

# International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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By Larry Seigle, Report Adopted by National Convention,  
Socialist Workers Party, August 1984

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# SPECIAL OFFER!

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By Larry Seigle, report adopted by Socialist Workers Party  
National Convention, August 1984

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# The Leadership Crisis in the Fourth International

By Larry Seigle, Report Adopted by National Convention, Socialist Workers Party, United States, August 1984

[When the United Secretariat approved publication of this report in the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, it rejected including the appendices.

[Since there are many references to these appendices in the report, many comrades will want to read them. They are published along with the report in an SWP *Internal Information Bulletin* (which can be obtained at a special reduced price — see special offer on facing page).

[In addition to approving this report, the 1984 SWP National Convention voted to adopt as party policy the application of the party's organizational principles as documented in the following materials:

An international faction is operating today in the Fourth International, under cover of the Bureau of the United Secretariat. It is a secret faction, whose platform and membership have not been openly declared. This secret Bureau faction has been pursuing a course aimed at extending to other countries the split that it has already organized in Canada, in Australia, and in the United States. This course has plunged the Fourth International into a leadership crisis that is threatening to split our world movement.

What is the goal of this split course? It is aimed against those comrades in the International who are in general agreement with the political positions being advanced by the Socialist Workers Party, as well as against those who are opposed to the "super-centralist" organizational methods of the Bureau Faction. Its purpose is to prevent a genuine and democratic discussion within the Fourth International of the major programmatic, political, and organizational issues that are before the International today.

This Bureau Faction is not a politically homogeneous formation. Those who make it up hold different and even contradictory positions on a number of the most important questions. It is a combination that can only be held together by avoiding the debate. Only by blocking this discussion can the Bureau Faction guarantee that it will be able to continue the sham of speaking as the "majority" of the Fourth International.

The discussion on the disputed questions in the leaderships and in the ranks of the Fourth International parties has yet to begin. Most comrades around the world have not yet been part of the discussion, and are far from having made up their minds. The Bureau Faction can in no way be described as representing a coherent political majority in the International today.

The Bureau Faction is trying to justify its campaign to extend the split by spreading the false charge that the SWP is walking away from the Fourth International. This slander has been circulated for several years. It has been refuted not only by what we say but also by what we actually do. Despite repeated predictions that the SWP is going to split from the International, we have done just the opposite.

Nonetheless, these slanders keep circulating. That is because they do not stem from what the SWP does, but from the need of the Bureau Faction to seek to justify the steps it is taking as it tries to implement its split course.

The Bureau Faction has organized the breakdown of normal and democratic functioning of the International's leadership bodies over the last three years. This breakdown has taken a number of forms. The functioning of the United Secretariat has been corrupted. It meets less and less often. In 1984, only four meetings will be held, despite the requirement in the statutes of the Fourth International that the United Secretariat meet at least once a month.

More importantly, when the United Secretariat does meet, it is

["Defending the Organizational Principles of A Proletarian Party," (*Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 1 in 1982); "Report of the Control Commission on Events Related to Charges Filed by Milton Genecin (Alvin)," (*Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 3 in 1983; Statement of the Political Committee, "End of the Split Operation Against the Party," included in *Party Organizer*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1984); "Tendencies and Factions in the Pre-convention Discussion," in *Internal Information Bulletin* No. 2 in 1984; and "The Gerardo Nebbia Disruption Campaign," *Information Bulletin* No. 1 in 1984.

[All five of these documents can be obtained from the Socialist Workers Party, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y., 10014 for a reduced rate of \$4.00.]

presented with decisions already made and implemented by the Bureau Faction, acting under the "legal" cover of the Bureau of the United Secretariat. The Bureau has no statutory powers, but is supposed to be an administrative subcommittee. Information and documents that properly belong before the elected United Secretariat are withheld and provided only to those who are members of the Bureau Faction. The United Secretariat is thus divided into two classes of members: those with access to political information in the hands of the United Secretariat Bureau, and those who are denied access to it. This, of course, makes it impossible for the United Secretariat to fulfill its responsibilities as a leadership body elected by the International Executive Committee.

This breakdown is reflected in the character of the meetings of the United Secretariat. These sessions are organized in such a way as to block the political exchange of views so urgently needed in order to clarify the differences that exist. The "real" discussions — on line resolutions, as well as on organizational matters — occur within the Bureau Faction. The debates in the United Secretariat meeting are pro forma — the decisions have already been made.

If the functioning of the United Secretariat has been corrupted, the International Executive Committee, which is elected by the delegates to the World Congress, has in effect been abolished. The IEC has not been convened since May 1982, despite the requirement in the statutes that it meet at least once every six months, and even more often if necessary.

Requests from a significant minority of the IEC members for a meeting to seek ways to resolve the worsening leadership crisis in the International have been ignored. In the face of the worst crisis in thirty years, with a split threatening to spread through the International, the IEC, which is the highest body between World Congresses, has not been allowed to meet.

This suspension of the statutes has ended the functioning of the IEC and United Secretariat as authoritative leadership committees, despite our efforts to keep the democratic norms from breaking down. The authority and the democratic functioning of all Fourth International bodies, including the World Congress, have been sacrificed as a result.

Simultaneously with its disruption of the functioning of the elected leadership bodies of the International, the Bureau Faction has increased its interference in the democratic functioning of the national sections and sympathizing groups. It has intervened behind the backs of the elected leadership committees of the sections to organize splits, and to collaborate with those who have split in efforts to weaken the sections. Sections and sympathizing groups that refuse to submit to the commands of the Bureau Faction find it intervening against them in their own country. They



become targets of an international boycott aimed at reading them out of the International.

As part of this campaign to quarantine sections and sympathizing groups that don't accept this "supercentralist" mode of functioning, the Bureau Faction is working to undermine the internationalist norms of the Fourth International. These norms have encouraged comrades to travel and meet with revolutionists from other countries, to attend conferences in other countries when invited to do so, and to exchange views, whether as part of an organized tendency or faction or not, with comrades from other countries and members of the International's elected leadership bodies.

Now, for the first time in the history of the Fourth International, the Bureau Faction is seeking to implement the practice that members of sections can be denied "permission" to even meet with members of the IEC or the United Secretariat who visit their country, and that comrades can be disciplined for the "crime" of attending, as invited guests, a conference of another section.

Instead of encouraging the exchange of views on the broad range of questions that need to be thoroughly discussed in the International, the Bureau Faction is seeking to cut off political discussion before it begins in the parties of the International throughout the world.

Right here at this convention there are some twenty comrades from the British section — including members of its Central Committee and members of the United Secretariat — who are facing a threat of expulsion simply for attending this national gathering. These attempts to block discussion threaten to split the Fourth International. We will continue to consider as Fourth Internationalists anyone victimized on these spurious and undemocratic grounds.

### Challenge before SWP

The challenge before the Socialist Workers Party is to chart a course that can limit the damage from the split that has already begun, and can stop or at least slow down its spread. We will do this by fighting for steps toward restoring normal functioning in the International, so that it is possible to organize the discussion that is needed to clarify the political issues.

We will act as a majority should act, advancing policies aimed at resolving the leadership crisis and restoring the democratic functioning of the International. It is too early to predict how successful we can be in affecting the organizational outcome of this leadership crisis.

Those favoring a split in the Fourth International have already accomplished part of their purpose. Moreover, the objective weight of the course of world politics is working against us. The pressures of the retreats, setbacks, and defeats in the world class struggle that have been the dominant factor in the last several years affect the Fourth International, just as they weigh on every other tendency in the working-class movement.

There have been no decisive new victories in the fight to extend the revolution since 1979, and one of the victories of that year — Grenada's revolution — has been wiped out in a defeat whose full impact we have yet to absorb. In Southeast Asia, in Southern Africa, and in the Middle East, the imperialists are stepping up their pressure and have succeeded in forcing a series of retreats on the anti-imperialist struggles.

In the imperialist countries, the offensive of the capitalists against the living standards, rights, and organizations of the working class has advanced, with no counter-offensive of any equivalent weight by the working class. Retreats and setbacks continue to outnumber victories and advances. And the imperialists' war offensive against the revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean bears down on the working class as a

whole, including its vanguard. The result, in the short term, is a continuous shifting of the axis of politics toward the right.

The Political Committee's Draft Political Resolution for this convention [in *SWP Information Bulletin*, No. 4 in 1984] explains that we reject the idea that the working class in this country has entered a prolonged political retreat such as that of the 1950s. Class battles are on the agenda as the rulers deepen their attacks on living standards and democratic rights and their course toward a new Vietnam-style war in Central America and the Caribbean. At the same time, the resolution describes how the negative pressures of the political situation today and in recent years have affected the currents in the working class movement in the United States — including the SWP. Every organization on the left in this country, including our own, has declined in size. Not a few radical groups have even dissolved.

But unlike other currents, the SWP has not retreated politically in the face of these pressures. We have reaffirmed and deepened the turn to the industrial unions as essential to advancing the construction of a party that is proletarian in composition as well as program. We have deepened our activity in the fight against the imperialist war in Central America and the Caribbean. And we have deepened our understanding of the centrality of this fight to the class struggle in all its forms in the United States.

In moving in this direction, we have been swimming against the stream. One of the results of the current political conditions has been the decline in size of the party. Losses through splits and attrition have been greater than gains through recruitment and fusions. Some comrades were simply no longer convinced that the revolutionary perspective has any meaning in the United States, and left politics.

At the same time, as the Draft Political Resolution explains, "The deepening of the party's proletarianization and our advance along the road that converges with the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian proletarian leaderships set a section of the party on a different political trajectory. These members recoiled from the political advances of the party, from the changing reality of a party more and more centered around industrial union fractions, and from our orientation toward the revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean. This led them on a split course."

Comparable pressures have affected the Fourth International as a whole. The effects have been different, of course, in different countries. Those who have retreated from the turn to the industrial unions decided on at the 1979 World Congress have been unable to advance in the process of building a party with proletarian moorings. Sections that have not retreated from this course have gone through splits, in one form or another, as they have led the process forward, rather than allow the opposition of a minority to paralyze the party.

We have to look at the fight in the Fourth International within the framework of these objective pressures or else we won't see the depth of the problem. When you are swimming against the stream, being correct on the political and organizational questions in dispute doesn't mean you are going to win a majority. It doesn't mean you will grow. Bigger, objective forces press in the opposite direction.

That is what we are up against today.

But there is something else we must keep in mind as well in relation to the fight inside the Fourth International. The Bureau Faction is far from having achieved its goal of convincing the decisive majority in the International that it is necessary or desirable to split with the SWP and with the other parties and currents in parties that are on the same trajectory. The Bureau Faction has not lined up a majority on the political and organizational issues in dispute.

That is why we cannot predict the organizational outcome of this fight. What we do know is that if we were to turn our backs



on this challenge, we would guarantee that the Fourth International would split. To turn our back on this fight would be to walk away from the International. It would be to abandon the conviction, which has guided our party since 1938, that building the Fourth International as a worldwide vanguard nucleus, organized to march toward the construction of a new, mass communist International, is inseparable from building the revolutionary proletarian party in the United States.

### Origin of Bureau Faction

What is the Bureau Faction? Where did it come from?

We can pinpoint the day it was formed without any trouble. In the Fall of 1979, immediately after the triumph over Somoza, the SWP sent a delegation to Nicaragua headed by Barry Sheppard and Fred Halstead. After hearing the report from this delegation, the SWP members who were fraternal members of the United Secretariat had some discussions and came to the initial conclusion that a workers' and peasants' government with a revolutionary leadership had come to power in Nicaragua. When Comrade Sheppard reported this thinking to the members of the United Secretariat Bureau in Europe, Ernest Mandel responded by immediately calling a meeting of all those members of the United Secretariat who disagreed with that position. That was the origin of the Bureau Faction.

It was formed by those in the leadership of the Fourth International who rejected recognizing the workers' and peasants' government in Nicaragua, and recoiled from the advance of the proletarian leaderships in Central America and the Caribbean, leaderships that have emerged outside the Fourth International. They turned away from recognizing the historic political convergence between the Fourth International's trajectory and the course followed by the leadership of the Nicaraguan revolution, which is part of a current that includes the leadership of the Cuban Communist Party, the proletarian vanguard in the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador, and the leadership team that existed around Maurice Bishop of Grenada, before the coup organized by Bernard Coard in October 1983.

The development of revolutionary leaderships in Central America and the Caribbean represents a gigantic step toward resolving the world crisis of leadership of the working class. This development provides confirmation of the historic correctness of the decision to found the Fourth International and to orient it toward linking up with such forces as they would emerge in the course of the struggle against world imperialism. But instead of recognizing this, and acting accordingly, the organizers of the Bureau Faction have responded in a sectarian way. Their response is to cling ever more tightly to the shibboleths that — in their minds — justify the Fourth International's permanent existence separate from these revolutionary proletarian forces.

