plenum.

A year later we took the step of establishing the Political Bureau. The Political Committee itself was composed of nineteen members when you included the Consultative members and the youth representative. We needed a smaller body that could meet on call and more often, and directly oversee the administration of the National Office, although its function was not limited to this. The Political Bureau had the full authority of the Political Committee between meetings of the P.C., which made it qualitatively different from an administrative committee or a secretariat which handle basically administrative and organizational matters by consensus and are directly under the supervision of the Political Committee.

This was, of course, an unwieldy set-up in several ways. There was the problem of what to take to the PC as opposed to what to take to the Political Bureau. On one level it was quite clear how to solve this problem. The PC was composed of the broadest selection of the most authoritative leadership of the party. Preparation of resolutions and reports for conventions or plenums, discussions of big turns in the political situation, initial thinking out sessions on big questions, we would take to the PC. Other questions we would deal with in the Bureau. Sometimes we would deal with a question in the Political Bureau first and then discuss it in the PC; sometimes we would have a PC with points on the agenda which could have been taken up in the Bureau.

But as time went on and we moved along in the steady shift of more responsibility to the younger elected leaders of the party, more and more the Political Bureau began to supplant the PC. NC members were getting minutes of the Political Bureau more and more often, and minutes from the Political Committee less and less often. It finally reached the point where I received one of those pertinent memorandums that I occasionally get from George Breitman. The memo had a few sentences, but it came down to this, "Dear Jack: Have we dissolved the Political Committee without my knowing about it? And, if we have not, could we possibly have a meeting of the Political Committee with at least one point on the agenda, 'Whither the Political Committee?' Comradely, George." It seemed a reasonable request.

And so we had that meeting, on November 15, 1974. Comrades on the NC received a summary of what we agreed on at that meeting. We agreed that the present Political Committee-Political Bureau evolution had led to a new situation that reflected the need to formally reorganize the Political Committee to come more into harmony with the reality of the acting leadership of the party, and to take another step in the transition in leadership.

We had already begun initiating a series of moves, a series of leadership shifts to try to strengthen the party nationally. Among the Political Committee members on the list you have before you elected by the last plenum, we had already set in motion three major shifts to strengthen different branches by transferring active central leaders. We sent Joel [Britton] to Illinois, Derrick [Morrison] to Pennsylvania, and Lew [Jones] to California, to take on basically branch or city responsibilities. We also made the decision that Peter [Camejo] would be the presidential candidate, which was going to be an intensive drive for

him for a couple of years. Gus [Horowitz] and Ed [Shaw] were going to be taking on more international responsibilities. Betsey [Stone] was going to do field organizing directly responsible to the national office, operating out of Chicago. In essence she was going to be the substitute for a period of time for us being able to have more members of the PC more often in the field, so at least one member of the PC could move around more, spend more time with the branch organizers and the executive committees.

In looking over this whole situation we made another decision. The function of the Political Committee is not only to be the week-to-week political leadership of the party. We must take into account the administrative and organizational realities and needs of the party at any given moment. It is very important to remember one thing about the Political Committee. It is a committee. It's not a collection of individual leaders; nor is it *the* leaders. At any one time it will have, and it has to have, a minimum number of the accepted central leaders of the party on it to have the authority and respect of the body to which it is responsible—you, the National Committee. But it is not "the leaders" of the party or a collection of individual leaders. It's a *committee*. Its members have to be able to meet regularly and as often as necessary to make the decisions, to collectively think them out and take responsibility for them and to share out the work in implementing them.

After quite a few years of a relatively large Political Committee, we are able now to shift to a much more functional body that will be roughly the size of the present Political Bureau.

In the motion contained in the PC minutes comrades will note that the Political Committee agreed that there were four comrades—Peter, Ed, Gus, and Betsey—with whom we had not been able to thoroughly check about their schedules. If they would be able to be at a significant number of PC meetings between now and the convention, we wanted them formally elected to the PC; if they would not be able to be at most meetings we did not want to place them on the PC, because we wanted the PC to be able to meet with a maximum number of its members at all meetings.

