

Saw i.l.c. as first step to lp but what was first step to i.l.c.?

Independent Labor Candidate for President!

By MARGARET GUTTSHALL

The Republican and Democratic parties are already planning their strategies and considering candidates for the 1984 presidential elections.

Neither is concerned with solving the problems of the working class — unemployment, wage cuts, the drive to war. Instead, each is trying to find a solution to the major problem of the capitalist class — the growing *independent* mobilization of the working class against the Reagan regime.

As usual, the Republicans, never long on strategy or tactics, are planning to rely on brute force. Thus Reagan is trying to build up the right wing of the Republican Party.

The Democratic Party on the other hand, the more wily of the two parties, is trying once again to revitalize its image as a party of the people, to enable itself to disorient and split off a section of the working class. Leading Democrats are taking part in a march on Washington this summer for "jobs, peace, and freedom" on the anniversary of the original march on Washington led by Martin Luther King. They also rushed to Chicago to support black Democrat Harold Washington in an effort to counterattack the negative image of the party expressed when local white Democrats went over to the Republican candidate for mayor. And leading black Democrats are talking about running a black candidate for president in order to encourage their fellow Democrats to clean up their act.

But like an aging movie star, the Democratic Party can only "come back" so often. All the makeup in the world cannot cover a wretched face.

The working class, its unions, parties, organizations, and especially the upcoming UAW convention, must be prepared to confront this situation. *The 1984 presidential elections represent a tremendous opportunity for the working class, not only to defeat the bosses' maneuvers, but also to carry forward the independent mobilization of the working class and constitute the working class as an independent political force.* This demands a fight for an independent labor candidate for US president, a first step in founding a labor party.

The working class must seize this opportunity and seize it now, beginning with the UAW convention that will bring together delegates from the strongholds of the working class across the country. *This convention must initiate an independent labor candidate for US president.*

With a fight for such a candidate, it will be possible to unify all the different movements arising in the working class against the Reagan regime (against concessions, in defense of black rights, against US intervention in Central America) and foster still more. It will be possible to reinforce and strengthen all the independent tendencies within the working class, its fighting spirit.

The fight for an independent candidate is above all a fight to draw a balance sheet of the working class's experience with the Democratic Party, to combat the conception that exists in the working class that workers and oppressed peoples have been able to and can get something from the Democrats that they cannot get from the Republicans.

In the minds of many workers and black people, the gains of the labor and black movements are identified with the Democratic Party. It is true that many of the gains were made while the Democrats were in office. And there certainly is a lot of propaganda put out by union officials and the Communist Party attributing

workers' gains to the Democrats.

But in reality, the gains of workers and black people, which can be summed up chiefly in the existence of the unions and the improvement of their material position in society, were acquired by the workers themselves. They were wrested from the capitalists in struggle, many times with arms in hand.

The Republicans have pursued a policy of openly rejecting the workers' demands. Thus they have been completely rejected by the workers. The Democrats have been trickier. They have pursued a policy of granting concessions to mass movements while attempting to destroy the leaderships that built these movements in the first place, thus laying the basis for "taking back" what they allegedly "gave."

Thus it was the Democrats who both "gave" us our unions in the 1930s and the post-World War II "red scare" in the 1940s and 50s in which the militant workers who actually built those unions were driven from the unions and the unions were turned over to forces hostile to workers independence.

And it was the Democrats who "gave" us both our civil rights and the assassination of Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, Mark Clark and other lesser known young black leaders in the 60s. And in all cases it has been this capacity of the Democratic Party to mislead the working class, with the irreplaceable assistance of the union officials and the Stalinists, that has made the Democratic Party the party that has

development of tactics not really followed by development of political struggle Does USSR Arm Central American Rebels?

Since the reactionary Somoza regime was overthrown and the US first escalated its involvement in Central America, first Carter and now Reagan have claimed that the Soviet Union and Cuba are arming and training the rebels in Central America for a "Soviet-style" revolution.

These claims are aimed not only at justifying US aid to the military dictatorship in El Salvador and to the counterrevolutionaries in Honduras and Nicaragua (through which the guns are allegedly being passed!), but also at pacifying the US working class, at painting the conflict in Central America as an "East-West" or "US-USSR" conflict in which the US working class has no stake, or, at least, as a conflict whose outcome, even if it is important to the American working class, depends upon forces other than those of the workers.

So let's take a look at the US's claims. Are the Soviet Union and Cuba arming the rebels in Central America? Are guns being passed from Moscow to Havana to El Salvador via Managua?

First let us say that we do not in any way challenge the right of the Soviet Union or Cuba to send arms to Central American rebels, still less the right of the rebels in Central America to accept guns from whomever they wish. We want the US out of Central America and we support anything aimed in that direction. We are simply questioning whether this is indeed taking place.

