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International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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[The following are: Part I of "The Deepening Proletarian Turn in World Politics," the international section of the political resolution adopted by the August 1981 convention of the Socialist Workers Party; and "New Steps Toward Resolving the World Crisis of Working-Class Leadership," by Steve Clark, the report on Part I of the political resolution adopted by the 1981 SWP convention.

[The resolution and report have not been updated since August 1981. They therefore do not deal with the sharpening collision between U.S. imperialism and the advancing

workers and peasants revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean; the crackdown on Solidarity and the heroic Polish workers struggle by the Jaruzelski regime; the growing protests in Western Europe and the United States against the imperialist militarization drive; the stepped-up offensive of anticommunist propaganda by the imperialist ruling classes and their labor lieutenants around the Polish events, aimed at giving ideological cover to their military moves and austerity offensive; and other developments in the international class struggle.]

The Deepening Proletarian Turn in World Politics: Part I

[The following is the first of three parts of the resolution adopted by the August 2-8, 1981 National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party.]

* * *

Workers assert leading role

The working class is more and more asserting its leading role in anti-imperialist struggles and in the fight for democracy and socialism in the colonial and semicolonial countries, the workers states, and the imperialist centers.

- The workers have led the toiling people of Nicaragua in establishing a workers and farmers government. They are strengthening that class alliance and have embarked on a line of march that leads toward the consolidation of a new workers state. This has encouraged and emboldened the revolutionary anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchical struggles by the workers and peasants of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. These advances and President Reagan's aggressive counter moves have accelerated class polarization in the region. A new generation of revolutionary fighters has been inspired, especially in Central America. These events have deepened opposition to war among U.S. workers and had a radicalizing impact on a layer of them, particularly Latinos.

A workers and farmers government has been established in Grenada, the first to be led by Black workers. This revolution has inspired the toiling masses throughout the Caribbean islands, the majority of whom are descendants of slaves brought from Africa. As Blacks in the United States learn about this revolution and the social advances it is making, many will be attracted to the socialist road.

- The Polish working class, under the class-struggle leadership of Solidarity, is conducting the most powerful mass fight for socialism and democracy in a deformed workers state since the Stalinist counterrevolution in the 1920s and 1930s. The workers are inspiring and giving political leadership to the farmers, to the students and to the radical intelligentsia. This massive social and political upheaval originated in the struggle of the industrial workers for unions that would fight for their needs, unions independent of the domination of the bureaucratic caste that governs Poland. The workers' struggle is at the center of a mighty social movement to democratize all aspects of life, work, and other social relationships.

Tens of thousands of Communist Party members have joined Solidarity, and its emergence is shaking up the party, leading to discussions and debates inside it.

The unity, determination, and power of the Polish workers are having a profound impact on workers in other bureaucratized workers states, Western Europe, North America, and throughout the world. This unfolding political revolution is a mortal challenge to the bureaucratic caste in the USSR, which oppresses the peoples in the Eastern European workers states. Solidarity's open declaration of support for the aspirations of workers elsewhere

in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union for democratic trade unions increases the stakes in the battle against bureaucratic misrule.

Any military intervention aimed at crushing the Polish workers would be a blow to the developing antiwar movement in Western Europe and North America, as well as grist for the mill of imperialist propagandists and politicians—conservative, liberal, and social democratic alike. It would at the same time have big repercussions in Eastern Europe, spotlight Moscow's national oppression of Poland, and lead to a profound crisis inside Communist parties around the world.

The Polish events have inspired U.S. workers and helped to further undermine anticommunism. Striking air traffic controllers, for example, have contrasted the response by the Polish government to striking state employees there to the vicious antilabor moves against the air controllers by the Reagan administration. The workers in Solidarity have demonstrated that Stalinist totalitarianism can be shattered as they fight for democracy and socialism.

- The Vietnamese workers have extended socialized property relations to the southern half of their country; defended their revolution against the imperialist-backed aggression of the reactionary, capitalist Pol Pot regime; assisted the Kampuchean people in ridding their country of that murderous gang and aided them in beginning the reconstruction of their ravaged economy and elementary social institutions; repelled a U.S.-inspired invasion by Peking; helped advance the social revolution in Laos. The Vietnamese Communist Party, as part of its battle against imperialism, has extended solidarity to the revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean.