Of course, we expect Gus and Betsey to be invited to attend PC meetings whenever they are in town, but the proposal is for them not to be elected members of this committee.

You may also note there is one other comrade resident in New York who was elected as a regular member of the NC at the last convention—Dick Garza—who is not a member of the PC and is not proposed for the new PC. This is because of the necessity we feel at this stage for the PC to meet on call. Dick is teaching and is involved in the UFT fraction, in Puerto Rican work, and he is our one regular NC member on the New York city committee.

We came fairly rapidly to agreement on the necessity and wisdom of proposing these changes in the PC. After some consideration, this discussion led to the question of the National Committee. The decision that Tom, George, and Farrell would go off the Political Committee, as would Joe who was not formally a Consultative member, but who viewed himself in that category—raised the question of whether this was not the time to end the chapter of the category of Advisory membership on the National Committee.

This question is, of course, not as pressing as the question of the Political Committee. It is only with the physical removal of Farrell, Tom, George and Joe from the Political Committee, in my opinion, that the next big step in leadership functioning can take place. That is, the committee has to operate without them in the room. Although we've previously taken the step to establish the category of consultative membership and these comrades speak much less in the meetings than they ever did before; as long as they are in the room it is a different kind of committee. Comrades who are carrying the responsibilities and making major decisions do not speak as much as they should under these conditions. When people who are among the most experienced and capable the Bolshevik movement has ever produced are sitting in the room, there is often an unconscious desire to let them have the final say, let them really make the decisions, and maybe not make a remark that might be wrong, because when you get criticized you're a little embarrassed. Until this change is made we won't have made the next necessary step forward. That to me is the most important point in this step we propose taking, just as the change in national officers meant that at one point we not only had to have Farrell not be National Secretary, but also at a certain point he said it was time to get out of New York. As long as he was in New York the transfer was incomplete. We could simply walk over to his desk and ask him something. When he is not there, it changes. We can't do that now.

Well, these are things we have been conscious of and have been talking about for a long time. Comrades here began talking about this problem way back in 1962 when the Advisory category of membership on the National Committee was established. We have taken the necessary steps in the transition in leadership systematically, at the proper pace, preserving the necessary continuity in leadership, since these 1962 discussions. And we took these steps when we could still solicit the opinions and advice and have working relations with the older comrades involved. This is true of the step we are now proposing in relation to Farrell, Tom, George and Joe, who relatively speaking—they have this or that ache or pain—are healthy.

But, of course, the change proposed for the Political Committee raises the question of the Advisory category of the National Committee. The comrades know the basic history of this category. It was initiated by the National Committee thirteen years ago at the June 1962 plenum. Discussions with comrades involved and the transcript of the meeting indicate the leadership was grappling with two fundamental problems.

One was the question of the leadership generation around Jim Cannon's age who still had so much to give as far as knowledge and experience were concerned but who could no longer carry out the functions of Regular members of the National Committee. The creation of the advisory category enabled the natural process of testing, training, and bringing new comrades into the NC to take a step forward.

Tom reminded us in the PC meeting that there was a second problem. The Regular NC membership list had practically become frozen. There was a tendency to approach the NC election at each convention not from the standpoint of who should be on the NC, but whether there was a reason to take anyone off. It reached a point at the 1961 convention when Jim, Farrell and Morris Stein had

to go before the nominating commission and tell them that the central leadership appreciated the great problem they had, and obviously something had to be done about it. I think Jim addressed the convention itself pledging the incoming elected leadership would do something about it.

What was done about it was the establishment of the category of Advisory membership on the National Committee at the June 1962 plenum, which was ratified by a constitutional amendment at the next party convention. This opened the door to further transition but maintained the continuity and eliminated any misunderstandings nationally or internationally about comrades like Jim and those around him.