Let's take a look at the evidence. First, the Soviet Union and Cuba have repeatedly denied sending guns to the Salvadoran rebels. The guerrillas have repeatedly denied receiving guns from the Soviet Union and Cuba. Numerous stories have appeared in the press of fighters acquiring their guns from the enemy or on the black market. Cayetano Carpio, a leader of the rebel forces who split from the

brought us war — World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam.

It is especially important to draw a balance sheet of the UAW's experience with the Democratic Party. In 1976, 1980 and 1982, instead of devoting its energies to the combat against the corporations trying to bleed the autoworkers dry, the UAW devoted itself to the election of Carter, the reelection of Carter and, in 1982, various other Democrats. It cut short the strike in 1976 and did not even strike in 1979 or 1982 so as not to rock the boat.

What does the UAW have to show for its support to the Democratic Party? An unprecedented loss of membership and a remaining membership working under conditions that are worse than ever.

No. Returning the Democrats to power will not restore the gains under attack by Reagan. It will only make the situation of the working class worse. It will split the independent mobilization of the working class that can restore those gains and the Democrats will use their positions in office to try to further destroy the workers' movements as they have always done in the past.

The fight for an independent labor candidate for US president in 1984, beginning at the UAW convention, means assimilating the lessons of this experience and fully breaking with the Democrats once and for all.

Today the Trotskyist Organization is the only tendency in the working class leading this fight. For us, as Trotskyists, the fight for an independent labor candidate is a

party associated with Moscow, even issued an appeal criticizing the USSR and Cuba for not sending them guns and calling on workers and their organizations the world over to arm the rebels.

Obviously in a case like this, one cannot put too much weight on such statements. These people could quite easily, and quite justifiably, be lying.

So let's take a look at the evidence that the US has to offer. And here is where the case gets interesting, for the US has absolutely no evidence to offer! The only time it ever tried to offer any concrete proof that the USSR and Cuba were arming the Salvadoran rebels, their "proof" was quickly exposed as a forgery.

Thomas O. Enders, assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, just testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and, according to *The New York Times*, "provided the committee with information about arms shipments that the administration asserts the Soviet Union and Cuba have sent through Nicaragua to guerrillas in El Salvador." But absolutely none of this "information" has been made public.

Dozens of US reporters and even Congressmen have given eyewitness accounts of US presence in Nicaragua and El Salvador that have been widely published, but the US has not even come up with so much as a gun crate or even a cereal box stamped "made in the USSR." For you can be sure if it had, it would be splashed all over the papers.

No. The USSR and Cuba are not arming the Salvadoran rebels for a "Soviet-style" revolution. What is taking place in Central America is a conflict between workers and oppressed peoples and US imperialism and the outcome of this conflict depends entirely upon the workers and their independent struggle.

means to open up a fight for an independent party of the working class to lead the workers to power, to make a socialist revolution. It is a way to rebuild the US Section of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution.

But we are fighting to unify all workers and their unions, parties and organizations around the fight for an independent labor candidate, *no matter what political direction they think this candidacy should take:* (1) because we want the largest possible struggle against the capitalists and their candidates now and we know the majority of workers are not yet for socialism; (2) because we know that an independent workers party, a socialist revolution, will not just arrive some fine day; they must be forged in the living struggle, in large class battles.

Other tendencies in the working class that claim to be revolutionary or even Trotskyist have declared themselves to be in principle for such a fight. Socialist Workers Party members have said repeatedly that they are for independent labor candidates. The International Workers Party recently issued a manifesto calling for a united labor and socialist slate in the 1984 elections. Now is the time to put these principles into practice with a unified struggle for the UAW convention to initiate an independent labor candidate for president.

This struggle will be a test of tendencies and their principles.

This is why Trotskyists are fighting for workers in the US and throughout the hemisphere to drive the US out of Central America and take all the practical steps necessary to make this happen: a boycott of US supplies to the counterrevolutionaries, expediting guns and other supplies to the insurgents.

The US has no right to be in Central America. The oppressed peoples have every right to do everything in their power to drive them out. There is nothing to negotiate.

Such a struggle on the part of the US working class will not only insure the victory of the workers and oppressed in this conflict with imperialism, it will also immeasurably strengthen the struggle for the independence of the US working class itself. We, American workers, have nothing in common with the imperialists that rule this country. There is nothing that we should defend together against the other peoples of the world. The upcoming UAW convention must also take a stand on this question, in words and deeds.

US Out of Central America!
M.G.

**UAW Local 7
and
Chicago mayoral
elections
on back page**

Economic Crisis and the Workers Notes

(Part I)

By KEVIN FITZPATRICK

Every member of the working class is deeply concerned about the economic crisis. This is not just a concern that comes from the newspapers or TV, but a concern that arises from their own lives and struggles.

There is a great deal of concern, but there is not much understanding. That is why questions like the "recovery" seem to be out of our hands.

In this two-part article we, as Marxists, want to lay the basis for understanding the crisis and, most of all, doing something about it.