The Vietnamese CP today publicly attacks the Maoist strategy, which denies the leading role of the working class in favor of the peasantry in the struggle for national liberation. It has polemicized against the Maoist substitution of military tactics for a strategy rooted in the social and political centrality of the proletariat in our epoch. It asserts that Maoism is a fundamental betrayal of the teachings of Marx and Lenin. These polemics open the door to advancing discussion on the proletarian strategy for national liberation and socialism in the Communist parties and among the oppressed and exploited toilers in Asia, especially in Thailand and the Philippines.

- The Iranian working class was the driving force in the mass upsurge that brought down the shah. It has remained in the forefront of the struggle against the intensifying campaign of the imperialist powers to overthrow the Iranian government and move towards reestablishing a pro-imperialist regime through a military dictatorship; defense against the imperialist-backed Iraqi invasion; and

resistance to moves by the Iranian capitalist regime to step up repression and roll back democratic rights and social gains won by the revolution. The Iranian revolution has weakened imperialist power in the Middle East and parts of Asia, inspired workers throughout the entire Muslim world, and strengthened the hand of workers and peasants against capitalist regimes throughout that region.

- Recent years have seen the growth of Black industrial unions in South Africa fighting for the economic and social advancement of the Black proletariat. These unions play an increasingly central leadership role in the broad social struggle against the apartheid system. There has been a growth of the role of Black workers in the African National Congress and other vanguard liberation formations. The organization and mobilization of Black South African workers are central to the continuing battle in the whole of southern Africa, where Washington, Pretoria, and London seek to reverse the gains made by the Angolan, Mozambican, Namibian, and Zimbabwean masses against imperialism in recent years.

- The growing militancy and influence of the left wing of the British unions in the Labour Party are a harbinger of shake-ups in the labor movement and mass reformist-led parties in other Western European countries, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, as the capitalists intensify their drive toward austerity and war. Other signs of these changes include the rebellions by young workers in cities across Britain, the demonstrations in West Berlin against the visit there by Secretary of State Haig, the mass demonstrations in New Zealand against connections between the government there and the apartheid regime in South Africa, and the breadth of the solidarity among workers around the world for the resurgent struggle of the Irish people against British imperialism.

- The U.S. working class and its trade unions are part of this shift of the proletariat toward center stage in world politics. As the employers intensify their offensive against the workers' unions, living standards, and democratic rights, the workers have been driven back. Chrysler-type takebacks are rammed down their throats under the blackmail threat of mass layoffs and plant closings. The rights of Blacks, women, and other oppressed people are curtailed and slashed, along with other democratic rights and social gains. But out of their process, class polarization is deepening and a vanguard layer of young American workers is becoming more combative, more radical, and more open to thinking socially and acting politically.

Crisis deepens in imperialist countries

Following World War II, U.S. imperialism's world domination was challenged by the colonial revolution.

But the strength of American capitalism's economic reserves, reinforced by three decades of expansive accumulation of capital, provided the underpinnings for relative domestic class peace. This unfolding contradictory combination was at the center of the SWP's 1961 convention resolution, "The World Struggle for Socialism," adopted shortly after the establishment of the Cuban workers state:

"The confinement of revolutionary advances to the less developed parts of the world, together with the pronounced political lag in the West, has set its stamp upon our entire period." The end of this "pronounced political lag" was signalled by the explosive proletarian upsurge in France in

May-June 1968. Today, workers and workers' organizations in the imperialist countries tend to follow one another's example in resisting capitalist austerity, militarization, and political repression.

Zeroing in on the situation in this country, the resolution explained that, "The witch-hunt atmosphere and erosion of democracy in the fifties, coupled with the prolonged prosperity, greatly blunted the class struggle in the United States, making it possible for imperialism to carry on with relative impunity a policy of the most dangerous 'brinkmanship' in foreign affairs."

Today, that domestic class stability and "impunity" has been deeply eroded by Washington's defeat in Vietnam and by the onset of world capitalist stagnation and permanent high inflation.

Despite the blows and setbacks, the trend is for class consciousness and combativity to rise inside the American working class, which is potentially the most powerful social force on earth. It has the historic task of conquering political power before the U.S. rulers hurl humanity into nuclear incineration.