These comrades reject the political orientation toward these revolutions and their leaderships advocated by the SWP. They reject the efforts our party has been making to learn from these revolutions in order to strengthen our understanding of the programmatic continuity between our course today and the orientation of the Comintern under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party.

They also reject the central organizational conclusion for the Fourth International that flows from this political line: opposition to organizing separate Fourth International groups in these countries. We are opposed to organizing separate Fourth International parties, or factions or tendencies of Fourth Internationalists, in the Cuban CP, in the FSLN, in the FMLN — or in the New Jewel Movement prior to its destruction in October 1983. In other words, we are for the organizational liquidation of the Fourth International in those countries where Marxist working-class van-

guards have emerged from origins other than the Fourth International and won the leadership of the workers and peasants. Anyone who agreed with our international political perspective in those countries today would strive to become part of the revolutionary vanguard, contributing whatever talents and ideas they have as part of that vanguard. They would reject the course of trying to carve out a current, grouping, fraction, or separate party of the Fourth International.

### Opposition to turn to industrial unions

The members of the Bureau Faction voted for the report on "The Turn to Industry and the Tasks of the Fourth International," which was adopted by a big majority at the 1979 World Congress. When faced with the leadership challenge of actually carrying out this decision, however, they retreated. [This report, along with the other reports and resolutions from the 1979 congress, has been published in a special supplement to *Intercontinental Press*. It is available for \$1.00 (plus postage) from the SWP, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014.]

The report stated:

One central, practical consequence flowing from the political resolution submitted to this congress . . . overshadows all others — that is, that the sections of the Fourth International must make a radical *turn* to immediately organize to get a large majority of our members and leaders into industry and into industrial unions. . . .

It is *there* that we will meet the forces to build the Fourth International, to build workers parties. It is *there* that we will meet the young workers, the growing numbers of women workers, the workers of oppressed nationalities, and the immigrant workers. It is inside the industrial working class that revolutionary parties will get a response to our program and recruits to our movement.

After analyzing the objective conditions dictating the turn as the road today to advancing the proletarianization of our movement, the report also looked at the turn and the Fourth International from a broader historical point of view:

Our movement's current social composition is totally abnormal. This is a historical fact, not a criticism. In fact, far from being a criticism, it was our movement's ability to recruit from the new generation of radicalizing youth — from the early sixties on — that today poses the possibility of making this turn. And this *possibility* now coincides with a pressing political *necessity*.

Only parties not only proletarian in program, but in composition and experience can lead the workers and their allies in the struggles that are on the agenda.

Only parties of industrial workers will be able to withstand the pressures, including the ideological pressures, of the ruling class. And these pressures will increase.

Only such parties will have their hand on the pulse of the working class, and thereby not misread their own attitudes, ignorance, and moods as those of the workers. In other words, only parties of industrial workers can move forward and outward.

The leadership of the turn to the industrial unions presents a challenge to every section of the International. The turn is different from other political decisions because it is not a change in political line, or the launching of a new tactic, or a new campaign. The turn involves a change in the lives of thousands of comrades. This can only be accomplished if the leadership *leads* it.

The turn poses a question — very sharply in some cases — of what party members are doing with their lives, what their commitments to the party are, and what their priorities are. Many comrades respond with enthusiasm, and move forward to demonstrate new leadership capacities. Others make the decision to drop away from the party rather than subordinate their personal lives to working in industry.

Although the Bureau Faction members voted for the report on the turn at the World Congress, and did so with good will, they



refused to *lead* the turn, and all its aspects, in the national sections. In particular, they refused to face up to the responsibility of putting an end to leadership functioning based on keeping the "family" — made up of competing cliques — together, each with its own turf, or arena of work. When part of the "family" of the old leadership combination wouldn't go along with the turn, others in the leadership retreated.

The line of the Bureau Faction members on the turn became a negative one. They were negative toward the goal of getting the big majority of the membership into industrial union jobs. They were negative to the deepening of the turn marked by the decision of the SWP to build national fractions in the garment and textile unions. They were negative toward the construction of national fractions — collective teams — with structured ways of making decisions democratically and integrating and developing as leaders comrades who go into industry, as well as those who are recruited on the job. They were negative toward the weekly rhythm of political activity and branch life that is essential to a party more and more made up of comrades in the industrial working class.

At first, these negative positions were presented as criticisms within the framework of continued support for the turn. But more and more that has shifted to open opposition to the line adopted by the 1979 World Congress, and to a call for its reversal.

Some members of the Bureau Faction occasionally still gave lip-service to the report on the turn adopted by the 1979 congress, but they have unanimously declared their opposition to the efforts to apply this line in each country, and to extend the turn to industry to encompass broader layers off the industrial working class, in particular the oppressed nationalities and the immigrant workers. The Bureau Faction is especially adamant in its opposition to efforts to advance the proletarianization of the parties of the Fourth International by building parties that reflect — in their leadership as well as in their membership — an orientation toward the most exploited and oppressed layers of the proletariat in each country.

This counterrevolution in the face of this decisive challenge in advancing the proletarianization of the Fourth International means that the parties of the International will inevitably be more susceptible to the pressures of the deepening economic and social crises, and imperialist war preparations. These are pressures that originate in the bourgeoisie and are transmitted into the workers' movement through various petty-bourgeois layers and organizations. For a proletarian party to decide not to base its membership in the industrial working class and their unions when the objective conditions make it possible to do so will over time inevitably undermine the revolutionary program.

We can anticipate that efforts to reverse or gut the other political accomplishments of the 1979 World Congress will follow, as well. For instance, comrades who are in the bloc that has patched together a majority in the British section (another heterogeneous part of the Bureau Faction "majority") have openly called for reversing the line of the World Congress resolution on women's liberation. This resolution establishes a clear proletarian axis for the work of the Fourth International in the women's movement, among women workers, and in the labor movement as a whole. It also provides a clear theoretical foundation for understanding the Marxist approach to the struggle for the emancipation of women, and reaffirms our political continuity on this question with the early years of the communist movement.

### **Politically heterogeneous combination**

The Bureau Faction is not built around agreement on political line, but around *opposition* to a line on Central America and the

Caribbean, and *opposition* to a line on the turn to the industrial unions. Within this "majority" combination patched together by the Bureau Faction there are a variety of political positions on the most decisive questions before the International.

For example, there are contradictory positions on the class character of the Nicaraguan government. Some who support the Bureau Faction believe that in Nicaragua today there is a workers' and peasants' government, leading the transition toward the establishment of a workers' state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Others now argue that Nicaragua has been a workers' state since July 1979 and that there never was a workers' and peasants' government there. Still others believe that there is a capitalist government in Nicaragua today, and that the task is for the workers and peasants to seize power from the current regime.

Similar disagreements and contradictory political lines exist in regard to the character of the Grenadian government prior to October 1983.

There is an equally wide range of views on El Salvador within the camp of the Bureau Faction. Some comrades argue that the line of the FMLN on negotiations with the Duarte regime and with Washington, and the FMLN's call for a Government of Broad Participation, may open the door to a betrayal of the revolution and should be opposed. These comrades agree with some of the positions of the ultraleft and workerist followers of Salvador Cayetano Carpio who split from the FMLN and have organized the Revolutionary Workers Movement (known by its Spanish initials as the MOR).

These comrades argue that the Fourth International should demand that the FMLN make public the evidence that Carpio was responsible for the murder of Commander Ana Maria, and that the Fourth International should back the MOR's claim to be a legitimate part of the revolutionary vanguard in El Salvador today.

However, the Bureau Faction also includes comrades who are opposed to identifying the Fourth International in any way with the MOR's campaign against the FMLN. They think it is damaging to the Fourth International to be publicly associated with the positions of the MOR, and to be identified as collaborating with them in their efforts to disrupt the international solidarity campaign being promoted and encouraged by the FMLN.

Nonetheless, these comrades subordinate their differences on El Salvador to maintaining the combination of the Bureau Faction.

### **Suppressed positions on workers' and farmers' government**

At the center of the drive by the Bureau Faction to widen the split in the International is the effort to block discussion within the Fourth International leadership, and within the sections, of the workers' and farmers' government.

This is one of the most important programmatic questions that have been brought to the fore by the advances of the revolution in Central America and the Caribbean. Understanding this is a decisive part of strengthening our political continuity with the revolutionary strategy of the Comintern's first five years.

Moreover, a central task for each of the parties of the Fourth International, in the imperialist countries as well as in the colonial and semicolonial world, is to develop for their own country an understanding of the strategic alliance of the working class and the exploited farmers in the revolutionary struggle for state power, along with the fight to lead the working class in championing the struggles of the oppressed nationalities and women against discrimination and oppression. Only with this perspective can the turn to the industrial unions advance us toward building proletarian parties oriented toward rooting themselves in the most exploited and oppressed working people in city and coun-



tryside.

This is the purpose of the resolution we have been discussing in the SWP, "For a Workers' and Farmers' Government in the United States" [published in *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. XVIII, No. 5]. This resolution, which we are going to vote on at this convention, has also been placed before the Fourth International, and will be put to a vote at the World Congress now scheduled for early 1985.

What has happened with this resolution in the International?

This resolution was adopted by the SWP National Committee in March 1982. It was published at the time of the IEC meeting in May 1982 — the last IEC meeting that has been held. The delegation from the SWP took photocopies to that meeting so that all members of the IEC could have it, and so that the discussion on these questions could begin.

But there was no discussion on the resolution at that IEC meeting, and there has been no discussion since then in any leadership meeting of the Fourth International. There is no written position of the majority of the United Secretariat, or of the United Secretariat Bureau, on the questions raised in this resolution.

At the United Secretariat meeting in May 1983, a motion was adopted directing the Bureau of the United Secretariat to present its position, for discussion and vote by the United Secretariat, on the workers' and farmers' government question, which it had been agreed would be on the agenda of the next World Congress.

Members of the SWP and others had successfully made the point in the United Secretariat that it was not sufficient to express disagreement with the position of the SWP National Committee. A positive counterline, or counterlines, had to be presented in order for a discussion to take place. The members of the United Secretariat Bureau agreed that this was true, and promised to come back to the United Secretariat with their written position.

This was scheduled to be on the agenda of the next United Secretariat meeting, in October 1983. That meeting came and went without the statement. Likewise the subsequent meeting, in January 1984. And in May, fully a year after the United Secretariat Bureau was directed to prepare a document with its views, there was still no statement of the position or positions of the members of the United Secretariat Bureau, and therefore no way for the United Secretariat to organize the discussion around clearly counterposed positions.

For two years no alternative line to the resolution adopted by the SWP National Committee was presented for adoption by the IEC or the United Secretariat. Then, suddenly, at the May 1984 meeting, the Bureau introduced a motion, which was adopted by majority vote of the United Secretariat, proclaiming that this resolution "stands in contradiction to the general line expressed in the established programmatic documents of our movement."

After two years of silence, without any counterposed line presented, without any discussion or explanation, the majority of the United Secretariat has proclaimed that the position of the SWP National Committee — which has been approved by the overwhelming majority of the SWP membership in the voting in the branches on counterposed platforms prior to this convention — is beyond the bounds of Marxism!

This is a pretty far-reaching motion. The conclusions from such a motion are clear: the SWP has politically broken from the program of Marxism, and the organizational consequences of this break will logically follow. This is a motion whose purpose is to end the discussion before it starts.

There wasn't any discussion at all in the United Secretariat on this motion. The motion was not on the agenda of the meeting. It was not distributed to the members of the United Secretariat in advance of the meeting. And there was no discussion at the meeting itself.

So we are faced with a motion reading out of the program of Marxism the position the SWP National Committee has adopted, with no explanation at all of the views of those who voted for the motion. In what way does the position of the SWP "stand in contradiction to" the program of Marxism? Which "established programmatic documents" are we supposedly throwing overboard? And how does this assertion relate to the political continuity of our movement with the strategic line advanced by the Comintern under Lenin and the Bolsheviks? All this remains a mystery.

The treatment of this resolution by the Bureau Faction reveals a great deal about how it intends to keep its "majority" together. And it is valuable to review this for another reason, as well. One of the most often heard charges by the Bureau Faction against the SWP is that we never put our positions on the big questions in dispute in writing, to be read and discussed by the International. This charge is aimed at bolstering the claim that we are walking out of the International — well, if not today then surely tomorrow.

The charge is completely false. The leadership of the SWP has more resolutions, line reports, and lengthy articles in print explaining its views on the major questions than it has ever had. In fact, it is precisely what is written and published for the whole International to read that creates such a furor in the Bureau Faction, because the comrades do not agree with these positions.

No one has any doubt about the line that the SWP is presenting in the International. Comrades may not agree with it, but no one can honestly claim that the line is not being presented clearly, for all to read. The problem is a different one. The discussion on these questions is being blocked by the Bureau Faction.