On June 23-24, 1921, at the Third Congress of the Communist International (known as the Comintern, for short, or as the Third International), Leon Trotsky gave the report and summary on "The World Economic Crisis and the New Tasks of the Communist International."

Framework

We think the content and overall conception of this report give us an excellent framework for understanding our own economic crisis and our own tasks today. Naturally, this does not mean in every detail, because, as anyone can see, the report was given over sixty years ago.

Some people may immediately object that there can't be anything correct in a document on economic crisis that old, that it is impossible to explain the situation today in connection with the one existing after World War I. The sharpest attack such people will make is that capitalism has survived right up to now, therefore, any document which takes up its overthrow six decades ago is basically ridiculous.

We not only disagree in general with such an idea, but Trotsky's report itself is strengthened by an anticipation of capitalism's possible survival, a possibility whose actual development not only confirms Trotsky's basic insight, but precisely makes it immediately relevant to today. Here is his view:

If we grant — and let us grant it for the moment — that the working class fails to rise in revolutionary struggle, but allows the bourgeoisie the opportunity to rule the world's destiny for a long number of years, say, two or three decades, then assuredly some sort of new equilibrium will be established. Europe will be thrown violently into reverse gear. Millions of

European workers will die from unemployment and malnutrition. The United States will be compelled to reorient itself on the world market, reconvert its industry, and suffer curtailment for a considerable period. Afterwards, after a new world division of labor is thus established in agony for 15 or 20 or 25 years, a new epoch of capitalist upswing might perhaps ensue.

It was not that the workers did not "rise in revolutionary struggle," but that these upsurges were betrayed by Social Democracy and, above all, Stalinism, that led to this outcome.

Yes, fascism, the Great Depression, World War II — these are the bases for what many people are pleased to call the "postwar boom" of the 1950s and 1960s.

It was immense defeats of the working class, not anything that changed in capitalism, that delayed not only the sharp outbreak of the crisis, but also the final settling of accounts that is now upon us.

What was the position of the Bolsheviks on the fundamental character of the economic crisis of capitalism?

In his report, Trotsky emphasized something which is of equal importance today: "With the imperialist war (World War I — KF) we entered the epoch of revolution." Later, he refers to it as the "period of the destruction of capitalist economy." In short, World War I marked the literal explosions of all the contradictions of capitalism's final stage, imperialism.

That is not only the reason why a relatively lengthy prosperity could emerge only on the basis of the most massive destruction in history, but also why, once again, despite all the assurances that the Depression "couldn't happen again," it is happening again.

Recovery?

This is where the question of a possible recovery today comes in. All the mouthpieces of the capitalist class, in a thousand different ways, try to make it seem as if this recovery will wipe out everything bad that has happened in this last "downturn," which was really a depression.

As Trotsky pointed out: "So long as capitalism is not overthrown by the proletarian revolution, it will continue to live in cycles, swinging up and down." But — "In periods of rapid capitalist development the crises are brief and superficial in character, while the booms are long-

lasting and far-reaching. In periods of capitalist decline, the crises are of a prolonged character while the booms are fleeting, superficial and speculative."

So Marxism does not at all require denying the possibility of a recovery. What it does require is putting any such development in the context of the overall epoch — the epoch of wars and revolutions, of the death agony of capitalism.

Two bourgeois economists have calculated that in the US between 1918 and 1939 (250 months), the economy was in decline for 106 months, 42% of the total. Between 1945 and 1965, the proportion in decline was 18%. Thus, even by bourgeois standards, there is a confirmation of Trotsky's thesis.

Now, leaving aside the peak period of the Vietnam War as a distortion, just as the two economists did with World War II, what do we find? Since 1970 (a period of less than fourteen years) we have gone through four so-called "recessions," each one sharper than the last, and the most recent, the one we are probably still in, the worst since the Great Depression.

As a rough estimate, out of 148 months in this period, we have 53 in decline, a percentage of 36.3. Clearly, the basic pattern of capitalism in this epoch is reasserting itself.

Moreover, let us examine the facts in terms of the conditions of the working class. The unemployment rate for March 1983 was 10.3%, a minuscule reduction from 10.4% the month before. Since September of 1982 that rate has not fallen below 10%.

And this, of course, is only an average. Among blacks, for example, the rate has been basically double, while among blacks 16-19 years old it has not been lower than 45%, and in November 1982, for black males in that age range, the rate was 53%.

It is thus not at all surprising that the US Census Bureau itself has to report that there are now *more* people living in poverty than at any time in the last twenty years, that is, since *before* the "War on Poverty."

Given this, we can well see what the outlines of the coming recovery will be — "fleeting, superficial and speculative."
(To be continued)

Poland: General Strike to Bring Down Junta!

Last week Walesa met secretly with underground leaders of Solidarnosc who have been sought by the Jaruzelski regime for months. The underground issued a manifesto, with Walesa's support, calling for demonstrations against the regime on May 1. And even though the police picked up Walesa because of the meeting and he might be arrested again, Walesa declared publicly that he intends to meet with the illegal underground again.