The threat of a massive antiwar movement—which would be explosive and would have a profound impact on the unions from its outset—has thrown a monkey wrench into the ability of the ruling class to use its vast military power to stem revolutionary struggles and reverse proletarian victories. The American people have developed not only the "Vietnam syndrome"; they have also shown a growing resistance to military adventures by Washington, knowing that their escalation into a war between the United States and the Soviet Union would bring down a nuclear catastrophe upon the world. This is even more deeply felt among workers in Japan, who alone have experienced the horrors of nuclear destruction at the hands of U.S. imperialism, and the workers of Western Europe, who know that they are on the front lines of any war between NATO and the Soviet Union. This growing working-class opposition to imperialist military aggression has helped open the door to liberation for oppressed peoples in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

The imperialist rulers have not been able to establish the preconditions necessary for a prolonged new expansive wave of capital accumulation and economic growth. At the same time, they have not been able to deal crippling enough blows to the industrial unions to preclude them from being transformed into powerful instruments of struggle under class-struggle leadership. Thus, the rulers are forced to escalate their offensive against the working class to drive down its living standards, to raise the rate of exploitation, and to weaken the industrial unions, the workers' strongest institutions of defense.

Proletarianization of world politics

Workers in the United States correctly believe that they have entered the greatest period of economic decline and employers' offensive since the Great Depression of the 1920s. Unlike the 1930s, however, the working-class fight-back that will mark the 1980s takes place in a context where massive industrial unions already exist; where large numbers of Black, Latino, and, to a lesser extent, women workers belong to those unions; where the Jim Crow system of legal segregation has been defeated; where masses of women have placed the battle for women's rights at the center of the struggle for progressive social change; and where the working population is more and

more opposed to the use of military power by U.S. imperialism to preserve its world domination.

Politics in the United States is unfolding in a world in which the class relationship of forces internationally is the most favorable for the working class and its allies at any time since the grave defeats the workers suffered in the 1930s—defeats that opened the door to the second world imperialist slaughter. This proletarianization of world politics can be summarized in four points:

- Not one of the workers states established since 1917 has been overthrown by imperialism. The expropriation of the exploiters in these countries remains an enormous conquest of the world working class and weighs more and more heavily in the world balance of class forces. In the most recent period, the Vietnamese toilers beat back a prolonged imperialist attack, established a workers state throughout all Vietnam, and aided the Kampuchean and Laotian toilers in establishing the conditions necessary to move toward workers states throughout Indochina. The workers in Nicaragua and Grenada, under the leadership of the FSLN and New Jewel Movement, are on the road to extending the socialist revolution further.

- The revolutionary leadership in Cuba—the first to lead a workers state since the Bolsheviks under Lenin—continues to politically advance. It is now being reinforced by the revolutionary leaderships in Grenada and Nicaragua.

- The mass organizations of the proletariat are putting their stamp on the class struggle in the colonial and semicolonial countries, workers states and imperialist centers. The political role of the independent mass unions in Poland is the most powerful and important current example. The growing tendency toward urban explosions and proletarian forms of struggle reflects the significant growth and weight of the working class and its mass organizations. This helps draw the three sectors of the world revolution more closely together.

- In all the imperialist countries, as class polarization deepens, the working class and its industrial unions and mass parties are moving to the center of political and social struggles.

In 1978 the SWP responded to this increasing proletarianization of world politics by deciding to lead our members into the mines, mills, shops, transport centers, and the related industrial unions in order to meet the growing opportunities there for political work by revolutionary Marxists. Subsequently, the 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International decided to make “a radical turn to immediately organize to get a large majority of our members and leaders into industry and into industrial unions.”

Successful implementation of the turn is a necessary condition for our world movement to progress toward its goal: the construction of proletarian parties and the rebuilding of a mass Leninist international. Only a proletarian world current, composed in its majority of industrial workers, can stand up to the pressures that will intensify as class polarization deepens, understand the interrelationship of the class forces in the developing political situation, and chart a clear course along the historic line of march of the working class. Only a current with a proletarian composition and program can confidently take the initiative to link up with class-struggle fighters and collaborate with the revolutionary leaderships that are developing as the world revolution moves ahead.

The 1938 founding document of our world movement, the *Transitional Program*, stated, “The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.”

New proletarian forces are emerging from the rise of the world revolution in all of its three sectors. The actions of vanguard layers of the Polish workers movement show the potential for revolutionary leaders to emerge in the bureaucratically deformed workers states. The young rebel workers from Chicago to Liverpool, from Sydney to Gothenberg—who, at different tempos, are seeking class-struggle methods to fight back against the capitalist onslaught—show the same potential in the imperialist countries. The same is true for the young workers and anti-imperialist fighters in the increasingly proletarian-led battles in the colonies and semicolonies. These developments indicate the new potential for resolving the historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat.