In Comrade Mandel's article in the international discussion bulletin, "On the Workers and Peasants Government" [*IIDB*, Vol. XX, No. 2, April 1984], he states that he was forced to delete from his article a section containing his views on what the Transitional Program says on the workers' and farmers' government, and on what the Comintern had to say on it — two vital links in our continuity on this central programmatic question. Comrade Mandel states in a footnote that he had to drop these sections because they would have brought the length of his article over the limit set by the United Secretariat for contributions to the discussion.

The SWP members argued at the United Secretariat meeting in May 1984 that the United Secretariat should exercise its leadership responsibility to make an exception to the length restrictions that it itself had set. It would be a simple matter, completely within the authority of the United Secretariat, and it would have been a wise leadership decision: waive the space limits to allow Comrade Mandel to publish the omitted portion of his article, so that the members of the Fourth International would not be kept in the dark on what his views are. This is not a question of forcing someone to publish something they aren't ready to publish, or for some other reason choose not to put into print. Comrade Mandel stated clearly in the footnote that he would have included these sections of his article if the space limits had not barred it.

But this motion was voted down. In the name of upholding a rule on space limitations, the majority of the United Secretariat voted to keep hidden from the Fourth International what Ernest Mandel thinks on the political continuity of our program on the workers' and farmers' government. This was done at the same meeting where the majority voted to declare that the position of the SWP National Committee on this question was a programmatic break from Marxism.

Here is an issue on which — if we were to believe the Bureau Faction — entire sections of the International and substantial minorities in several others have broken from the program — but Ernest Mandel can't print his view on decisive aspects of the



question because his article is too long. The bureaucratic manipulation of the discussion has gone that far.

### Keeping the "majority" together

Why this extraordinary effort to block the discussion? Because the Bureau Faction itself includes comrades with contradictory positions on the questions of the strategic class alliances the proletariat must seek to forge, the revolutionary perspective toward the seizure of state power by the exploited producers, the relationship between government and state — questions that are at the heart of communist politics. Within the International as a whole, there is a wide range of views on these and other aspects of the discussion on the workers' and farmers' government.

The Bureau Faction's claim to speak in the name of the majority of the Fourth International would collapse as soon as the discussion opened and all the points of view were laid on the table.

What are the varying positions held by the members of the Bureau Faction? We don't know. We can only guess, like all other members of the International.

At the meeting of the United Secretariat held in May of this year, Comrade Mandel reported for the United Secretariat Bureau on its resolution on Grenada. [This resolution is published in the July 9, 1984, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.] In his oral report, Comrade Mandel stated his view that there had never been a workers' and farmers' government in Grenada, and that a workers' state had existed there since the week of the March 1979 insurrection that overthrew the Gairy dictatorship.

This position contradicts the one adopted at the May 1982 IEC meeting, which recognized that a workers' and farmers' government had been brought to power by the popular insurrection led by the New Jewel Movement, and that the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat remained a task for the future. [See *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* Vol. XVIII, No. 7.]

So Comrade Mandel disagrees with the position adopted by the IEC. He thinks it should be changed. Fine. The problem is that the Fourth International doesn't know that is Comrade Mandel's position. In the resolution adopted by the United Secretariat on Grenada, this question is avoided completely. Was there a workers' state in Grenada? Was this the first time in history a workers' state has been overthrown? The resolution doesn't say.

Or was there a workers' and farmers' government there, as the majority of the IEC concluded? The resolution doesn't say that either.

If Comrade Mandel thinks that the insurrection led by Maurice Bishop established the dictatorship of the proletariat and a workers' state within a week, then surely a similar conclusion must be reached on Nicaragua. This would also lead in the direction of revising what the Fourth International has said in the past on Cuba, and proclaiming that a workers' state was established in January 1959, when the Rebel Army marched into Havana, rather than in the fall of 1960, when the expropriation of the major capitalist enterprises was carried out.

And what would this mean for the position that until now has been held by the Fourth International that a workers' and peasants' government existed in Algeria from 1963 to 1965, when it was overthrown by a counterrevolutionary coup?

What is involved here is not a question of whether the right label is applied to Grenada. It would be foolish to make that the axis of any debate. The heart of the matter is something else altogether: what is a workers' state? Is it based, as Trotsky explained, on state property in the means of production, a state monopoly of foreign trade, and a planned economy?

Trotsky argued, "The class nature of the state is . . . determined not by its political forms but by its social content; i.e., by the character of the forms of property and productive relations which the given state guards and defends." [*Writings of Leon*

*Trotsky (1937-38)*, p. 61.] But to call Grenada in the week after the overthrow of Gairy — or Nicaragua in July 1979, or Cuba in January 1959 — a workers' state would be to give a different content to that term. It would be transforming the concept of a workers' state into one that rests on *political* criteria — and in doing so it would revise, without saying so, the position of our movement. It would be to throw overboard the criteria we have used to define a workers' state ever since Trotsky, in the 1930s, applied the Marxist tools to an analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union, explaining the criteria for what constitutes a workers' state. Trotsky's views were summed up most completely in the book *In Defense of Marxism*, where he also applied these criteria to the possibility of social transformations in Finland and the Baltic countries.

Surely these questions should be discussed through to the end. But this can't be done if a faction made up of comrades holding a variety of different positions on these questions subordinates the discussion to maintaining a faked "majority" — and seeks to preserve this "majority" by blocking the discussion and driving toward a split with comrades who are pressing for the discussion to be held.

### Organization question as political issue

The recoiling from the openings presented to the Fourth International by the emergence of proletarian revolutionary leaderships in Central America and the Caribbean and the extension of the socialist revolution, the retreat from the turn to industry and the steps that are possible and necessary to advance the proletarianization of the parties of the Fourth International — these are the twin political axes of the Bureau Faction's course.

There is a third axis, as well, that we must understand. That is the decision of the Bureau Faction to seek to resolve the disputes in the Fourth International by resorting to bureaucratic and super-centralist modes of functioning. This is an urgent political question, because this mode of functioning is splitting the International. The political differences that exist form the basis for a discussion — they do not justify splitting the International. But the organizational measures being implemented by the Bureau Faction are blocking the discussion, and driving the International toward a spreading split. Unless this course is reversed, unless the organizational question is dealt with head on and steps are taken toward resolving it, the political discussion can't take place in an atmosphere in which political clarification can be achieved. The differences can't be tested against the course of events, which is the only way differences can be resolved.

We have reached a stage where the organization question has come forward as a decisive political question for the world movement. It is for this reason that the organizational questions relating to the Fourth International are so important for this convention to discuss and decide.

### Montreal meeting and the split in the SWP

The Bureau Faction encouraged the minority faction in the SWP to split from the party. This is not a secret, although it was done behind the backs of the United Secretariat, as well as behind the backs of the elected leadership bodies of the SWP.

This split is now a closed matter as far as the SWP is concerned. But the role of the Bureau Faction in the split is not something that can be simply placed behind us, because similar operations have been and are today being carried out against other parties. This will result in a deepening of the split in the International unless these practices by the Bureau Faction are sharply reversed.

The first step in organizing the split in the SWP was the notorious trip to Montreal by Comrades Walter and Duret, for the Bu-



reau Faction, in January 1982. The story of this factional foray is told in detail in the SWP bulletin on "Defending the Organizational Principles of a Proletarian Party." [See Appendix F.] A couple of aspects are worth reviewing here in light of the subsequent unfolding of the split operation set in motion at that meeting.

While in Montreal, Walter and Duret met with two members of the SWP National Committee minority, Comrades Bloom and Lovell. The problem was not that Walter and Duret met with Bloom and Lovell. The problem was the way the meeting was organized, and what it revealed about how the Bureau Faction operates.

In January 1982, Comrade Lovell hand delivered a letter to the SWP national office one day stating that he and Bloom "will be out of the country for a few days consulting with members of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International."

This was a complete mystery, because the members of the SWP who were members of the United Secretariat had not been informed of any United Secretariat meeting to be held during that time. Nor had any other members of the United Secretariat been informed of this meeting, unless, of course, they were part of the Bureau Faction.

This problem was compounded by the fact that the meeting with Bloom and Lovell was organized without informing the elected leadership of the SWP. This broke with the assurances given in 1977, when the "International Majority Tendency" (which was actually a faction) dissolved, that such methods of functioning would end.

The international center cannot intervene in the sections and sympathizing groups of the Fourth International behind the backs of the elected leaderships. We have had this out many times before. Unfortunately, the comrades in the Bureau Faction believe that the only way to function when they have important political differences with the elected leaderships of the sections is to maneuver behind their backs, to link up with forces in the sections who will work with them against the elected leaderships. This accelerates centrifugal forces. And — as happened in the SWP — it almost always winds up in a split.

The SWP leadership was not told that some members of the United Secretariat wanted to meet with members of the SWP National Committee minority. We were not informed that some United Secretariat members saw a convergence of views with Bloom and Lovell and wanted to discuss this with them. Had we been told that in advance, the meeting in and of itself would have presented no problem at all.

For two-and-a-half years we have been asking a simple question: Who paid for the Montreal trip by Walter and Duret? What body financed it? We have not gotten an answer to this, and we will never get one.

If it was financed out of Walter and Duret's own pockets, then this was an impermissible political use of personal resources that should be placed at the disposal of the movement.

If it was financed from United Secretariat funds, then what was involved was the Bureau Faction's use of the Fourth International's funds secretly for factional purposes.

If it was financed by a tendency or a faction of the United Secretariat members who are in agreement on important political positions, then the existence of such a tendency or faction has never been reported. If there is such a grouping, if it is functioning, raising funds for international trips, engaged in consultations with members of sections, then this must be stated.

But this was not stated prior to the Montreal meeting, and it hasn't been reported to this day. The faction operating under the cover of the Bureau of the United Secretariat is a *secret faction*.

The SWP Political Committee, as soon as it received Lovell's letter saying he and Bloom were going to "meet with members of

the United Secretariat," sent a letter to Comrades Bloom and Lovell, and to the United Secretariat, stating that "the members of the United Secretariat' with whom Comrades Bloom and Lovell are consulting are part of an undeclared international faction to which they adhere." [See *Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 1 in 1982, p. 33.]

All the warning signs were flashing like the red lights on a fire engine. You couldn't miss them.

This was not the first time we had been through this. We had been through it in the late 1940s and early 1950s when Michel Pablo and his collaborators in the International center thought they could mess around in the SWP and organize against the party, and against other sections of the International, as well. We had been through it in the 1970s, when the leaders of the International Majority Tendency encouraged the split course of the Internationalist Tendency faction in the SWP in order to build the "real International" behind the backs of the Fourth International's elected bodies.

We had hoped that this had changed, that the comrades had learned from those experiences, and that this kind of functioning would not be repeated. That is why we went to such lengths to make clear what we were concerned about, to warn the comrades in the clearest possible way that they would split the International if they did not halt the course they had embarked on. We urged them to pull back.

### Operation against Canadian section

There is a still worse aspect of the Montreal trip by Walter and Duret. It was part of a secret war being waged by the Bureau Faction against the Canadian section, the Revolutionary Workers League. This operation has included political collaboration and encouragement to several groupings that have split from the Canadian section, the Revolutionary Workers League, and are today active opponents of it.

The stance by the Bureau Faction encouraged these splitters to continue their course of opposition to the RWL, and has diminished any possibility that some of them might be won back to the Canadian section of the Fourth International.

At the same time that the Bureau Faction has been working behind the back of the RWL leadership to pull together a viable grouping in Canada that could give the Bureau Faction a base of operation there, it has been organizing an international boycott of the Canadian section. Representatives of the United Secretariat or the United Secretariat Bureau are no longer sent to central committee meetings or conventions of the RWL. For all practical purposes, the Bureau Faction acts as though the Canadian section doesn't exist, trying in this way to justify its operations in Canada.

During their week-long visit to Montreal in January 1982, Walter and Duret were only a few minutes from the headquarters of the RWL. They never even called the comrades on the phone. They made no contact at all with the RWL — part of the deep-freeze treatment.

But it just so happened that the Montreal trip coincided with the weekend of a national conference of one of the splitters' organizations in Montreal. Quite a coincidence!

This was just another step in the systematic campaign by the Bureau Faction to weaken the Canadian section. The Bureau Faction has repeatedly defied the decision of the United Secretariat in 1980 that there are to be no relations or dealings of any kind with the splitters in Canada without the prior agreement of the Canadian section.

Quite a North American operation: organizing a split from the SWP in the United States, and trying to pull together groups of splitters in Canada to challenge the RWL.

When the Political Committee informed the comrades in the



Bureau Faction of our views on the Montreal trip, it did so in such a way as to not make it harder for them to back off from the course they had started on. We did not want to box them into defending their actions, but to encourage them to think through what they had set in motion. But the message was clear: If you continue down this road, you will split the International, just as happened in 1953, and for fundamentally the same reason.

Unfortunately, these warnings were ignored. As a result the split in the SWP was inevitable, and the deepening crisis in the International was unavoidable. This is the situation we face today, and this is what we must mobilize a fight in the international leadership to combat.