This is not an isolated act of defiance. It is only the tip of the iceberg. On March 13, the day of the month used to commemorate opposition to the December 13 coup d'état, 1000 workers gathered at a mass against martial law and clashed with police who began to ask for identification and try to break up the demonstration.

Our comrades in Poland report that living and working conditions have become completely unacceptable, workers buying power has been cut in half. A total boycott of government-sponsored unions is in effect and discussion of the preparation of the general strike is taking place throughout Solidarnosc.

The TKK (underground Solidarnosc coordinating committee), which cancelled

the week of action planned for last December 13 in the interests of a dialogue with the regime, has been forced to go back on this decision and issued a public statement that includes the preparation of the general strike. The MKO and "Fighting Solidarity" in Wroclaw, which criticized the TKK's initial decision, have acquired a tremendous amount of authority among the workers. And some leaders of the underground, like Palubicki of Poznan, have openly stated that any idea of an agreement with the regime is illusory.

Yet at the same time, much of the discussion on the preparation of the general strike concerns how it can be carried out without a full scale confrontation with the regime and reverts to ideas like "roving strikes" or building a "clandestine society." Different tendencies in Solidarnosc have rejected the church's attempts to get a section of Solidarnosc to capitulate to the regime, but none are prepared to lead a struggle for the workers to break with the church.

This shows that all the elements are there for the Polish workers to pass from the first stage of the revolution, which was

marked by illusions in the possibility of an accord with the regime, into the second stage of the revolution, which will be characterized by the confrontation with the regime and consequently the Kremlin, *but that this will not take place spontaneously.*

Thus the Fourth International has decided to fight for the unified preparation of the general strike, for its aim to be the overthrow of the regime and the conquest of freedom, and in this framework to take up the conscious preparation of the inevitable confrontation with the Kremlin by fighting for the program of the political revolution that will enable the Polish workers to win the Russian and other Eastern European workers to their side.

With this political struggle the Fourth International intends to reinforce its Polish Section and recruit a large number of workers into its ranks in order to enter into and carry forward the second stage of the revolution.

All readers who want to support this struggle can do so by making a pledge to the Workers Fund for the International. M.G.

France

In the last issue of *Truth*, we reported on the results of the French elections. In these elections, our comrades, although they did not agree with the "Workers Voice Against Austerity Slate," advanced by the LCR and LO, because it did not represent a clear break with the imperialist Mitterrand regime, supported and participated in this slate against the right-wing and social-democratic slates in order to advance the struggle for such a break with the regime.

We have since learned that in the working class district where our comrades are active and fought clearly for a total break with the Mitterrand regime, that their candidates did better than the others on the slate and that the slate as a whole did better than it did in the last elections. In Creil, outside Paris, among the workers of Chausson, we got 4% of the vote, the LCR got 3.7% and LO got 3.9%.

The OCI, which also claims to be Trotskyist, but *openly* supports Mitterrand, ran candidates that came up way behind. This shows that in France, as in the US, that there is a significant section of the working class breaking with the old leaderships, but that it can only be strengthened and enlarged if Trotskyists fight for a clear break with the old regime and offer a clear alternative to it.

The LST (Ligue Socialiste de Travailleurs, associated with the IWP in this country) refused to advance common candidates in these elections with our comrades, saying it didn't "make agreements with sects." It said it was going to make a common slate with the LCR and LO, but in the end did nothing.

Spain

In Spain our comrades have launched a struggle for "Workers Opposition Slates" in the upcoming municipal elections. In a recent issue of *La Aurora*, they argue that workers cannot remain passive supporters or critics of the social democratic government that is doing nothing to improve the situation of workers and oppressed population, that this will only lead to the growth of the fascists as the results in the recent French and German elections show.

At the same time it is fighting for the legalization of the PORE so that it can run candidates in the elections. The PORE is the only working class organization that has remained illegal since the fall of Franco. While other organizations have taken positions against the repression of the PORE they have not yet taken action to insure its legalization.

Argentina

On March 28, Argentine workers organized a 24-hour general strike that succeeded in bringing the country to a complete stand-still.

Workers went on strike in defiance of government threats to fire and imprison them. The strike was 96% effective according to even the fascist ministers.

The following day a demonstration took place in Buenos Aires under the banner "Peace, Bread, Work" that involved 10,000 people.

In this situation, unfortunately, the PST (Partido Socialista de Trabajadores, led by Nahuel Moreno and associated with the IWP in this country) has taken a decision to dissolve itself into a new organization MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) that does not even claim to be Trotskyist.

Moreno claims that the overthrow of the junta is not on the order of the day, that the movement is entering into a period of legal and democratic struggle.