The *Transitional Program* also noted that by 1938, aside from the cadres of the Fourth International, “there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name.” The evolution of the international class struggle is ushering in a new period in this regard. The Cuban leadership, and more recently those in Grenada and Nicaragua, constitute other currents “meriting the name” revolutionary. Their role in the class struggle internationally marks a historic step forward in the task of rebuilding the kind of leadership that the world proletariat must have to emerge victorious.

The revolutionary course of the Cuban leadership

The Cuban revolutionists have been profoundly influenced by the deepening proletarianization of world politics. They have responded as proletarian internationalists to the favorable shift in the world balance of forces opened by Vietnam’s triumph in 1975. They have acted to advance the revolutionary cause where they judged their initiatives could have the greatest impact in Angola and elsewhere in southern Africa; in Ethiopia; in the Arab East; in Central America and the Caribbean. They continue to approach solidarity with Indochina as an acid test of internationalism.

The leadership of the Cuban revolution has strengthened its links with the Cuban working class, which has grown numerically, in its degree of organization, and in its political consciousness. The Cuban workers have been profoundly affected by the victory of the Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions.

The Cuban leaders have increasingly sought to deepen their understanding of the program and strategy of Marx, Engels, and Lenin as the best guide to revolutionary action today. They have developed a greater appreciation of the role of the trade unions and the leading political role of the proletariat in revolutionary struggles. In working with revolutionary movements in Latin America, they act on their view that the democratic and socialist tasks become combined in the struggle against imperialist oppression, tyrannical rule, and capitalist exploitation.

The Cuban revolutionists operate in several different but overlapping international arenas.

- They work closely with the Sandinistas and New Jewel Movement, whom they consider two more conscious battalions in the revolutionary proletarian current they are seeking to forge in Latin America. They are seeking to

add to those battalions by their unstinting solidarity with revolutionary fighters in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

- They have developed especially close relations with the Vietnamese Communist Party through their many years of active solidarity under the banner, "For Vietnam, even our own blood!"

- They collaborate with national liberation movements in many countries and seek to learn from and influence radical and revolutionary currents everywhere.

- They lead the anti-imperialist wing in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries—a wing that includes the Nicaraguan, Grenadian, and Vietnamese leaderships. They seek to develop mutually advantageous government-to-government relations with countries in the colonial and semicolonial world that are in the sharpest conflict with imperialism. They are committed to keeping troops in Angola and Ethiopia as long as they are requested to do so to meet imperialist-backed attacks.

- They maintain formal ties to Communist parties around the world. As the Main Report to the 1975 Cuban CP Congress put it, "Our Party participates in this with its own independent views but, at the same time, with complete loyalty to the cause of Communists the world over."

- They have recognized the importance of the developments taking place inside the Socialist (Second) International and have pointed to the increasing opportunities for revolutionists to unite in action with social-democratic parties in Latin America around specific objectives. Alert to the opportunities created by the conflicts and divisions inside the social democracy, they are conducting a political intervention in the Socialist International, and they encourage the NJM, FSLN, and FDR to find ways of operating in it.

Cuba is besieged by the world's strongest imperialist power, which possesses a strategic nuclear arsenal, huge armed forces, and the capacity to choke off both vital imports and export markets for the island. It is a permanent target of acts of harassment, the systematic murder of Cubans abroad, sabotage, biological warfare, continual military provocation and pressure in Guantanamo and the waters surrounding Cuba, and destabilization efforts inspired and organized by the CIA and their counterrevolutionary exile gangs. It is under permanent economic pressure from the U.S. blockade, which is exacerbated by the adverse effects of the world capitalist crisis.

This unceasing hostility by U.S. imperialism has made Cuba dependent economically and militarily on the Soviet Union. To prevent their revolution from being crushed, the Cubans have correctly linked its future to that of the Soviet workers state. Because a bureaucratic caste governs the USSR, however, Cuba's lifeline comes with a significant political price. The Cubans must pursue a policy that allows the Stalinist castes to share in the prestige of the Cuban revolution.