### International democratic centralism

A revolutionary International can only be built and strengthened on the solid foundation of revolutionary parties that develop their own leaderships that are responsible to the membership and that earn their leadership responsibilities by demonstrating their capacities and willingness to shoulder leadership tasks. This means building parties that are self-confident, with leaderships who make their own decisions. That is the only kind of party that makes sense to communist fighters who want to make a revolution in their own country. Revolutionary-minded workers won't place their confidence in leaderships who change their political views on order from "higher bodies," any more than they will have confidence in leaderships that function by issuing bureaucratic edicts rather than leading politically.

But there is an alternative to this view in the International. According to this conception, the international leadership bodies of the Fourth International have the right, and the duty, to impose their views on important political and organizational matters on individual sections. According to this view, the United Secretariat, or the IEC, has the power to alter the decisions of the elected leaderships of the sections, and, if necessary, even go so far as to change the composition of the leadership itself. It is this organizational conception that underlies the course being followed by the Bureau Faction today.

This supercentralist conception was reflected in the way the statutes of the International that were in effect after the end of the Second World War were used. These statutes gave the International center sweeping powers to intervene into the life of the sections.

These statutes, for example, contained a provision giving the IEC the right to "intervene in the internal functioning of national sections, when it is convinced that abuses have been committed . . . It has the right to require that sections take disciplinary measures or expel individuals or groups who have violated proletarian discipline or to reinstate individuals or groups which it considers to have been unjustly disciplined or expelled; and in cases where such measures are disputed by a national section, it has the right to apply them itself." (These statutes are published in *International Information Bulletin*, No. 1 in 1969. Also in this bulletin are the statutes that are currently in effect, which were agreed upon as a condition for reunification of the International in 1963.)

These statutes were used to substitute the judgment and political line of the comrades in the International center for the judgment and line of the democratically elected leadership bodies of the sections. This approach had more in common with the way the Comintern functioned under Stalin's control than the way it had functioned in the time of Lenin.

These statutes gave the IEC the authority to send representatives to intervene directly in the sections. This meant to Pablo and his collaborators in the international leadership that if they didn't agree with the political line decided on by a section's elected leadership, they could invoke the authority of "higher bodies" and intervene to change it.

They claimed the right to intervene against the line decided on by the membership, and even to alter the composition of leadership bodies elected by the members.

And this they did. The most infamous example is the intervention in 1952 into the French section by the International Secretariat (the body that we today call the United Secretariat.) The Pablo leadership didn't agree with the line of the French section; they were backing a minority in the section. So they invoked the authority of the statutes and sent a representative of the International Secretariat into the section.

This representative was given the deciding vote as the "impartial" chairman of a parity committee. By siding with the minority representatives on this parity committee, he was able to give them control of the section and the majority in a newly elected Political Bureau. In other words, the International Secretariat had overturned the elected majority in the central committee of the French section.

As Jim Cannon recalled in his speech on "Internationalism and the SWP," which is reprinted in the Pathfinder collection, *Speeches to the Party*, the SWP leadership hit the roof over this bureaucratic move. This was the kind of functioning that was completely incompatible with the kind of proletarian International the SWP was trying to build. Cannon said:

How are you going to build an International if you think you can upset an elected leadership of a national party?

It hit me especially, because I am one of those people who, when he gets burned, like the child, always fears the fire. I had been burned by that very thing in 1925, when the Comintern *by cable* upset a convention majority of the Communist Party of the United States and ordered us to set up a parity National Committee. Or rather, they didn't order it, but that's what the representative of the Comintern here, a man named Gusev, said the cable meant — that we must set up a parity National Committee (even though we were a two-to-one majority) and that he would be impartial chairman. We innocently accepted this decision of the all-high Comintern. The two-to-one majority went into a parity commission with Gusev as chairman in the name of the Comintern. His first action was to constitute a new Political Committee by throwing his vote to the others, thus giving the Lovestoneites a majority in the Political Committee.

Cannon added:

We came out of the Comintern, as I said, and we remembered the crimes of the Comintern. "Socialism in one country" was not the only crime. One of the greatest crimes was the destruction of the self-acting life of the individual Communist parties. The Stalinist Comintern overthrew the indigenous leaders everywhere. Where they couldn't overthrow them directly, they would conspire against them, set factions on foot with secret backing to undermine and finally get rid of all the independent characters in the leadership.

It is impossible to build a revolutionary party of the proletariat if you have to bend your knees to a "higher body," some committee that is going to tell you who your leaders are and what the line of the party is going to be.

This difference over the "supercentralist" approach of the Pablo leadership was decisive in the split in the International in 1953. None of the political differences that existed then made a split necessary. Given a democratically functioning International, they could have been left to be resolved by the test of events. But the insistence of Pablo and his collaborators on putting into practice their concept of international supercentralism made this impossible, and forced the split.

### Conditions for reunification

When the development of the world class struggle, most importantly the victory of the Cuban revolution, made possible a reunification of the divided International, the disagreement over the organizational question had to be resolved. The explicit rejection of the claimed right of "higher bodies" to intervene into



the sections was essential to the reunification. Without agreement on rejecting this mode of functioning by the International leadership, the SWP could not have agreed to reunification.

But with this agreement, the reunification became possible. Both sides could agree that, even though major political differences still existed, they could be left for future discussion.

This required new statutes, which were agreed upon although not formally put to a vote at the time of reunification in 1963. The provisions that had been used to justify the "supercentralist" portions, like the one that I read earlier, were replaced. Here is how the current statutes deal with relations between the international leadership and the sections:

The International Executive Committee cooperates with the national sections in helping to raise the theoretical, political and organizational level of their internal life. However, intervention of this kind, carried on by such activities as tours and visits by members of the International leadership, is qualified by the resources of the Fourth International in personnel and finances. This qualification operates with equal force in instances where differences have developed between a national section and the International Executive Committee. Nevertheless, the International has the right to send a representative to present its views. Such representatives are responsible to the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee. The national leadership should do its utmost to cooperate closely, giving representatives of the International Executive Committee voice (but only consultative vote) in all leading bodies, enabling them to discuss freely with the membership, and permitting them to present motions if they wish.

The current statutes explicitly reject the "supercentralist" approach that claims for the international leadership the right to overturn decisions of a section on questions of discipline, and on membership:

Where supposed violations of democratic centralism in national sections are brought to the attention of the International Executive Committee, whether these violations involve a leadership accused of depriving a minority of its democratic rights or a minority accused of irresponsibly violating the discipline of the section, the International Executive Committee may bring its moral influence to bear to help rectify the situation, if evidence exists that errors or abuses have actually occurred. Rather than exercise disciplinary measures of its own in instances of differences with a national leadership, the International Executive Committee should seek to rely on persuasion and recommendations. In no case has it the power to alter the majority rule of a regularly elected leadership of a national section.

This same point was once again explicitly reaffirmed in the resolution on "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International" that was adopted by the 1979 World Congress.

Two paragraphs in this resolution sum up the position that was accepted at the time of reunification on the meaning of "international democratic centralism" for the Fourth International today:

... the statutes of the Fourth International include two general provisions on the mode of operation of democratic centralism:

(1) Decisions taken by a majority of delegates at a democratically organized world congress, the highest body of the Fourth International, are binding on all sections. Decisions taken by the International Executive Committee, which is elected by the delegates to serve as the highest body until the next congress, can be appealed but remain in effect until the appeal is heard and decided on;

(2) The members of national sections have the right to elect their own leaderships. Democratically organized congresses and plenary meetings of elected national committees constitute the highest bodies of national sections. They have the right to determine political line on all questions nationally, and to interpret and determine for all members of the section the national application of decisions made by the Fourth International.

[See the special supplement to *Intercontinental Press*, p. 33.]

Note especially the last sentence: it does not limit what the sections have the right to determine to "national questions." It states they have the responsibility to decide their line on *all* questions *nationally*. There is no artificial distinction imposed be-

tween "domestic" political questions and "world" political questions. What no section has the right to do is to present its position, if it differs from the position adopted by the International's elected bodies, as the position of the Fourth International.

What was accepted at the time of reunification, and reaffirmed in the political resolution adopted at the 1979 World Congress, is now being violated. We are witnessing once again attempts to impose the will of "higher bodies" on sections and sympathizing groups. We are seeing the resort to "supercentralist" organizational threats and actions aimed at whipping recalcitrant sections into line. Those who won't get lined up are subjected to splitting actions, international boycotts, and threats of derecognition by the Bureau Faction.

### Ultimatum from "Bureau of the Fourth International"

This is the framework for the set of decisions that are before this convention. What is at stake is spelled out clearly in the ultimatum this convention received from three comrades — Allio, Claudio, and Walter — who speak in the lofty name of the "Bureau of the Fourth International" — a body that doesn't exist. (See appendix A.) What does exist is the Bureau of the United Secretariat, an administrative body that has no statutory authority at all, and is supposed to be a subcommittee of the United Secretariat with responsibility for preparing United Secretariat agendas and implementing its decisions.

By this slip, the three comrades have accurately expressed their mode of functioning, which has in essence dissolved the IEC and reduced United Secretariat meetings to formalities, where decisions made and carried out by the Bureau Faction are rubber-stamped.

These three comrades of the "Bureau of the Fourth International" condescend to mail the delegates to this convention a three-paragraph letter warning you that this is your last chance to change the "unprincipled" political and organizational policies of the SWP, and to choose a new leadership that will meet with the approval of the International center.

If the convention doesn't act as they command, these comrades leave no doubt that they intend to drive forward with their course of splitting the International.

We had anticipated that the United Secretariat would send representatives to this convention, to present the point of view of the majority of the United Secretariat on the leadership crisis in the International, and to explain why they think the convention should take a different course from the one that has been followed by the National Committee.

When the National Committee last fall was forced by the actions of the United Secretariat majority to decide not to invite the representatives of the United Secretariat Bureau to attend the National Committee meeting, the representative of the United Secretariat Bureau was given all the time he asked for to argue against that course.

We have informed the United Secretariat that the question of invitations to attend this convention would be proposed as the first point on the agenda, and that it would be up to the delegates to decide convention policy. Unfortunately, neither the United Secretariat nor the United Secretariat Bureau has sent anyone here to present their point of view, and to discuss it with the delegates here. Instead of a discussion with responsible comrades on the critical questions before the International, the delegates get in the mail a three-paragraph ultimatum from the "Bureau of the Fourth International."

### Challenge to integrity of leadership meetings

The Bureau Faction has implemented a policy of violating the integrity of leadership committee meetings, making it impossible for these committees to function.



The stakes here are explained in the letter of April 11, 1984, to the United Secretariat from Malik Miah for the SWP Political Committee. (See appendix B.)

As this letter explains:

The policy of respecting the integrity of SWP NC meetings applies as a condition of attendance to *anyone* invited to them. This has been the case since our founding. Anyone who violates this policy by reporting discussions or decisions against the decision of the NC will not be invited to observe future leadership meetings of the SWP or have access to the record of its decisions and proceedings or those of its subcommittees. . . .

It is the SWP's longstanding view — and we have always assumed it to be the United Secretariat's view as well — that the democracy and integrity of leadership bodies are undermined if members of those bodies do not have control over what aspects of their meetings are to be reported to others. Without assurance that the integrity of the meeting will be respected by everyone present, comrades are not free to raise their views frankly and emerge from the discussion with strengthened views as a result of the collective effort. If they have to guard their comments under the knowledge that their remarks or some version of them may be reported to they know not whom, then the collective functioning and elementary democracy of the body itself breaks down. Revolutionary centralism is undermined.

Before turning to the story of how the actions of the Bureau Faction have forced this dispute to the point of a crisis in the International, I want to dispose of two false issues that have been raised by supporters of the Bureau Faction. They both relate to what we mean by "integrity," as we are using it here.

First, some comrades have tried to twist the issue by saying we are accusing individual representatives of the Bureau of the United Secretariat of lacking personal integrity, that is, of being police agents or posing some other threat to the security of the movement. This is false.

This is not a question of security. If it were, the problem would be much easier to resolve than the one we are facing. We wouldn't need a big discussion. If anyone in our movement ever has any reason to believe that there is an agent of the police or some other hostile force in our ranks, all they have to do is to file charges and present their evidence to the appropriate bodies, and the issue will be resolved. No one in the SWP has made any such accusations against any of the representatives from the United Secretariat Bureau, and we have no reason to do so. What we are raising concerns not the action of individuals — however irresponsible those actions may be — but a *policy* of the United Secretariat.

The second false issue that has been raised is the question of the Bureau's collaboration with Socialist Action and Fourth Internationalist Tendency, two organizations set up by those who have split from the SWP. Some comrades have tried to reduce the issue we are raising to a concern that information from SWP leadership meetings will be communicated to opponent organizations in the United States with whom the Bureau Faction is collaborating.