But this category was never intended to be permanent. George Novack in urging us to consider this two years ago quoted the French proverb, "there's nothing so permanent as the temporary." The comrades who initiated the Advisory category insist they did not expect it to last thirteen years. But I'm of the opinion that to have eliminated this category of membership on the National Committee prior to this point would have been premature and would have jumped ahead of the process of transition in the Political Committee. The transition on the National Committee should be in harmony with the transition on the Political Committee.

So after discussing it at the April 22 meeting it seemed clear that we should consider recommending to the next convention the elimination of the category of Advisory membership on the National Committee.

I should make one thing very clear. If the convention delegates take this decision, what they are doing is eliminating this *category* and restructuring our National Committee. They are not eliminating any individual from the National Committee. Any individual Advisory member of the National Committee has the right and complete freedom to run for the National Committee like anyone else in the party. But the category—through which a process took place, beginning with Jim and Ray Dunne and comrades like them, then through the central leadership generation of the comrades sitting over there, Farrell, Tom, George, and Joe—has served its fundamental, "temporary," thirteen-year purpose. We think it is wiser to go back now to the structure of regular and alternate membership on the National Committee.

We have a small problem with Joe. We want Joe to do more writing on the broader questions, but he's the editor of the best international newsweekly publication in the world, and it takes quite a bit of his time. He also has a preferred way of operating, tied to a weekly publication schedule. He produces more, not less, that way. Our responsibility is to organize a team working with Joe that can absorb some of the tools of the trade and knowledge of how to put out this kind of publication, so that Joe can be freed a little bit more for some of the writing that has to be done. We will see how fast we can move on this—it may call for some adjustments in plans.

The change in the Political Committee is also going to eliminate an inevitable irritation for comrades in the Consultative category. In my opinion, it is very hard for comrades who have been so active, so capable, so responsible on a day-to-day basis, to watch things being done differently than they would do them. At a certain stage you have to step back a bit, watch things being done differently from the way you would do them, possibly not as well in some instances, but with the idea that over the

long haul it's going to come out for the better, with a stronger team. And there is no obstacle to soliciting advice when needed as we go along.

There are a couple of other questions we discussed briefly and informally before the plenum but are given more urgency by the political discussions we have had at this plenum. One concerns the frequency of plenums. If the concrete new problems and new openings in the mass movement are going to get the kind of attention they should, we have to think in terms of more frequent plenums. We can consider having shorter plenums sometimes to take up several specific points. And we'll have to consider the idea that George [Breitman] raised a few years ago of not necessarily waiting two years between conventions. It could be that we will want not only more frequent discussions in the NC, but that new political events, problems, responsibilities, and tasks will necessitate more frequent conventions.

It also means that the PC is going to have to look at the structure of the national office in the coming period. We are not yet growing that rapidly. We're not going to be significantly bigger overnight. But we have to supervise and oversee a growing number of tasks, campaigns and resources.

One final thing. If the NC adopts this proposal, if the convention concurs, and the category of Advisory membership on the National Committee is eliminated, we can consider a slight increase in the size of the National Committee. I raise this very hesitantly because I'm convinced by reading all the past reports of the different turning points in making the transition in party leadership, that simply increasing the size of the NC would have been the easy way out and avoided grappling with the problem. But one of the things we do by eliminating the category of Advisory membership on the National Committee is make the size of the National Committee smaller by eight places. The Advisory members of the National Committee are members of the National Committee like all of us, with one difference: like the Alternate members they have consultative rather than decisive vote. That is the only difference. They are members of the National Committee with all of the rights and responsibilities of members. So we have an edge if we want to move in the direction of slightly increasing the number of Regular members. The nominating commission at the convention will have to consider this. We should keep in mind that this committee is going to have to change over time, not only in the normal way, but also, as we recruit from and are involved in the mass movements more and more, the comrades that are proving themselves in these movements need to be systematically and consciously brought onto the committee.