The shaping of Cuba's world view

The Cuban revolutionists have been shaped by their concrete experiences and by the period of world history in which they emerged:

1. there has been no mass Leninist international;
2. the world's most powerful workers state has been governed by a bureaucratic caste that long ago overturned

the program and practices of Bolshevism; and

3. during most of the first decade of the Cuban workers state, the colonial revolution was unaccompanied by any substantial radicalization of the workers in the advanced capitalist countries.

This objective situation underlies the Cuban leadership's view of the relationship between the three sectors of the international class struggle.

The Cubans' understanding of the role of the working class in the workers states in advancing world socialism continues to evolve as the international class struggle unfolds and as they absorb new experiences. They now state that a process of degeneration is possible in the workers states, creating an opening for capitalist restoration. This is reinforced by their recognition of bureaucratic abuses and lack of internationalism in the leaderships of some workers states.

Some of the main elements of the Cuban approach are:

- The right and duty of the workers in all the workers states to defend their anticapitalist conquests from imperialist attacks. They correctly see that the overturn of a workers state by imperialism would be a gigantic blow to the world revolution.

- Unlike the bureaucratic castes in the deformed and degenerated workers states, the Castro leadership does not utilize the imperialist blockade and military threats as an excuse to abandon proletarian internationalism or to defend bureaucratic privilege and repression. It points to the close relationship between the Cuban Communist Party leadership and the Cuban masses as unique among the workers states. It states that implementing its internationalist outlook goes hand in hand with democratizing and strengthening the mass organizations. The Cuban leadership mobilizes the masses to fight bureaucratic deformations and privilege-seeking social layers who would steer Cuba away from its orientation of deepening the socialist revolution at home and helping to extend it abroad.

- In polar contrast to the Kremlin's policies, the aid that Cuba itself gives to dozens of countries and revolutionary movements is provided with no strings attached, in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. It stands as an example and a source of aid and inspiration to others struggling against imperialism and for social emancipation.

- The Cubans explain that the blatantly counterrevolutionary foreign policy and repressive rule of the social layer governing China is an obstacle to the world revolution. They hail the qualities and revolutionary spirit of the Chinese people who established the workers state in China, and they state that the Chinese masses will sooner or later "sweep away" the ruling clique.

- The Cubans recoil from the bureaucratic abuses and privileges in the party and state apparatus in Eastern Europe that have been spotlighted by the Polish workers' upsurge. In reference to the Polish events, Fidel Castro has publicly contrasted the lack of democracy, ties with the working masses, and internationalism to what exists and is being strengthened in Cuba. But the Cubans erroneously view the struggle led by Solidarity as a danger to the Polish workers state, as increasing the opportunity for imperialist intervention and capitalist restoration. They see the Soviet regime as the ultimate defender of the conquests of the Polish workers—rather than recognizing its role as the ultimate defender of the totalitarian regimes

in Eastern Europe in order to protect its bureaucratic privileges. This false view cuts across the class solidarity that vanguard workers throughout the world feel with their Polish brothers and sisters, and miseducates revolutionists who look to the Cubans for leadership.

As the working class has come increasingly to the fore in the imperialist countries over the past decade, the Cuban leadership has deepened its understanding of politics and its confidence in revolutionary perspectives there. It was deeply affected by the role of the U.S. antiwar movement in ending Washington's devastation of Indochina and noted the impact of this movement on the U.S. working class. It follows closely the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in the United States and takes an active interest in the solidarity campaigns developing today with El Salvador, Nicaragua, Grenada, and against the blockade of Cuba.

The Cuban government seeks to win support from the large Cuban population in the United States against the blockade and other imperialist threats. In 1978 it opened a dialogue with leaders of the emigré communities to advance this objective. U.S. police agencies responded with fierce brutality to this propaganda initiative in the American class struggle. The cops and political police collaborated with right-wing assassins to kill and terrorize Cuban-Americans leading the dialogue.

The Cuban revolutionists also point to the ravages of unemployment, inflation, and cutbacks on the working class of even the richest capitalist countries. They hailed the significance of the coal miners' strike in fighting back against the ruling-class offensive in the United States. They noted the importance of the sweeping electoral victory in France that brought Mitterrand into the presidency. A growing theme of the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian revolutionists is the contrasts between their own social policies and priorities and those existing in the imperialist countries.

Revolutionary internationalism and the fight against bureaucracy

The acid test for Cuban revolutionists is their refusal to abandon their revolutionary internationalist course in the face of brutal pressure from U.S. imperialism to do so.