But that misses the point. This problem arose well before the split in the SWP, before Socialist Action or Fourth Internationalist Tendency had even been organized. And it has nothing directly to do with them. If that were what was involved, that too would be a relatively simple matter. The SWP would simply insist on assurances from the United Secretariat that internal SWP meetings not be reported to our opponents in the United States.

### **Tijuana conference**

No, the problem of the challenge to the norms of functioning of the Fourth International goes deeper than these false issues. We can see this by reviewing the circumstances under which the Bureau Faction has forced this issue to center stage.

This problem came up for the first time following the meeting of the SWP National Committee in December 1982. At that meeting, there was a report and discussion on developments in the fight against U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, and the openings these presented for the party to step up activity on this front.

One element of the report was an evaluation of a conference held a month earlier in Tijuana, Mexico, at the initiative of the World Front in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. This "border conference" drew participants from both the United States and Mexico.

The Tijuana conference was one of a number of initiatives the SWP responded favorably to, seeking to advance it along an axis of deepening the involvement of the labor movement and the organizations of the oppressed nationalities in the fight against the U.S. war. The Tijuana conference was a step in that direction. It had the support of the FMLN-FDR, the solidarity movement in Mexico, and other forces. The SWP threw resources and energy into making the conference a success.

As comrades recall, following the conference the National Committee made some projections along the lines of carrying forward the approach reflected at Tijuana. Some of the projections — such as the united front effort to build a tour in the United States for a leader of the World Front — turned out to be unrealistic. Others, however, opened the door to some valuable initiatives. On balance, the Tijuana conference and the follow-up the party did was a step toward deepening our work in this fight, and strengthening our contacts with and knowledge about the Salvadoran struggle and the revolutionary proletarian forces in the FMLN who are striving to lead it forward.

A small part of the report at the National Committee meeting consisted of a review of the course followed by the Political Committee in guiding the intervention of the party fraction at the Tijuana conference. This was necessary because the Political Committee had made a decision that affected our collaboration with the comrades of the Mexican section of the Fourth International, the Revolutionary Workers Party (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores — PRT).

The Political Committee had decided not to establish a common fraction between the SWP members and the PRT members at this conference because the PRT's comrades in Tijuana were intervening in the conference preparations along a political axis different from the one we were following. What was the difference? The heart of it was the view expressed by the PRT comrades leading their fraction that the FMLN and FDR were too conciliatory to the imperialists and the Salvadoran regime on the question of negotiations and "dialogue." These comrades argued that the draft resolutions proposed for adoption by the Tijuana conference should be modified to correct this alleged weakness.

As is obvious now, this difference was an early foreshadowing of the major political dispute that has since developed within the Fourth International over the line toward the Carpioite splitters from the FMLN. The Carpioites have made their ultraleft and sectarian attack on the FMLN line the cutting edge of their international campaign of opposition to the FMLN.

But this difference did not appear so clearly then, nor could it have been foreseen how far it would develop. All the Political Committee knew was that it was a sufficiently important political difference to prevent effective functioning in a common political fraction at Tijuana.

### **Frej's letter to Mexico**

This discussion of a political difference with some of the comrades in Mexico was then taken by Comrade Frej, who attended the National Committee meeting as a representative of the United Secretariat Bureau, as the excuse for a letter to the Mexican com-



rades, reporting his version of what was said at the meeting. (See appendix C.)

All you have to do is read Frej's letter to see that it was intended to make a political discussion between the SWP leadership and the PRT leadership on this question difficult, if not impossible. (Many comrades here were at the National Committee meeting, and can see how many falsifications there are in the letter. I won't interrupt this report to rebut each of them.)

What Frej's letter did not report, of course, were the two things the National Committee decided to do to pursue the discussion on this point with the leadership in Mexico.

The SWP had, as usual, invited the PRT Political Bureau to send a representative to participate in the National Committee meeting. Unfortunately, the comrades were unable to send a member of their leadership. Instead, the PRT Political Bureau asked if a member of their party who was going to be in New York for personal reasons during the National Committee meeting could attend. The National Committee of course agreed, and this comrade attended the entire National Committee meeting, participated in the discussion, and gave a report to the PRT leadership immediately upon returning to Mexico.

Next, the Political Committee sent a delegation of Barry Shepard and Matilde Zimmermann to Mexico City two weeks after the National Committee meeting. These comrades met with the PRT leadership, and they explained what the National Committee had discussed and the political differences with the line the PRT faction had followed in Tijuana.

This was certainly not the first time that political differences had arisen between the SWP and the comrades in the PRT. How could it be otherwise? The SWP has always found that leadership discussions, where we can talk through the differences and clarify what is involved, have been the best way to handle such matters. Moreover, the PRT leaders had always said they found these discussions helpful, even when they didn't agree with all of the SWP's positions. Frej knew that a leadership delegation of the SWP would meet with the PRT comrades, because this had been discussed at the National Committee meeting. But he omitted this fact from his letter.

Moreover, Frej's letter did not report that the National Committee voted to keep the discussion of the disagreement with the PRT faction within the National Committee.

From the standpoint of the norms of functioning within the International, two things are important about Frej's factional letter.

First, it was a deliberate move by the Bureau Faction to negate a decision made by the SWP National Committee concerning the terms of its own meeting: what would be kept within the meeting and what would be reported out from the meeting.

Second, this letter was sent without consulting the United Secretariat. Members of the United Secretariat who might have disagreed with this course because it would disrupt relations between the SWP and the PRT weren't even given a chance to express their opinion.

Unfortunately, it turned out that Comrade Frej's letter was only the first step in this factional operation. Frej's account of what was said at the SWP National Committee meeting — where the participants in the meeting believed they were free to speak not "for the record" — was integrated into a lengthy written document that was printed up by the Bureau Faction and mailed all over the world. This document was prepared by Alvaro Lain, a member of the PRT. (See appendix D.)

The Alvaro Lain report combines purported quotations from the SWP National Committee meeting with what are presented as quotations from private meetings and discussions involving leaders of the FMLN in Mexico, officials of the World Front, the United States Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), and others. Virtually every paragraph contains

an accusation of criticism supposedly made by someone against someone else concerning differences within the FMLN, disputes within the Fourth International, charges levelled against the SWP. Parts of Frej's version of the SWP National Committee meeting are thrown right in the worst possible context, mixed in with completely irresponsible and provocative accusations — every one false — of personal corruption and even illegal activities in the United States by several individuals and organizations.

For instance, Lain accuses CISPES of sending money to a wing of the FMLN. This is a false charge, which, if true, could be evidence of illegal activity. Lain echoes the red-baiting smear of the United States Peace Council as a "front" of the Communist Party. He accuses Heidi Tarver, a central CISPES leader, of misappropriating funds from CISPES for personal use.

Accusations are reported second, third, or even fourth hand. And the distortions are crude. For example, Heidi Tarver, who it is well-known has sharp political differences with the SWP, is reported to be part of "a faction of the SWP which has tendencies at the present time."

What makes this a problem for the Fourth International is the fact that the Bureau Faction made a decision to translate, print up, and circulate this scandal sheet internationally! This is almost unbelievable — almost irrational for a revolutionary organization that cares about its integrity and its relations with other revolutionists and political forces.

We need not speculate on the motives of Alvaro Lain in preparing this report, based on supposed quotations from so many private discussions he was invited to attend. But we do need to come to grips with the decision of the Bureau Faction, without consulting the United Secretariat, to circulate a document of this type around the world.

When the SWP received this circular mailing of the Alvaro Lain "report," the party had to make some decisions. Some were obvious. We didn't prepare a written document rebutting all the lies, and request that the United Secretariat send *it* to everyone around the world who got the first document. How could we have done that? Only by saying, no Comrade Lain's account is wrong, what really happened at the private discussion with the leaders of the World Front was...? That would just make it worse.

A second decision was equally obvious. You learn real fast not to say anything to people like Alvaro Lain that you don't want to read in print. There are certain people with whom you can't discuss things in confidence. That's no problem. You just learn the ground rules. You talk to them as though you were talking into a tape recorder — if you don't want it on tape, you don't say it.

But now we come to the real problem. What happens the next time the National Committee gets together to talk out a problem, to chew over a line — and Comrade Frej or another representative of the Bureau of the United Secretariat is sitting there, taking notes?

The members of the committee are not going to say freely what they think if they are worried about their remarks being printed up and sent out all over the world. They are not going to feel comfortable raising tentative ideas, thinking out loud, raising criticisms — not if they have to speak always "for the record."

The result will be that the committee can't function, because the right of the committee to control its own meetings is violated.

We all know how this works in the branches. We know what happens when someone starts spreading around versions of the discussions in the branch executive committee. "Sally said she thinks the UAW fraction is too weak and needs strengthening; Joe thought the party speaker at the forum was too soft on Jesse Jackson and we need more education; Ralph was on the fence, as usual."



When that starts happening, pretty soon the executive committee meetings change. You may go through the motions of a meeting, but it is no longer a leadership meeting of the committee elected by the branch to guide its work.

Then other negative things start to happen. Meetings take place outside the elected bodies, to "work things out" outside the executive committee. A basic democratic right of the membership is thus abrogated: the right to elect the leadership bodies.

The leadership is weakened, as the leadership committee functioning breaks down. This is what happens when one of the comrades violates the integrity of the meetings of the leadership committee by unilaterally deciding to take the discussions outside of the room.

From this standpoint, it makes no difference if the reports on what was discussed are accurate or misleading. As long as members of the committee feel they can only speak for the public record, the functioning of the committee is disrupted.

But when the reports on what transpired are factionally twisted, this creates still another problem. Because then you can get drawn into trying to correct them. Sally has to say, "No, I didn't say the UAW fraction is led by opportunists." Joe has to say, "No, I didn't say the comrade who gave the forum has capitulated to the Jackson wing of the Democratic Party."

Or: "No, I didn't say that the PRT is hopelessly sectarian. What I said was . . ."

Then the integrity of the leadership meetings breaks down still further — now with your own complicity.

### Different traditions in International

This is what the SWP members have tried to explain in the meetings of the United Secretariat. They have explained that if the SWP doesn't protect the right of its elected leadership bodies to function, we won't have a party worth a damn. There is not much room for compromise on this fundamental point. This is a principle that we can't fool around with. As Fidel says, if you negotiate away your principles, you are left with nothing. If we capitulate on this, we will be left without a party.

In discussing this in the Fourth International, we have to keep in mind that our longstanding norms in this regard are not shared by every section. Many of them have different traditions. In many sections — while lipservice is often paid to keeping the discussions within the leadership committees unless it is decided by those committees to report them out — the practice is different than in the SWP. It is common for members of different tendencies or factions who are members of leadership bodies to routinely report the discussions to whomever they choose in those groupings. The leadership committees in those sections tend to function more as meeting grounds where representatives of the different groupings in the party meet to negotiate their positions than as genuine collective leadership structures.

We think that way of functioning is wrong — but our goal is not to impose our views on these sections. Nor do we demand that the United Secretariat Bureau agree with the SWP on how leadership bodies should function. What we do insist, however, is that the right of the SWP to decide this question for itself not be overruled by the actions of the Bureau Faction.

Following Frej's letter to the PRT, and the publication of the Alvaro Lain document, SWP comrades raised all of these points with other members of the United Secretariat. The SWP members sought assurances that the representatives of the United Secretariat Bureau who were going to attend the next meeting of the SWP National Committee would respect the right of the committee to decide what discussions would stay within the committee, and not be taken beyond the membership of the committee and the United Secretariat.

The purpose in raising this was, if at all possible, to prevent

this from becoming part of a factional war. The SWP comrades didn't demand any repudiation of past action; simply assurances for the future. Those assurances were given, and it appeared that this had been resolved. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

### Frej's phone call to Australia

Despite the assurances we had a virtual rerun of the problem, this time concerning the Australian Socialist Workers Party.

At the beginning of June 1983 the SWP received a resolution entitled "The Cuban Revolution and its Extension," from Jim Percy and Doug Lorimer, two leaders of the Socialist Workers Party of Australia, and from Peter Camejo. This came with a letter from Comrade Percy, soliciting support for the international tendency defined by this document, which he said was being submitted for a vote at the next World Congress.

In response to this request, this proposal was placed before the August meeting of the SWP National Committee.

In advance of the meeting, the Political Committee notified the Australian SWP leadership that this would be on the agenda, and urged them to attend, as they had regularly done in the past. They wrote back saying this time they wouldn't be present, citing "severe financial constraints and the pressure of political work" in Australia. However, the comrades said that a member of their party who was not on the leadership committee would be able to be present.

At the National Committee meeting, I presented a report from the Secretariat of the Political Committee on why the line of the Percy-Camejo-Lorimer resolution was in contradiction to the line of the SWP, and why the political course being followed by Camejo and the Australian SWP leadership indicated it would be wrong to be part of this international current, and why none of the IEC members in the United States would join up.