Finally and very importantly, if we make this decision on the National Committee it eliminates at this stage in the evolution of the party any further question of relatively older members of the National Committee graduating to Advisory status. It means that comrades in that category, from Frank and George through Jean down to Al and Dick—do *not* have the perspective of taking Advisory membership on the National Committee. They have the

perspective of being available to stand for reelection to the NC at the convention. This I believe the party wants and needs. Before I conclude, I would like to read a letter Comrade Asher Harer asked to have read to the plenum, if there were no objections. Asher fully intended to be here, but at the last moment his back went out on him so after receiving the PC minutes with our proposal on NC perspectives he sent the following message:

San Francisco
April 30, 1975

National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Jack,

I really looked forward to attending the plenum, not only because it will be so politically important, but also since it would be my last plenum; as I had already decided to resign from the National Committee at the 1975 Convention. I had concluded that I, at least, had overstayed my time.

I do not feel so regarding a number of the one-time top leaders of the Party. However, the record of the present capable leadership promises me that the advice of these older comrades will be sought and that their considerable talents as experienced revolutionaries will be utilized.

Therefore, I agree with the recommendation of the Political Committee regarding the elimination of the category of Advisory Membership of the NC. The role of this transitional organizational measure is ended.

My present incapacity to attend the plenum (my poor smashed-up back went out again and I am confined to bed) merely tells me in one more way that *this* old-timer can no longer play an active leadership role. And that is what the NC is all about.

I have read the PC's political resolution. It is first-class! Revolutionary Greetings to the May Plenum of the Socialist Workers Party! Steady as she goes!

s/ Asher Harer
San Francisco

The four formal motions before us for consideration are:

1. That the Political Committee consist of twelve members.
2. That we elect those nominated by the outgoing Committee: Barnes, Breitman, Camejo, A. Hansen, D. Jenness, Lovell, Shaw, Sheppard, Seigle, Thomas, Waters, and a YSA NEC representative.
3. That the category of consultative member of the Political Committee be eliminated.
4. That we recommend to the convention the elimination of the category of advisory membership on the National Committee by striking section 3, paragraph 3, article V of the party constitution.

[The four motions were each adopted unanimously by the National Committee.]

Appendix A

Regular members elected by 1973 convention to National Committee:

J. Barnes	J. Hansen	L. Seigle
C. Bolduc	G. Horowitz	A. Sharon
G. Breitman	D. Jenness	E. Shaw
J. Britton	J. Johnson	B. Sheppard
P. Camejo	L. Jones	B. Stone
P. Chertov	C. Lipman	T. Thomas
C. DeBerry	F. Lovell	J. Tussey
D. Garza	D. Morrison	M. Waters
F. Halstead	H. Ring	N. Weinstein
A. Hansen		

Alternate members elected by 1973 convention to National Committee:

1. B. Scott	9. D. Styron	16. S. LaMont
2. L. Evans	10. D. Roberts	17. P. Seidman
3. W. Lyons	11. J. Benson	18. F. Boehm
4. C. Lund	12. N. Blackstock	19. J. Hawkins
5. L. Jenness	13. L. Henderson	20. D. McBride
6. J. White	14. S. Stapleton	21. M. Dixon
7. D. Wulp	15. A. Morell	22. J. Mackler
8. A. Pulley		

Advisory members elected by 1973 convention to National Committee:

M. Alvin	F. Dobbs	J. Liang
J. Cannon	A. Harer	G. Novack
B. Chester	T. Kerry	E. Reed

Members elected by 1973 convention to National Control Commission

A. Chester	B. Matson
D. Ferguson	H. Scheer

Appendix B

Excerpts from the Minutes of April 22, 1975

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 16, April 22, 1975

Present: Barnes, Breitman, Clark, A. Hansen, J. Hansen, Jenness, Lovell, Seigle, Sheppard, Thomas, Waters

Consultative: Kerry, Novack

Chair: Clark

2. POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Barnes reported:

At a PC meeting last November 15 we decided to propose to the coming National Committee plenum the election of a Political Committee smaller than the present one. It would be composed of the comrades who are now on the current Political Bureau plus those regular members of the current Political Committee who have taken on day-to-day responsibilities. Under the new conditions we would have no need for the Political Bureau.