The Cubans wield state power to advance the interests of the workers and peasants and to extend the socialist revolution to countries still under the thumb of imperialism. Cuba has marshaled solidarity, provided aid, and dispatched internationalist volunteers for anti-imperialist struggles from Indochina to Palestine, from southern Africa to Latin America. It has shown in action its willingness to work with anyone to mobilize solidarity for these revolutionary struggles.

Where it can do the most to promote the socialist revolution and influence class-struggle-minded militants in a Marxist direction, it has done so. This is shown by its record in this hemisphere from Chile to Jamaica, and by events in Central America and the Caribbean since 1979.

In advancing support at home for this internationalist policy, the Cuban leaders rely on the mobilization, organization, and political education of the workers and peasants. This is the method they have followed from the massive mobilizations that uprooted imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation from Cuba in 1959-1960, to the repeated rallies and demonstrations in 1980 in re-

sponse to imperialist threats and provocations. The Cuban toilers have become the most internationalist and class-conscious people of any country in the world. That is the true source of Cuba's strength and revolutionary vitality.

The gigantic popular mobilizations in 1980, the largest in Cuban history, were both an answer to imperialist threats and a blow to those in Cuba—including self-seeking layers of the Cuban state apparatus—who are "fainthearted" about the revolution's internationalist course. The decision by the Cuban leaders to invite those who wanted to get out of Washington's line of fire to leave through the port of Mariel clarified for the Cuban people the stakes developing in Central America and the Caribbean. It rid the island of a significant layer of the parasitic *escoria* and a thin layer of aspiring bureaucrats, and rallied the overwhelming majority of Cubans around the course of defending and extending the revolution come what may. This commitment to the revolution is testimony to the Cuban people's determination to preserve and advance the gains they have made in health care, education, housing, economic development, and the battle against race and sex discrimination.

From their own successes and failures, the Cuban revolutionists have learned the value of institutionalizing democratic participation by the working class in order to ensure Cuba's defense; promote economic and social progress; instill proletarian internationalism; and combat the tendency toward the growth of bureaucratic privileges and abuses, a tendency that is inevitable given Cuba's situation as a besieged fortress and the relatively backward state of its productive forces.

Over the past decade, progress has been made toward institutionalizing democratic decision-making and participation by the working class: the unions, farmers' organizations, women's federation, and neighborhood Committees for Defense of the Revolution have been strengthened; elected organs of People's Power have been established and are evolving and gaining experience on the local, provincial, and national levels; a mass-based Territorial Troops Militia has been launched to counter imperialist threats in reaction to revolutionary gains in the region (this gives every Cuban the right to bear arms as part of a well-regulated militia); and more workers, women, and veterans of internationalist missions are being brought into the party and elected to the Cuban CP Central Committee. This sets an example for workers organizations throughout the world.

As the world revolution advances, and the working class increasingly asserts itself on an international scale, conditions for advancing the institutionalization of workers democracy in Cuba will be enhanced. In turn, lags and weaknesses in this uncompleted institutionalization process are a brake on internationalism, economic development, and proletarian morale.

The Fourth International

Today, as for the last half-century, the workers of the world have no mass Leninist international of the kind the Bolsheviks began to build during the years following the 1917 Russian Revolution. A revolutionary international based on mass proletarian parties remains to be rebuilt.

The Fourth International is a Marxist nucleus, organized as a world party, whose revolutionary activity is carried out with the conscious aim of rebuilding such a

mass proletarian international. From its founding, the Fourth International has faced enormous objective adversities. As the *Transitional Program* explained, the Fourth International was founded in the midst of the "greatest defeats of the proletariat in history"—the degeneration of the Communist International, the rise of fascism, and the opening of World War II.

This was followed by the postwar sabotage of revolutionary opportunities in Western Europe by Stalinist and Social Democratic parties; the temporary but far-reaching credit gained by Stalinism following the USSR's victory over German imperialism and the social overturns in Eastern Europe and China; and the pressures on vanguard workers generated by the combination of Cold War, witch-hunting, the Stalinists' worldwide vilification of Trotskyism and—most important—more than two decades of rapid capitalist economic expansion.

These factors explain the small size, substantial non-proletarian composition, and relative isolation from the organized workers' movement of the sections of the Fourth International. No section is yet a mass party with decisive influence in any major wing of the labor movement.

"The main historic contribution of the Fourth International to date," the SWP's 1961 world resolution said, "has been a program that consciously expresses and unites the long-range interests of the working people in all three sectors of the world."