There was no vote taken on the line of the report. The National Committee decided to keep the discussion of disagreements with the Australian party's leadership strictly within the National Committee, and not to take it to the membership. (This report has since become a topic of controversy in the International. For this reason, it is published here as an appendix, even though it was only a preliminary report, and has since been outdated by the further political degeneration of the Camejo-Percy current, most notably its explicit rejection of any class criteria in electoral policy. [See Appendix L.]

Let me repeat: *in response to a request* from the Camejo-Percy tendency, the Political Committee placed on its agenda its resolution on Cuba. The Political Committee informed the Australian leadership that it was doing so, and accepted their request that a member of their party be invited to the National Committee meeting in place of a delegation from their leadership.

Then what happened? Frej strikes again. He leaps up from his seat while the National Committee meeting was going on, races to the telephone, and calls the Australian SWP leaders with his version of what was reported and discussed at the meeting. The National Committee, of course, didn't know that Frej had done this. He didn't say anything at all to the National Committee about the political views expressed in the report or raised by the comrades during the discussion, and he certainly didn't say that he was relaying reports on the meeting over the telephone to Australia.

We first learned of the Frej phone report when Comrade Frej announced it during the meeting of the United Secretariat in October 1983. Later, after the SWP Political Committee wrote a letter to the United Secretariat explaining in detail what was involved (see appendix B, Miah letter of April 11, 1984) Frej submitted a written attempt at justification for his actions on behalf of the Bureau Faction. (See appendix E.)

In this statement, Comrade Frej asserts the following:



My *right* as a USec representative to inform the leadership of a section that it was the victim of a violent attack for being degenerated, chauvinist and adapting to its bourgeoisie and labor bureaucracy (attacks with wide repercussions for the International as a whole) — this right *can* be discussed. However, the fact is that no report by myself was given to the Australian leadership about Comrade Larry Seigle's August 1983 report. . . .

The phone contact I *had* with comrade Doug Lorimer from the Australian SWP's leadership dealt with *one* aspect of the matter; that is: the fact that relations between the Australian and American SWP had to be taken up at the October 1983 USec meeting and material related to this matter discussed there.

Contrary to Frej, there was no "violent attack" on anyone at the National Committee meeting. There was a political discussion, and sharp opinions were expressed on what comrades believed to be a political trajectory that was leading both Camejo and the leadership of the Australian SWP away from the Fourth International. But since when has the expression of sharp political differences of opinion been outlawed as a "violent attack"?

The Bureau Faction now asserts it to be the "right" of representatives of the United Secretariat Bureau to overrule decisions of the meetings they are invited to attend if the comrades present express disagreements — perish the thought! — with comrades in other sections, or in the International leadership.

Comrade Frej's declaration expressing the position of the Bureau Faction makes clear the depth of the problem we have been running against. It is not a question of factional excesses or irresponsibility by an individual comrade. We are confronting the Bureau Faction's "supercentralist" organizational practices. It claims to have the "right" to override decisions of the elected leadership bodies of the parties of the Fourth International. We are headed back to 1953 on the level of the dispute over the functioning of the International.

Of course, the Bureau Faction doesn't make the claim that it can directly intervene to overturn the elected majority in the SWP or any other party. It is barred from that by the explicit provisions of the statutes, the terms on which reunification was achieved, and the consciousness of the members of the International. But the Bureau Faction is claiming that the International center has the power to overrule the decisions of the elected leadership bodies of the sections on how they will organize their meetings — making it impossible for them to function unless they function along the lines desired by the Bureau Faction.

### Organization of split in SWP

The Bureau Faction's "supercentralist" conceptions, and its contempt for the integrity of the elected leadership bodies of the national sections, are also the two key organizational issues in the split in the SWP that was organized with the Bureau Faction's participation.

As signalled by the Montreal meeting in the beginning of 1982, there was a convergence between the increasingly factional course of the minorities in the SWP National Committee and the trajectory of the Bureau Faction.

Beginning with that Montreal meeting, the Bureau Faction encouraged and organized the process that culminated in the split from the SWP.

If you knew the individuals involved — Bloom and Lovell, and Henderson and Weinstein — and you saw the aggressively factional manner in which they began functioning within the party, you had to ask yourself: Where does this "boldness" come from? What makes them so audacious in their open challenges to our organizational norms? It was out of character.

It was obvious that they were being encouraged and urged on by the Bureau Faction. They were being offered protection from the "higher bodies" of the International should the party take any

action to protect its norms in response to their outrageous violations of SWP organizational principles and unambiguous decisions of the National Committee.

The minority leaders of 1983 followed exactly the course of the Cochranites, who were expelled from the party in 1953. The Cochranites, egged on by the Pablo leadership in the International Secretariat, believed that "higher bodies" could overturn any action taken against them by the SWP. Like the Cochranites, the Bloom-Lovell and Weinstein-Henderson gangs came to believe they were entitled to privileges and preferential treatment because they were "representatives" of the "international leadership" in the National Committee. They started demanding special rights and privileges, and challenging the right of the leadership bodies of the SWP to make decisions.

These issues came to a head, just weeks after the Montreal meeting, at the February-March 1982 meeting of the National Committee.

The two National Committee minority factions in the weeks following the Montreal meeting had become so flagrant in their violations of party norms that the Control Commission, after investigating the pattern of behavior, concluded that, "By their actions, Comrades Lovell, Bloom, Weinstein, and Henderson have forfeited their right to membership in the Socialist Workers Party." [This Control Commission report, previously published in *SWP Internal Information Bulletin* No. 1 in 1982, is reprinted here as part of Appendix F.]

Nonetheless, the National Committee decided not to take any disciplinary action. From the standpoint of the SWP alone, this decision doesn't make sense. The organizational issues were posed sharply and clearly. The minority members of the National Committee knew what they were doing, and planned on being expelled for it. They had no illusions whatsoever that they could do what they were doing and remain members of the SWP.

No objective comrade would have had any trouble voting for the expulsion of National Committee members who not only did not challenge the accuracy of the factual findings of the Control Commission, but boasted that they had a "right" to act as they did. And no one had any doubt that they would continue to act in this way — unless they were restrained by their international cothinkers.

Nor was there anything further to be achieved in terms of political clarification by continuing the debate with the National Committee minorities. The political issues had already been clarified; in fact the debate had been exhausted. This is confirmed by the fact that from the beginning of 1982 to the culmination of the split at the beginning of 1984, not a single new political or theoretical issue was raised by either of the two minority wings.

But from the standpoint of the Fourth International, the National Committee faced a broader decision. The involvement of the Bureau Faction in the disloyal functioning of the minority in the SWP was evident. The National Committee wanted to avoid, if at all possible, taking a course that would lock the majority of the United Secretariat into defending this course. It was still possible that extreme pro-split forces might be brought under control by others who did not want to see the International head toward a division that would have serious consequences all over the world.

For that reason, the National Committee decided to take no disciplinary action, but instead to publish all the facts in an internal bulletin, along with the report adopted by the National Committee (see Appendix F).

Placing these facts before the entire Fourth International would maximize the chances of slowing down, and hopefully to reverse, the direction the Bureau Faction was heading.

The report approved by the National Committee explained that



the comrades in the Bureau Faction "who have reached the stage of establishing relationships, based on political agreement, with comrades in the SWP minority, now have to share a big responsibility for how the minority in the SWP conducts itself."

The national Committee appealed directly to the Bureau Faction:

Use your political influence to encourage the comrades in the minority in the SWP National Committee to act in such a way that will not cut across our having a thorough political discussion, in our next pre-convention discussion and convention, and in preparation for the next World Congress.

### Challenge to Political Committee functioning

But the course had been irreversibly set. Things were forced to a head again in the spring of 1983, leading up to the May meeting of the National Committee, and concluding with the actions of the minority faction that led to their suspension by the National Committee in August 1983.

Prior to the May National Committee meeting, Lovell had addressed a letter to the members of the National Committee, regarding his objection to the Political Committee action upholding a branch decision to expel from the party a comrade who had refused to defend and advance the line of the party within the YSA.

Lovell had the right, of course, to disagree with this branch action, and to propose it be reversed, which he did at the National Committee meeting. He also had the right to urge that the party change its norm that members of the party are obligated at all times to advance the line of the party within the YSA, even if they don't agree with the position the party has adopted. Lovell did this, too.

But in his letter, Lovell did something else, which he did not have the right to do. He presented, by way of argument, lengthy accounts of what he said were the views that had been expressed by various members of the Political Committee. These consisted of long paraphrases and purported quotations of what was said at the meeting. We have already seen the essential problem posed by this mode of functioning. No political leadership body can function if transcripts or partial transcripts are going to be circulated without the consent of the participants in the meeting.

This has nothing to do with informing the members of the National Committee of motions or countermotions moved in the meetings of the Political Committee. Every one of these — including a number by Lovell — were automatically recorded in the minutes of the Political Committee, which are distributed to the entire National Committee.

Lovell's challenge to the norm regarding the functioning of the leadership committees of the party was not a new one.

In 1975, a member of the party in Los Angeles, Milton Alvin, raised this challenge in an article in the SWP *Discussion Bulletin* [Vol. 33, No. 8]. He was answered in the same issue of the *Bulletin* by Tom Kerry, who defended the SWP's traditional approach to this question.

Comrade Kerry wrote:

In his explanation of why he appeals to the ranks to correct the party leadership, Comrade Alvin observes: "First, only the party membership can ultimately correct errors made by the leaders that are not corrected by the leaders themselves." That is a truism and I would go even further and say that errors made should be acknowledged, for only then can the proper lessons be drawn and the possibility of repeating such errors eliminated, or at least considerably reduced. So far, so good!

"Second," Comrade Alvin continues, "differences of opinion within the leadership should be made available to the membership as a whole, especially where they have not been resolved within the leadership." And: "Third, knowledge of different views within the leadership and how they are disposed of can be of great educational value to the membership as training for leadership status."

No! Emphatically not! The concepts embodied in Comrade Alvin's theses 2 and 3 have more in common with the "participatory democracy" of the New Left than with the democratic centralism of Lenin and Trotsky. On this question Jim Cannon was our tutor.

It was his view and it is ours that there is nothing more calculated to turn the party into a factional jungle than to "make available" to "the membership as a whole" the "differences of opinion" within the leadership . . .

In our party the circulation in the ranks of the "inside dope" on "differences of opinion" among leaders in the center goes by the name of Abernism, the quintessence of cliquism. To adopt this method as standard party procedure would be to legitimize cliques and cliquism and, in my opinion, would be an abject expression of leadership bankruptcy.

When that reply by Comrade Kerry was published, Lovell expressed no disagreement. Nor did anyone else on the National Committee. It was an accurate summary of this aspect of our organizational norms.

Now, however, Lovell had changed his mind and decided that, at least as far as the minority in the National Committee was concerned, this norm was invalid.

In the Political Committee meetings that discussed this matter, and at the National Committee meeting in May 1983, Lovell let it be known that he regularly reported on what transpired at Political Committee meetings to Bloom. That was the purpose of the extensive notes — virtual transcripts — that Lovell took during the meetings.

Lovell claimed special privileges for himself and for his partner in factionalism, Bloom, who now had a privileged position in relation to the other members of the National Committee. Other comrades had to rely on the minutes and other reports sent out by the Political Committee. Bloom, however, got the "inside dope" on what was going on, every week.

Where did Lovell and Bloom get the audacity to claim for themselves this special privilege? Why, they weren't just Lovell and Bloom, they were the representatives in the SWP of the international leadership! We were dealing with comrades who were defending the line of the "higher bodies" of the Fourth International. Underneath their mild-mannered exterior, they were really wearing Superman suits that made them immune to the decisions of the elected leadership bodies of the SWP — or so they thought, anyway.

### Withdrawal from leadership committees

At the May National Committee meeting, the outgoing Political Committee proposed that unless Lovell agreed to abide by the norms of functioning decided on by the committee, he should not be reelected to the Political Committee. Lovell was free to disagree with those norms, but he couldn't continue to violate them.

All Lovell had to do was to state that he would abide by the norms, that he would respect the integrity of the meetings of the Political Committee. But this he demonstrably refused to do. As a result he took himself off the Political Committee, as surely as if he had directly declined the nomination.

This was a serious problem for the party: a member of the National Committee minority refused to serve on the Political Committee. This was made more serious because it was the final step in a consistent course. Of the three members of the minorities at the 1981 convention elected as regular members of the National Committee, each one had now refused to serve on the Political Committee. Earlier, Weinstein and Henderson had each refused to accept the proposal from the Political Committee that they move to New York, serve on the Political Committee, and take a full-time assignment at party subsistence. Each of them refused. There were no compelling personal reasons for these refusals — neither of them even claimed that there were. They just declined to take the assignment. They declined to subordinate their per-



sonal lives to the party, which is a requirement the party constitution sets for serving on the National Committee.

The decisions by Lovell, Henderson, and Weinstein not to serve on the Political Committee came on top of the decision by George Breitman at the 1981 convention to decline nomination to the National Committee. Breitman petulantly based his refusal on his complaint that he hadn't been given enough assignments. This was a complaint that he had never raised with the Political Committee or the National Committee. More important, even if true, it would be a sorry reason for declining to serve on a leadership body.