1953

By DAVID HEFFELFINGER

Nothing is more important or more decisive for the preparation of the American revolution today than the construction of the Trotskyist party. Central to this objective is the balance sheet of the years of crisis of the Fourth International and the struggle to rebuild it. This balance sheet demands an examination of the past political struggles that shaped the present situation in which numerous tendencies claim to represent Trotskyism and the banner of the Fourth International. The balance sheet of these struggles represents the accumulated lessons of the struggle of the proletariat over the course of more than a hundred years of Marxism and Bolshevism and thus is an indispensable guide to the future.

At the present moment many Trotskyists would agree that the party that once represented the Fourth International in the United States, the Socialist Workers Party, has been set on a course that heads toward the complete liquidation of the last remnants of the traditions and program of Trotskyism by the Barnes leadership of the SWP.

Nevertheless, there remain still two conceptions, two separate roads for the construction of the Trotskyist party in America, as there have been from the beginning of the struggle to overcome the crisis of the Fourth International. One is getting together all those who claim to be Trotskyists. The other is rebuilding the Fourth International through a delineation of Trotskyism from centrism. The first road, on which the SWP has gone the furthest, necessitated at each stage that a portion of the past be buried.

Having taken the second road to fight for a *Trotskyist Congress rebuilding the US section of the Fourth International*, the Trotskyist Organization of the USA dedicates this series to the clarification of the pivotal political struggles in '53, '63, and '72 that led to the foundation of the TO in 1975 and the rebuilding of the Fourth International in 1976.

The signers of the Letter to Trotskyists throughout the World, those who form the International Committee of the Fourth International in 1953, did not know that their struggle would become the basis for the rebuilding of the Fourth International. They did not fully comprehend that their stand against the revisionism and liquidationist course of Pablo and Mandel would become a dividing line between Trotskyism and centrism over several decades of crisis in the Fourth International. But the formation of the International Committee of the Fourth International in 1953 insured the continuity of the Fourth International.

This defense of Trotskyism, shaped to a large extent by the Socialist Workers Party, served equally to shape the political history of a generation of young revolutionists, once removed from the generation of 1953, long after the SWP had betrayed the stand it had taken.

The years after World War II greatly tested the Fourth International.

The newly formed international had great difficulty in coming to grips with the overturn of the "peoples democracies" in the buffer zone countries of Eastern Europe.

Later the Fourth International characterized these countries as deformed workers states. But at the root of the whole discussion was not simply the class character of these countries, but rather the fundamental nature of Stalinism itself.

The International Secretary of the Fourth International, Michel Pablo, concluded that "centuries of deformed workers states" would span a transition from capitalism to socialism, with Stalinism gra-

dually reforming itself. Flowing from this, he proposed entry of Trotskyists everywhere into the Stalinist parties. The essence of it was that the working class and its revolutionary party were mere spectators.

The liquidationism of Pablo and Mandel supported itself on the isolation of the Fourth International after World War II and was a capitulation to the material forces that produced this isolation, first and foremost the forces of Stalinism itself. The forces of Stalinism were responsible for the assassination of Trotsky in 1940 and the physical liquidation of all the Trotskyist cadre and organizations in Eastern Europe after WWII, not to mention before these, for the liquidation of the Russian section of the Fourth International.

After the war the American section, which found itself fairly well intact, had to endure, except for a brief period after World War II, a long dormancy of the American working class and the McCarthyite witch hunt of revolutionists in the trade unions.

The loss of Trotsky and the leading cadre of the Fourth International was a heavy blow to the newly formed international. Still, the fact that it emerged from the war as an international party revealed the powerful character of the Fourth International and the correctness of its foundation in 1938.

In 1940 the Socialist Workers Party concluded a fight against the petty bourgeois opposition of Shachtman-Abern-Burnham. Though the SWP was reduced from a party of 1000 to a party of 600, it was considerably strengthened by the split politically.

It was this political strength that allowed it to endure the persecution of its leading cadre, who were imprisoned under the wartime Smith Act, and to emerge from the war still the strongest and most authoritative section of the Fourth International. And it was the political acquisitions of this struggle that the SWP would be able to draw on in its battle against Pabloite revisionism.

Marxism

The social character of Pabloism was that of the petty bourgeois and intellectual milieu, frightened by great events, impressionistic, and hostile to the proletariat. Its physiognomy was that of a malignant and virulent cancer on the body of the Fourth International. As is often the case with disease, it could develop only after the weakening of an otherwise healthy organism.

Many militants today are only familiar with aspects of the Pabloite doctrine — "centuries of deformed workers states," and entry "suis generis" (of a unique kind) into the Stalinist and reformist parties — which were directly responsible for the liquidation of whole sections and precious cadres of the Fourth International.

But the centrist school of falsification will tell you that these were mere "excesses."

Hansen and the leadership of the SWP, who later rejoined the liquidators Pablo and Mandel in 1963, rewriting and revising all the real lessons of 1953, wrote: "Some of the views and practices of the secretary of the organization at that time, Michel Pablo, led to a factional struggle that ended in a split." (Marxism vs. Ultra-leftism).