That fact remains just as true and just as important today. To the fullest extent possible, we apply in the mass movement, and thus help to preserve and develop as a vital force, this program based on the fundamental contributions of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the Bolshevik-led first four congresses of the Communist International.

Trotsky and the International Left Opposition defended this program of Bolshevism against Stalinist degeneration. In the course of this struggle, they enriched the Leninist program, which linked the three sectors of the world revolution (the imperialist countries, the oppressed nations, and the new workers state), with an analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet workers state and the need for a political revolution by the workers to remove the bureaucratic caste and return to using Soviet power to pursue an internationalist course. This was codified in the *Transitional Program* adopted in 1938 by the SWP and at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International later that year.

These are indispensable contributions to resolving the crisis of proletarian leadership. The rise of world revolution creates greater opportunities than ever before for the Fourth International to become proletarian in composition as well as program, learn and enrich our program through our deepening involvement in the mass workers movement, increase our political influence, and grow.

We are confident that the revolutionists of action who emerge out of all three sectors of the international class struggle will increasingly identify with the necessary line of march of the working class. This will lead them toward the Marxist outlook. Events from Poland to Nicaragua and Grenada are again vindicating that confidence in the world proletariat and in the prospects for rebuilding a mass Leninist international.

Toward a mass Leninist International

Major progress toward rebuilding a mass Leninist international depends on new victories in the class struggle that draw together the proletarian vanguards in the three sectors of the world revolution. In the final analysis, it is the vanguard workers of the world who will resolve the leadership crisis of the proletariat.

Along this road there will be regroupments, splits, fusions, and maneuvers of all sorts. We will take initiatives toward centrist groups moving left, leftward-moving sections inside the social-democratic and Stalinist parties and youth groups, unions oriented toward class combat, and revolutionary currents originating outside our own ranks.

In Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, the place for those who share our ideas is as loyal builders of the Cuban Communist Party, FSLN, and New Jewel Movement. These parties, which we consider to be fellow revolutionary organizations, have shown in action that they are the leaders of the working people in their countries. Our aim is to collaborate with them in every way possible to further our shared goal of consolidating and extending the socialist revolution in this hemisphere and developing a strategy to achieve this on a world scale.

We are all necessarily shaped by our own origins and experiences. It is out of the accelerating class struggle itself—against imperialist domination, capitalist exploitation, and the oppression by the bureaucratic castes—that the views and capacities of each will be tested and differences resolved in life.

We have much to learn from the Cubans, as well as from the Nicaraguans and Grenadians, who don't judge political organizations primarily by names or labels but by what they do in practice. They approach political currents on the basis of willingness to collaborate around solidarity work and other common aims. This is another striking thing that sets them apart from the Stalinists, social democrats, and labor bureaucracy, all of whom place their own sectarian and bureaucratic interests above the interests of workers' unity against oppression and exploitation.

* * *

What organizational conclusions do we draw from our assessment of the proletarian turn in world politics?

In the broadest sense, this development reemphasizes the main tasks decided by the 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International—the turn to industry and defending the revolutions in Central America and Indochina from world imperialism. To this must be added a campaign in defense of the Polish workers and an organized effort to learn as much as we can from their titanic struggle—concretely, and first hand.

With regard to Central America and the Caribbean, and those currents that we consider fellow revolutionists, our central tasks are continuing and stepping up participation in anti-intervention and solidarity efforts; sponsoring trips for our members, co-workers, and other activists to discuss worker-to-worker with people in these countries and to learn critically and first-hand about these revolutions; using our press, election campaigns, and publishing pro-

grams to counter lies of the big-business media with eyewitness reports, exposés, polemics and interviews; and comparing the social achievements of these revolutions, despite imperialist sabotage and economic backwardness inherited from imperialist domination, to the deterioration of social conditions for the working class in the United States.

As internationalist workers, this is part of our orientation to the rising struggles of our class around the world. Our turn to industry is inseparably connected to this perspective of reaching out to these emerging proletarian currents and revolutionary leaderships. The internationalization of U.S. politics is the other side of the coin of the proletarianization of world politics.

New Steps Toward Resolving the World Crisis of Working-Class Leadership

by Steve Clark

[The general line of the following report was adopted by the 31st National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party on August 3, 1981.]