### Responsibilities of faction

At the May 1983 meeting, the National Committee also voted to recognize the existence of a faction in the National Committee, made up of the four members — Bloom, Henderson, Lovell and Weinstein — who had previously constituted two separate formations.

This faction was defined by two documents submitted at that meeting: "28 Theses on the American Socialist Revolution and the Building of the Revolutionary Party," and "A Platform to Overcome the Crisis in the Party."

Of these, the "Platform" was the decisive one. (See Appendix G.) It was a call to arms by the party ranks to "intervene in order to reverse the current disastrous policies" of the party. The party leadership had "broken from our theoretical and programmatic foundations."

Moreover, the "Platform" accused the party's leadership of having overturned all the democratic norms of the party. The party had become monolithic. The great bulk of the membership simply accepted what it was told by the leadership. The National Committee decided policies based not on the basis of the needs of the worker comrades, but on the basis of the needs of the party apparatus.

At the National Committee meeting, Lovell elaborated on this theme, charging that the elected leadership of the party was using its authority to endanger the legal security and squander the financial resources of the party for factional ends. He made this charge in connection with his criticism of the party leadership's conduct of the legal proceedings in the Gelfand-Pfaelzer-Fisher & Moest case in federal court in Los Angeles.

The "Platform" was an appeal to the ranks to rise up and throw out the leadership. These comrades had concluded that without replacing the leadership, no alteration in political line would suffice to salvage the party. It was this objective — not the scope of political differences raised — that defined this formation as a faction.

In response to this declaration by Bloom, Henderson, Lovell, and Weinstein, the National Committee adopted a motion recognizing this faction within the committee. (See Appendix H.)

Lovell and Bloom, in particular, objected to this motion. They thought it was an abuse of their rights because they didn't think the National Committee had any authority to regulate their functioning in any way. Moreover, they said, the four comrades were not a faction. They were a "bloc," a "coalition," an "alliance," a "caucus" — but not a faction.

But a "bloc" or a "coalition" or a brotherhood or whatever else you want to call it organized in the party around a program of overthrowing the leadership is a faction. Changing the name doesn't change the fact.

The National Committee did not consider this to be an unprincipled faction, even though its four members had substantial political differences among themselves. For example, the faction contained two contradictory lines on Nicaragua — not a small question. Lovell and Bloom thought there was a workers' and farmers' government in Nicaragua; Weinstein and Henderson

thought the FSLN government was a capitalist government — a position, by the way, that they have not altered to this day.

But the four comrades in the faction said that they had decided to subordinate this and other disagreements to the need to organize to replace the leadership of the party. The National Committee said, "Fine. If what you say about the leadership of the party were true, or even one-tenth true, then it would be a more immediate and critical problem for the SWP than the party's line on Nicaragua."

The National Committee recognized that these comrades had formed a faction. That was all. There was no disciplinary action, no prohibitions, no accusations. Of course, when you organize yourself into a faction, certain responsibilities accompany that act. The motion adopted by the National Committee stated the responsibilities of each of the faction members.

First, each was responsible for the actions of the others. This was a disciplined formation, and it was collectively responsible for the deeds of each of its members.

Second, if the faction wanted to meet, it had to inform the National Committee. That's all — just inform the committee. No restrictions or prohibitions were ever put on any meetings of this faction. They didn't have to ask permission — just inform the party of the meeting. The party is responsible for guaranteeing the democratic functioning of faction meetings, just as for all other party meetings.

Third, if there were to be any alteration in the platform of the faction, the National Committee was to be informed. There would be no secret political positions held by the faction. It would be based on a platform known to the elected bodies of the party, not a secret platform.

That was all. Nothing more. But that was too much.

You can follow the actions of the four members of the faction as they are traced in the exchange of correspondence between the presiding committee at the August 1983 National Committee meeting, and the members of the minority faction. (See appendix I.)

Here is what happened:

On August 1, the faction informed the Political Committee that it was going to meet during the week of the SWP national educational and activists conference. That posed no problem. They met for five days. During this entire time they collaborated with the Bureau Faction representatives, who demonstratively met with them, and demonstratively took responsibility for their course.

At the end of the five days, Bloom and Lovell informed the Political Committee that the "Opposition Bloc" — the name they gave their faction — "is no longer operational." Why? The only explanation was that the two components "which constituted the Bloc can no longer agree on maintaining that form of alliance, which is insisted upon by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus [Bloom and Lovell]. The Trotskyist Tendency [Weinstein and Henderson] disagrees with this perspective."

But this explained nothing. What had changed between May, when the faction was proclaimed, and August, when it broke apart? There were only three possible explanations. First, one or more of the faction members no longer agreed with the documents that constituted the platform of the faction. Second, one or more of the faction members thought the platform was no longer adequate, and additions needed to be made, without which they could not continue to support the platform. Or, third, the difference was over something else — that is, a secret platform, of which the party had not been informed.

The Presiding Committee wrote letters to each of the four NC faction members posing these questions. The answers came back. Each said that he still agreed with the platform of the faction. Each of the four said that there was no need to add to it in light of new events.



Lovell and Bloom said they had "insisted" on maintaining the "Bloc," but Henderson and Weinstein wouldn't go along. Weinstein and Henderson said *they* wanted to maintain it, but Bloom and Lovell refused.

A faction is formed in May; it breaks up in August. Yet all participants claim that what they stand on in August is unchanged from what they stood on in May. Nothing needs to be added. Each offers no explanation for the rupture in the faction, except to say that the others didn't want to continue. They each accuse the others of lying — on that they all agree.

The National Committee could reach only one conclusion: the dispute had erupted over a secret part of the platform, which neither side was willing to reveal. It was a classic example of a *secret faction*. A secret faction is never a grouping whose existence is unknown; rather, key components of its platform, program and mode of functioning are kept concealed from the party.

The hidden program was so important that the disagreements over it cracked the faction apart. None of the participants were willing to reveal what the dispute was over even though it was obvious to all that this refusal was a clear violation of the party's organizational principles, as well as of the explicit terms of the motion adopted at the May meeting of the National Committee.

The trial was held by the National Committee, which made its decision on the basis of the facts I have summarized. The evidence was in the correspondence between the faction and the Presiding Committee. That was all.

The party had taken no steps aimed at compiling information or obtaining letters or documents from the faction. No one went to anyone's home or apartment to demand to see materials; no one sat outside to see who was meeting with whom; no one tried to elicit information or obtain copies of documents from supporters of the faction.

The party's approach to this was consistent throughout this fight. There were no efforts to collect documents. You can go back to the report of the Control Commission investigation in February 1982 (see Appendix F), and you will see that the only information in that report was what was turned over to the party by comrades who thought what was being done by the faction was wrong and called it to the attention of the party on their own initiative, and what the members of the faction themselves stated to the Control Commission. No "detective work" was involved at all.

At the National Committee meeting itself, as you can see from the excerpts of the minutes (Appendix J) that the party leaned over backward to allow the four comrades — or any of the four who wanted to — an opportunity to pull back from their course. The National Committee waited two full days to give the comrades plenty of time to think it over, and to maximize the chance that the Bureau Faction could use its great authority with those they were leading to alter their course. But the course wasn't altered.

What did the four say in their defense?

Weinstein and Henderson refused to stoop to rebutting the charge that they were part of a secret faction. They devoted their time to developing their charge that the party leadership is a "petty-bourgeois clique" that has decided that "Trotsky was wrong and Stalin was right."

Bloom and Lovell, on the other hand, took a slightly different tack. They declared, in a statement to the National Committee:

We have been asked to present an explanation for the dissolution of [the "Opposition Bloc"] which could justify the dissolution of a faction. We are completely unable to do this, since we never were a faction, and never functioned on the basis that we were a faction, but simply a bloc of two tendencies. The explanations we can give are good and sufficient for the dissolution of such a bloc.

The differences which necessitated the break-up of the bloc were partially the result of some of the political disagreements which we had pre-

vious to the formation of the Bloc. These still remained after we formed the Bloc. [But which differences were these? And why were they not an obstacle in May but became an obstacle in August?] And partially the differences were over tactics — of tone and approach to the discussion in the National Committee. Were such reasons sufficient for the dissolution of a faction? Probably not; but we didn't feel that we needed reasons of such import to end the formal relationship of the Opposition Bloc.

In other words, Lovell and Bloom didn't think the National Committee had the right to require the members of the "Opposition Bloc" to inform the committee of the alterations in the platform — whether over "tone" or anything else — that led to its dissolution. They were, of course, entitled to disagree with the National Committee's decision; they were not free to defy it.

The National Committee didn't have to know the details of the secret platform or platforms that led to the breakup of the faction in order to suspend each of the four. It was sufficient to know that there was a secret platform.

The differences, of course, are now no longer secret. They have given rise to two separate formations.

What was involved in the disagreements over "tone" are spelled out in the exchange of correspondence between Les Evans and Steve Bloom, chronicling the split between Socialist Action and Fourth Internationalist Tendency, which appears in *Information Bulletin* No. 1 in 1984 ("The Gerardo Nebbia Disruption Campaign"). It explains that the disagreement over "tone" was, among other things, a dispute over how to carry out the inside-outside operation against the SWP. How fast to move to a split. How to organize what they called "interior work" — the running of their agents inside the SWP.

This explains why there was no way for any of them to reveal to the party the nature of the disagreements over "tone." Lovell and Bloom could hardly say that part of our faction is in favor of a short-term split, while we think such a perspective is premature! They couldn't say we want to have 20 agents in the SWP, but the others only want to keep ten. The two components of the "Bloc" were stuck with each other to the end. And whatever their own deep differences, they placed loyalty to their secret faction above loyalty to the SWP. It was their dance of death.

### Upholding 1965 organization resolution

The party constitution reserves to the convention the decision on whether to expel members of the National Committee. The most the National Committee can do is to suspend them until the convention. This is because the National Committee is elected by the convention, and responsible to it.

The first motion under this report is to expel from the party Bloom, Henderson, Lovell, and Weinstein.

The second motion is to adopt as party policy the application since the last party convention, in 1981, of the principles contained in the 1965 organization resolution, as documented in the following published materials:

1.) The bulletin on "Defending the Organizational Principles of a Proletarian Party," (*Internal Information Bulletin* No. 1 in 1982). This is the so-called "Eight Dollar Bulletin." It is so thick because it thoroughly documents and explains — for the party membership and the ranks of the Fourth International — the broad range of challenges to the party's organizational norms by the minorities in the National Committee, the most across-the-board challenge to the 1965 resolution since it was adopted. The reports in this bulletin constitute a strong reaffirmation of the organizational norms explained in the 1965 resolution — the norms that have guided the SWP since its founding.

2.) The "Report of the Control Commission on Events Related to Charges Filed by Milton Genecin (Alvin)," (*Internal Information Bulletin* No. 1 in 1983). Three things are especially



important in this document. First, the reaffirmation of the responsibility of every member to provide the Control Commission with whatever information it requests, regardless of what the individual thinks about the validity of the request. Alvin was expelled when he refused to provide the Control Commission with what he had claimed was "documentary evidence" in his possession that members of the elected leadership of the party were responsible for stealing money that rightfully belonged to him.

Second, the report of the Control Commission, which was adopted by the Political Committee, reaffirmed that members of the party don't have the right to circulate slanderous accusations of illegal activities against other comrades. If they have evidence of wrongdoing they can file charges with the appropriate party bodies; if not, they have no "free speech" right to continue circulating slanders and accusations, which in this case were of a kind that could be used against the party by cops, courts, and lawyers.

Third, the Alvin case also involved another policy decision — upholding the action of the Political Committee in getting the best legal help we could to protect the party against the threat of a damaging lawsuit from Alvin. This included the successful tactic of getting the lawyers we hired to write a letter making it clear to Alvin that he would be sued for all his worldly possessions if he followed through on his implicit threat to throw his weight into the scales along with that of the Healyites and tie the party up in still more costly and potentially damaging legal proceedings.

3.) The statement of the Political Committee, "End of the Split Operation Against the Party," included in *Party Organizer*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1984). This includes affirming the course of the California state committee and the Political Committee in expelling from the party those who refused to repudiate the disloyal actions of the minority delegation at the California state convention.

4.) "Tendencies and Factions in the Preconvention Discussion," in *Information Bulletin* No. 2 in 1984. This is a reaffirmation of the norms of the party governing the character and purpose of preconvention discussion, the rights of individual members, and the rights of the party as a whole.

### Gerardo Nebbia Case

5.) "The Gerardo Nebbia Disruption Campaign," *Information Bulletin* No. 1 in 1984. This case has become, as a result of the actions of the Bureau Faction, a major issue in the International.