But nothing could be further from the truth. It was not a struggle against Pablo's personal methods of leadership, but the fact that Pablo, transmitting into the heart of the Fourth International the alien influences of Stalinism and the attack of the very forces bearing down on the International, opened the floodgate to revisionism

on every front.

The opening years of the crisis of the Fourth International were also the years of the East German uprising against Stalinist rule, and the powerful French general strike of 1953.

The Trotskyists who set up the International Committee were able to overcome many of the previous weaknesses of the Fourth International precisely in the life and death struggle against Pablo and Mandel. In the document, "Against Pabloite Revisionism," adopted by the 25th anniversary plenum of the Socialist Workers Party, many of the early confusions over the tasks of the Fourth International in Eastern Europe are cleared up. From the section on the East German uprising we quote: "Briefly, what did the East German uprising reveal?"

"... that the working class was the initiating and the decisive force in leading the people to revolt."

"... the Trotskyist program of political revolution against Stalinism by a mass uprising was vindicated..."

"... the unarmed and unsupported masses... felt the need for the formation of a revolutionary leadership and a party... to link it up with the struggles in the West and the buffer zone countries."

This resolution was even strikingly farsighted given the difficult situation of the factional struggle. It goes on: "The program for the political revolution must therefore include slogans for a free and independent Socialist Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary... The unity of the German people and above all its working class is indispensable for the promotion of the European revolution."

But Pablo and Mandel saw in the East German uprising only the possibility for the Stalinist bureaucracy to reform itself. They refused even to call for the withdrawal of Soviet tanks. The parallels between their position and that enunciated by Barnes in his speech to the last YSA convention, where he said of the Polish workers, they "... have gone beyond the limits of communist criticism..." are equally striking and prophetic, about the nature of the present leadership of the SWP.

The result of Pablo's liquidationist course was not only a complete betrayal of the proletariat in general, but concretely, the annihilation of Trotskyist cadre who were to carry out the policy of their party.

• The bottom line for centrism, in 1953 or today, is its abandonment of the decisive role of the proletariat and its party to the "objective" reform of the parasitical apparatuses.

SWP

By the time of the open letter, Pablo and Mandel had succeeded in severing the "head," its international leadership, from the body of the Fourth International. He suppressed his most vulgar propositions at the Third World Congress in 1951, in order to prevent the Congress from checking his course. This was the last World Congress that Trotskyists could base themselves on in the struggle against centrism until the Fourth Open Congress rebuilding the Fourth International.

The SWP was able to play an instrumental role by issuing the open letter in 1953 calling on all Trotskyists of the world to break with the Pablo gang and associate themselves to the International Committee formed by the leading sections in the US, Great Britain (Healy), and France.

But the SWP's isolation already had as a result the fact that it had removed itself for some years from the international struggle against Pabloism. Following the Third World Congress, the majority of the French section was expelled for refusing to

carry out Pablo's liquidationist line. Later, Pablo, in covering up the Stalinist betrayal of the French general strike, publically denounced the French section majority to the French workers.

Naturally, the isolation of the SWP was not only material, but also had a political reflection. It can be seen in the Theses on the American Revolution, adopted in 1946, which rested heavily on the prediction of an extreme decline of American capitalism that would inaugurate the American revolution and support the construction of a revolutionary vanguard.

Still though, one can find in these Theses that crucial element of Trotskyism that would separate the SWP from pessimists and skeptics of the Pablo type for another decade: "The decisive instrument of the proletarian revolution is the party of the class conscious vanguard. Failing the leadership of such a party, the most favorable revolutionary situations, which arise from the objective circumstances, cannot be carried through to the final victory of the proletariat..."

The SWP's struggle against Pablo really took shape with the rapid degeneration of the Cochran-Clarke tendency inside the SWP into a monstrous reflection of the pressures of post-war boom and cold war hysteria that was bearing down on the Fourth International. This tendency developed on the basis of the isolation of the American proletariat and the conservatism of the trade union bureaucracy that entrenched itself in the American labor movement after World War II. It allied itself with Pablo and Mandel, although it really didn't care very much about anything but leaving, as rapidly as possible, the revolutionary vanguard. Unlike the 1940 opposition however, the Cochran-Clarke tendency contained within it some of the cream of SWP proletarian cadre. The organization which it formed, the Socialist Union of America, quickly disappeared and followed the fate of the many cadre liquidated by Pablo and Mandel.

The break with Pabloism was not completely clean. Scarcely had the International Committee been formed when the SWP began to open negotiations with Pablo through the intermediary of the leadership of the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International.

Even as the split with Pabloite revisionism was being consummated, the Argentine section, led by Moreno, was entering a pro-Peron split from the Socialist Party, demonstrating the extreme difficulty of the sections in North and South America to assimilate what was really at stake in 1953. Later, as we shall see, all the questions fought over in 1953 would return with a vengeance a decade later, when Castroism would serve as the vehicle for the SWP to abandon the International Committee and rejoin the liquidators.