We agreed that this change would formalize the called-for next step in the transition in national leadership and provide the kind of Political Committee that would best serve the party's needs at this juncture. (See attachment to December 23, 1974 P.C. minutes.)

I've discussed the decision once more since then with the consultative members of the Political Committee in New York, Tom Kerry and George Novack, and they still believe it is the correct and needed step.

I also talked over the proposal with Joe Hansen and George Breitman. Upon my urging George agreed to stay on the Political Committee.

Joe said he had thought about the proposal and decided to go off the Political Committee for the same reasons in the transition in leadership as the three consultative members of the P.C. Joe reminded me that, while he had not formally become a consultative member of the Political Committee, he was one of the four long-time central leaders we had designated as possible members when the National Committee established consultative membership on the Political Committee at the Spring, 1972, plenum. He believes we should now go forward from that stage.

I want to call special attention to one thing. Since we decided that the new Political Committee should be able to meet regularly and on call we have not included on the proposed committee four of the current Political Committee members responsible to the National Office who are presently

on national assignments of the kind that precluded their attending committee meetings regularly. These four are Betsey Stone, who is doing field organizing; Peter Camejo, who is serving as presidential candidate; and Ed Shaw and Gus Horowitz who are on international work.

I will double-check with these comrades before the plenum and, if any of their situations permits attendance, they will be included as part of the proposed Political Committee.

It is understood that we will elect the Political Committee again in less than four months at the post-convention plenum and we can review the situation at that time.

Discussion

Motion: To recommend the following motions to the plenum:

1. That the Political Committee consist of ten members.
2. That the outgoing Political Committee nominates Barnes, Breitman, A. Hansen, Jenness, Lovell, Sheppard, Seigle, Thomas, Waters, and YSA NEC representative.
3. That the category of Consultative Member of the Political Committee be eliminated.

Carried.

3. NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Barnes reported:

In discussions about the Political Committee with Tom, George N., George B., and Joe each raised with me their opinion that the coming convention should eliminate the category of advisory membership on the National Committee. They all felt that going beyond the stage of consultative membership on the Political Committee marked the end of a certain process.

Of course, the category of advisory membership on the National Committee, originally set up to facilitate the transition in leadership, was never intended to be a permanent form. No one ever proposed such an institutionalization and probably the comrades who initiated the form did not expect it to last as long as 13 years. Yet it served a very important function and in my opinion it would have been premature to have eliminated it earlier than now.

In the broadest sense, the transition process began with the first central leadership generation, around Jim, and went through the second older central leadership generation who took the consultative membership status on the Political Committee at the Spring, 1972, plenum.

These steps helped make possible an orderly transi-

tion in leadership of a kind no other revolutionary party has had to grapple with, nor has done so well in solving smoothly. We seem to be in agreement that we are entering a new stage. This means, in my opinion, that the generation on the National Committee ranging from comrades of Frank Lovell's and George Breitman's age group down to the age group of those like Al Hansen and Ed Shaw will not have the perspective of moving on to any advisory membership, but will remain available for active regular membership on the National Committee. Thus the convention delegates would face the normal task of weighing each candidate in preparation of a proposed slate reflecting a balanced National Committee as they did before the initiation of advisory membership on the National Committee.

Of course any individuals formerly holding advisory membership on the National Committee could make themselves available as National Committee candidates if they so desire.

A couple days ago I asked Evelyn Reed, who is an advisory member of the National Committee and resident in New York, what her opinion was. She said she was in agreement with the proposed change.

So I think we should place this question on the agenda and solicit the opinion of the National Committee to see if they hold similar views about the party's needs at this stage of our development.

Discussion

Motion: To recommend to the National Committee the following motion for presentation to the convention:

To recommend to the convention the elimination of the category of advisory membership on the National Committee by striking section 3, paragraph 3, article V of the party constitution.

Carried.