Before turning to the political challenge the Fourth International is facing in connection with this ongoing Healyite operation, I want to emphasize one aspect of the organizational side of this case, which is of a general policy nature. Nebbia was expelled from the party without a trial. He was expelled in accordance with the provision of the party constitution (Article VI, Section 2) authorizing disciplinary action by the Political Committee on the basis of an investigation by the Control Commission, without a trial of the individual or individuals involved. This procedure was followed because, in the opinion of the Control Commission and the Political Committee, it was the most effective procedure the constitution provided to protect the party in that situation.

Unfortunately, the expulsion of Gerardo Nebbia didn't end the Healyite operation he was part of. This Healyite agent is today a member of Fourth Internationalist Tendency, and the majority of the United Secretariat has refused to act to expel him from the Fourth International. This is done for no other reason than to further the factional operation of the Bureau Faction against the SWP. As a result of this factional blindness, which is carried to extreme lengths, the Healyites have scored their biggest victory yet in their decade-long campaign of slander and disruption

against the SWP and against the entire Fourth International. The details of this scandalous factional operation are spelled out in the bulletin on the Gerardo Nebbia case.

Gerardo Nebbia was a Healyite who entered the SWP as a constitutional member in June 1979. When the secret faction was organized in the party, he became a part of it, affiliating to the wing that eventually formed Fourth Internationalist Tendency.

In February 1984 ironclad proof in the form of documentary evidence was provided to the Political Committee nailing Nebbia as both a member of the secret faction in the SWP and a Healyite. He was expelled following a Control Commission investigation.

The response of Fourth Internationalist Tendency was to denounce the SWP in public for engineering an FBI-style frame-up of Gerardo Nebbia, thus joining the Healyites in this kind of accusation against the party. An article, signed by Naomi Allen, Steve Bloom, and George Breitman, appeared in FIT's public magazine. It was headlined "A Page from the FBI's Book on Standard Frame-up Procedure (report on the expulsion of Gerardo Nebbia)."

Allen, Bloom, and Breitman concluded their article by outlining the following course of action:

1. The Fourth Internationalist Tendency should do everything it can to expose and discredit the expulsion of Comrade Nebbia and to help clear his name of the false charges used to smear him and other oppositionists inside and outside the SWP.
2. The F.I.T. should support Nebbia's appeal for reinstatement in the SWP and urge the United Secretariat to include him among the unjustly expelled SWP members whom it recognizes as part of the Fourth International.
3. The F.I.T. should support Nebbia's efforts to bring into existence an impartial commission of inquiry which would invite the SWP leadership to submit its alleged proof that he is an agent of the Healyites.

What a coup for the Healyite operation! Instead of ridding themselves of the Healyite agent, FIT starts echoing the Healyite slanders against the SWP about FBI frame-ups — and even apes the Healyite's stock-in-trade demand for an "impartial commission of inquiry" to "investigate" the SWP! The decision by FIT, including its leaders George Breitman and Frank Lovell, who are known as long-time Fourth Internationalists, to echo part of the Healyite's slander campaign is a blow to the entire International. For the first time an organization currently seen in the working-class movement as a part of the Fourth International has accused the SWP of using FBI methods.

Bad as this was, however, the majority of the United Secretariat multiplied the damage at the May meeting, when it refused to take any action on this matter, thus acquiescing in the course followed by FIT.

The evidence against Gerardo Nebbia is indisputable. It has been published for all to see, and no one who has read it has challenged it — except for Gerardo Nebbia and his comrades in FIT.

Yet the United Secretariat majority is willing to let a known agent of the Healyites continue his disruptive work from *inside* the Fourth International rather than to take the objectively required course of throwing him out. Why? Because rather than subordinating their differences with the SWP to the need to defend the Fourth International, the Bureau Faction has decided to sacrifice the defense of the International on the altar of the factional crusade against the SWP.

As long as Gerardo Nebbia remains a member of the Fourth International, the International will be damaged. We will keep up the fight to convince the United Secretariat, and the International leadership as a whole, of the utter self-destructiveness of this factionally-blind course.

### International slander campaign

The stance of the Bureau Faction in relation to the ongoing



Gerardo Nebbia affair is just one aspect of the international slander campaign organized by the Bureau Faction. A central axis of this campaign is the effort to convince comrades in the International that the SWP has bureaucratically expelled all comrades with political positions different from those of the party leadership. As with the slanders around Gerardo Nebbia's expulsion, this charge collapses when the facts are looked at objectively.

Comrades all received copies before the convention of the publication of the United Secretariat Bureau entitled, "The Organizational Situation in the Socialist Workers Party (USA)." This is a faction publication. To get it out, the Bureau Faction simply bypassed the procedures for submitting articles to the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*. In this way, evidently, they hope to be able to keep out of the IIDB the SWP's side of the story, which we will submit to the bulletin for the information of the entire International. We hope it will be published, not only in English, but also in French and in Spanish, so that all of the comrades can have the facts in front of them.

The factional character of this publication is obvious from its selection of documents, and the Introduction and "Chronology of Events 1981-1984." (See appendix K.) You can compare the version in the "Chronology" with the facts detailed in the "Eight Dollar Bulletin" [IIB, No. 1 in 1982].

Of the thirteen items in this "information" bulletin, only two present the views of the SWP. Although the "chronology" begins in 1981, the bulletin does *not* include the report of the Control Commission and the report by Jack Barnes, adopted at the February-March 1982 National Committee meeting, along with the motions passed there — documents that are assumed in the later report that is reprinted (without its summary). None of the other information contained in the extensive compilation in the "Eight Dollar Bulletin" is included.

Yet without this information, comrades will not be in a position to evaluate the accusation, repeated in the ultimatum to this convention from the Bureau Faction, that the SWP is applying "unprincipled" organizational norms.

If the Bureau Faction wants to make the argument that the organizational norms of the SWP are "unprincipled," it will no longer be sufficient to base these charges on horror stories circulated without facts and without the documents. These facts will be available to all the comrades who want to evaluate this charge.

Instead, the Bureau Faction will have to present its position on the 1965 resolution on the organizational principles of the SWP, which is the document the National Committee has been applying, and which this convention, by approving these motions, will be reaffirming. Is this resolution, in the view of the Bureau Faction, "unprincipled"?

The comrades will also have to express their view on the organizational agreements that made possible the 1963 reunification of the Fourth International, which outlawed intervention by "higher bodies" to resolve by organizational measures disagreements between the membership and elected leadership bodies of the national sections, and the leadership bodies of the Fourth International. Is the view of the SWP on this question — which hasn't changed since 1938 — now to be condemned as "unprincipled" as well?

### Leadership crisis

These are the dimensions of the leadership crisis that exists today in the Fourth International. The challenge we face is to organize the struggle on the leadership level, where the crisis is centered, and where it must be resolved. Only by waging this

fight can we reach the ranks of the Fourth International with a serious perspective that can maximize the chances of slowing down the split, and create the conditions for a return toward normal functioning. Only by waging this fight can political differences in the International be discussed in an organized and democratic way, and the alternative lines tested against the unfolding of the class struggle.

What we are up against is a secret faction pursuing a course that will transform the Fourth International into an ultraleft sect. The Bureau Faction is recoiling from the turn to the industrial unions, which is indispensable today to progress toward proletarianizing the parties and leaderships of the national sections. It is retreating from an orientation toward the revolutionary proletarian forces in Central America and the Caribbean.

At the center of this ultraleft secret faction are political positions that are being kept hidden from the membership of the International. Those who hold these positions cannot present them and argue openly for them and at the same time maintain the pretense that they speak for a majority of the Fourth International. The program of the Fourth International, and the cadres who have been won to that program, and who want to build an International along the lines of that program, are too strong for that to happen if all the positions were out on the table.

Instead of openly arguing for their political positions, the members of the Bureau Faction resort more and more to "supercentralist" organizational methods to impose their will and enforce their authority. These methods are intended to replace political argument and debate, and to guarantee that no open political discussion can happen.

For this reason, there is a double axis to the fight we must wage against the drive by the Bureau Faction to deepen the split.

First, we must help bring the organizational question into its proper place as a decisive political question. The concept of an International made up of parties that will take orders from "higher bodies" is alien to everything the Fourth International has ever stood for. Explaining the need for comrades to see the political centrality of the organization question is essential to fighting against the deepening of the split on a world scale. Because without that, there can be no political discussion and no objective weighing of views and experiences in the class struggle.

Second, we have to fight for the convening of an emergency meeting of the International Executive Committee. We have to seek to convince the members of the IEC to demand that the United Secretariat majority convene such a meeting. A meeting of the IEC — where all points of view held by the members of the United Secretariat and the IEC on the big questions can be laid before the International leadership for discussion — is essential. Without such a meeting, the debate at the forthcoming World Congress will be so unprepared that its authority and democratic character will be sacrificed.

The fact that the Bureau Faction has begun to organize a split and is trying to spread it doesn't settle the matter. Not at all. The will to split and the ability to drive through a split are two entirely different things. The members of the Fourth International are far from being convinced that a split with the SWP, and the comrades around the world with whom we are in agreement on major questions, is the road forward.

The fight to prevent the deepening of the split in the Fourth International is not over — it is just beginning. Only by throwing ourselves into this fight can we move forward along the course of building the new, mass International that the World Party of Socialist Revolution — the Fourth International — was formed to advance.



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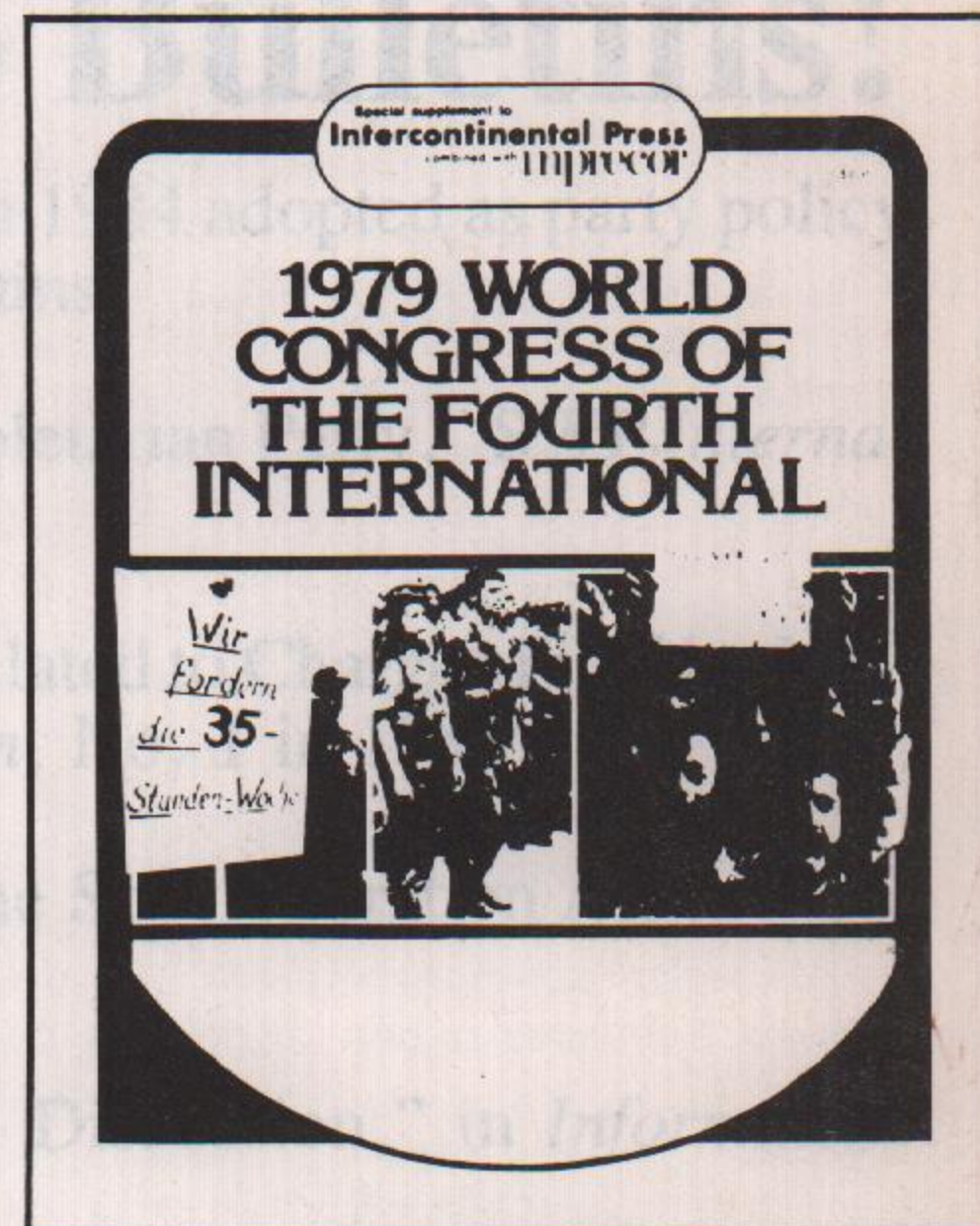
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