Comparing the 1953 split to 1940 Cannon wrote, "the present split is more definitive. There is not a single member of this plenum who contemplates any later relations with the strikebreakers of the Pablo-Cochran gang..." But "later relations" there would be. The organizational split with Pablo alone was not sufficient, a thoroughgoing struggle against centrism had to be led — a struggle that continues up to the present day.

Nevertheless, the Letter to Trotskyists throughout the World and the formation of the International Committee was not an act born of desperation. It was an attempt in a very difficult situation to continue the prophecy of Trotsky, "I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International — go forward."

UAW Local 7: Fight for Labor Party Advances

By BARBARA PUTNAM

Every real concrete step in the construction of a labor party has to be analyzed, developed, reinforced, in other words, *used*, if it is to mean anything or hold any lessons for conducting the struggle. For the participants, for the entire working class, such a step was taken in the fight for a united slate for a labor party in the delegate elections to the UAW Constitutional Convention planned for May 15 in Dallas.

Our fight was to organize this slate to show auto workers the way they will have to fight if they want to build their own party. The major political problem was to convince the groupings opposed to the concessions and layoffs that there has to be a common struggle centered around building a new, working class leadership, a labor party as the road out for the working class. Our goal was not to "get everybody together" — every group is for that. No, we saw the necessity and the tremendous *basis* in the actual struggles that have been developing against the concessions and layoffs to forge a labor party and took that into the delegate elections. It has been on that basis that we sought unity.

We did not reach this kind of agreement with the opposition groups at Local 7. Only one worker decided to fight for a united slate for a Labor Party, Fox Davis. That is not to say that this fact is unimportant. It is extremely important because it is a signpost of the turn the workers are taking to build their own party and break with the Democratic Party and all its treacherous

faces. Fox Davis got 89 votes or roughly 4.4% of the 2,016 ballots cast. That is the core of the labor party. But we must be clear, those 89 workers will not spontaneously build the labor party. They must be organized, trained and educated as fighters for the working class.

Our fight between now and the Convention is evident enough. We must continue the effort to join the opposition groupings around the fight for a labor party. This has to be carried out both at Local 7 where this policy has real support and in UAW locals across the country. We think the best way to carry this forward is by fighting for an independent labor candidate for US president.

Getting back to the elections at Local 7, because there is much to be learned, there were three slates involved and a large number of individual candidates. Fox Davis was the only candidate that had a clear policy. All the others were practically indistinguishable. There was the Progressive Group (the "ins" or those now in office), Jefferson P.U.L.L. (initiated by the Communist Party) and a slate that formed on the eve of the elections, the Rank and File Slate. (This slate seemed to us to come together as a criticism of Fox Davis's campaign since several of its members had been discussing with him. Their platform contained every demand but the labor party. It was as though they wanted to say in forming this slate: "the workers won't vote for a labor party.")

We talked with a number of workers

from each of the slates with the exception of the Progressive Group, which took it as a point of honor not to talk to us, it being the most conservative slate there. We asked if they agreed or not about the necessity to form a labor party. Just about all of them did, but they were leery of taking that step because they don't believe those who vote will accept such a proposal.

Now, it was true that the Progressive Group made a big effort to bring in all the retirees who tend to be far more hesitant about any fighting once they are removed from the scene of struggle. In fact, they counted on the retirees and their cronies' votes and they probably realized that in their confusion and disarray, the oppositionists would fragment the vote and blow their chances of winning the elections. They were more or less right because the Progressive Group (really hated by the most determined workers) won the elections by a safe margin. Their top candidate got 827 votes, whereas the top candidate of the P.U.L.L. group got 686 and the top candidate of the Rank & File Slate got 356.

Workers who supported Fox (and his votes were not accidental in the least) may feel dismayed by the elections. We don't see it that way. We see very important results in a first round of fighting and if we can draw the right conclusions about what was done, what happened, and from that see what we have to do, then we can say that the campaign was a real success.

Who were Fox Davis's supporters? Some of them were workers who led the walkout back in September against Fraser's proposed settlement. They did not change their minds as did many when the bureaucrats orchestrated the referendum to forestall any decision "until after Christmas." These are the diehard fighters, uncovered by a truly revolutionary struggle to break with trade unionist politics that have only gone around incircles for many years.

Let the elections stand as a lesson for all the workers. If you join forces and on the right basis you will win because the fight for a labor party has a future. It is based on the years of struggle of the working class to finish with "business unionism," betrayals and the latest schemes such as concessions to skin the workers for the crisis of monopoly capital. It is firmly based not only on the strikes and walkouts against concessions and layoffs, but also on *revolutions* against Reagan and the government's support to the Latin American dictatorships. The Progressive Group does not have a future because it is dependent on the Democratic Party and therefore totally disconnected from the large mobilizations of the working class searching for a leadership and freedom.

We must remember always that the workers will accept tomorrow what they may not accept today. But if the fight is not made now, they won't have that choice.

After the Elections in Chicago

On April 12, black Democrat Harold Washington defeated Republican Bernard Epton in the Chicago mayoral election by the very narrow margin of 51.5% to 48.5%. Unfortunately, Ed Warren, candidate of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), received only 3,725 votes (.4%).

The closeness of the vote, as well as the record participation (82%) in the election, show the kind of confrontation that was going on. There was virtually no abstention or "apathy."

What is the significance of this vote and, connected with it, of the fight the Trotskyist Organization made in Chicago for the labor party?

Recognizing, just as we did, that the objective of the workers was, in the final analysis, to break with the Democratic Party and defeat its hated Machine, the forces around Washington tried to make his campaign into a way to bring workers back to that party. That is why Washington himself denied his campaign was racial, saying instead that it was a "great movement to reform the Democratic Party."

In the same way, the visits of prominent Democrats (including Kennedy and Mondale, who had endorsed his primary opponents) were supposed to show the concern of the national party for "reform," black rights and all good things in general.

Finally, there was the Rev. Jesse Jackson and his "threats" to run as a black candidate in the Democratic presidential primaries, a maneuver aimed at, again, convincing blacks that by very drastic pressure tactics the Democratic Party could somehow be forced to change.

Around this basic scheme, the overwhelming majority of what passes for the "left" fell into line. The Communist Party, *The Guardian*, *Workers World* (and other Stalinist and pro-Stalinist forces), as well as the social democrats of *In These Times* and of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) itself. And here we find a particularly interesting connection.

Manning Marable, academic and jour-

nalist, is a well-known black member of DSA. But he is also a leading figure in the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP). This organization, as its name states, was formed to organize blacks in political independence of the two capitalist parties. But Marable feels no contradiction in supporting Washington, while the rest of NBIPP at best (the whole organization is in great crisis) has nothing to say.

The issue of the political independence of the workers, the poor, the oppressed (especially blacks) was thus profoundly at stake in the Chicago mayoral election.

Class political independence is the whole meaning of the fight for the labor party. That is what we were fighting for in Chicago. And, in that sense, we were for an organized expression of that fight in a vote for Warren.

The large vote for Washington does *not* express a vote for the Democratic Party, despite the best efforts of the Democrats and their hangers-on. The overwhelming character of this vote remains anti-Machine and anti-Democratic Party, *but very inadequately clarified, organized and fought for.*

It has been a long and winding road for the workers of Chicago — and of the whole country — in breaking with the Democrats. The election of Byrne in 1979 was the first open sign of this break in Chicago, but it was accompanied by all kinds of false hopes. The defeat of Byrne by Washington reflected a much deeper determination.

It is in this context that we want to examine the SWP's role, which we think is the best example of a lack of clarification, organization and struggle. While the SWP had an independent campaign, this developed in a purely formal way.

Thus, when Warren denounced a bribe attempt by the Machine, he referred to himself as "the other black candidate in this election." And that has been his consistent theme down to the end. The last two issues of *The Militant* before the elec-

tion put heavy emphasis on defending Washington from racial attacks.

We have repeatedly pointed out the racist nature of the opposition to Washington, but fundamentally race is a straw-man in this campaign. Even Washington, as we saw, wanted to stress that.

In Philadelphia, a black candidate (Wilson Goode) is running against a *notorious* bigot, Frank Rizzo, but nothing even comparable to what has happened in Chicago has happened there. Why? Because in Chicago we are seeing a sharp development of the break with the Democratic Party (which naturally involves racism). Chicago is not a repetition of Detroit, Cleveland, Gary, etc., it is an *anticipation* of great battles.

When the SWP ignores this reality and emphasizes "defending" Washington, it is giving passive support to all those who want to use the election to save the Democratic Party. *Passive* is the key word, because the SWP has not waged a fight to build the labor party in action, but another one of its "socialist education and propaganda campaigns" in a situation that has gone far beyond that. *That is the basic reason why it did so poorly in the elections.*

The last weekend before the election, we were able to participate in joint activity with the SWP, in which several members of that party expressed doubts about raising the labor party directly and indicated

they were not very interested in votes. It is this attitude, inculcated by the leadership, that was the major obstacle to a breakthrough for the labor party in this election.

But great possibilities exist. We were able later to sell twelve copies of *Truth* to SWP'ers we worked with, while the riff-raff of "Spartacist" (which saw Washington's nomination as a "defeat," but did not support the SWP) screamed — very significantly — that we were doing more for the SWP's campaign than the SWP was.

Yes, that is revolutionary politics.

Together with the contacts we have made in Chicago before, such activity lays the basis for our ability to fight for the labor party in the tumultuous period that lies ahead in that city and around the country.

K.F.

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

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

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

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