* * *

Our last convention opened less than three weeks after the July 19, 1979, Sandinista victory over the U.S.-backed Somoza tyranny in Nicaragua. That convention heard an eyewitness report on the first several weeks of the Nicaraguan revolution. It opened with the sentence, "The socialist revolution has begun in Nicaragua."

Events over the past two years have confirmed that evaluation. The organized and mobilized workers and farmers of Nicaragua have deepened the socialist course of their revolution under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

This was confirmed in a striking way a few weeks ago at the second anniversary celebration of the July 19, 1979, victory in Managua. A half million people attended that rally from throughout the country—some fifteen to twenty percent of the population.

A series of new anticapitalist measures were announced there, including stiffer laws to prevent capitalist sabotage of the economy through decapitalization—that is, against the increasing tendency of the capitalists to take the money and run. These measures mark a further extension of workers control, reinforcing the initiative of the Nicaraguan workers and their unions in spotting such sabotage, monitoring the operations of the remaining bosses, and calling in state intervention where necessary.

Fourteen enterprises where the workers had already organized government intervention against the owners were expropriated outright. And state control over foreign trade was extended.

There was an important new stage of the agrarian reform announced at the rally too. This will involve the nationalization of substantial tracts of unutilized agricultural land that the landowners have not planted, as well as government authority to take over land owned by Nicaraguans who have been out of the country for more than six months—this latter measure has already been applied against twenty-two or twenty-three landowners who have been living in Miami and elsewhere. The new phase of the agrarian reform also includes distribution of these lands to farmers and the development of cooperative and state farms.

At the rally, Sandinista Commandante Tomás Borge pointed to the motor force of the Nicaraguan revolution: the class struggle between those who want to advance it and those who want to hold it back and reverse it. [See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, August 24, 1981, for full text of Borge's speech.]

"Who decapitalized the country?" he asked. "Who assassinated Sandino and celebrated in an orgy of champagne and blood?"

"The bourgeoisie!" the half million roared back.

"Who made fabulous deals with the tyranny?" asked Borge. "Who made contributions under the table to Somoza's election campaigns?"

Again the answer came back, "The bourgeoisie!"

They shouted the same answer again and again as Borge asked, "Who grabbed up the peasants' land and kept the workers under the yoke of oppression? Who called our wonderful literacy campaign indoctrination?"

"Who chimed in and still chime in with the crude anticommunist campaigns of Somoza, Pinochet, Stroessner, and all the rest of the gorilla animal life of Latin America and the CIA? Who slandered the revolution and who abuses the mass organizations with disgusting epithets? ["The bourgeoisie"]

"Who asks for advice and takes orders from the representatives of the empire, of the same empire that tried to enslave our country, sowing death, destruction, and humiliation? ["The bourgeoisie"]

"It was not you workers and peasants. You weren't the ones who decapitalized the country. You weren't the ones who went and stood at the door of the American embassy to ask permission for what you were going to do. And if it wasn't you, then who is it, who was it, who has it always been? Who are the traitors, the capitulators, the false prophets? ["The bourgeoisie"]

That was a lesson right there in advancing class consciousness and the socialist course of the revolution.

Borge's speech—one of the most important speeches of the Nicaraguan revolution thus far—also explained:

"The whole world, both our friends and our enemies, knows what this heroic people is capable of. Sandino was the one who showed the way in defending our national honor. And who were Sandino's followers? The same people who made this revolution, who are now making concessions to the classes that were finally thrown out of power in Nicaragua, after ruling for centuries. [Applause]

"And these are real concessions besides. For example, the businessmen have been given incentives to produce, and it was correct for this to be done. They were given all kinds of help and access to financial credit, and they will continue to get help in order to produce. But everybody should know that as of July 19, the day of our victory, their access to political credit is closed off. That road is closed to them, because power is now in the hands of all the descendants of Sandino's rag-tag army, of the barefoot

soldiers, of the revolutionaries, of those who hunger and thirst for a justice that has been denied them since the beginning of our history." [Applause]

And Borge continued:

"We are creating a new society in which an individual is not a piece of merchandise, a society in which there are no wolves and lambs, where men do not live off the exploitation of other men. We are struggling to create a society in which the workers are the fundamental power driving things forward, but in which other social sectors also play a role, always insofar as they identify with the interests of the country, with the interests of the great majority.

"The measures the Government of National Reconstruction has announced today are a step forward in the process of transformation demanded by the working class. But it is not possible to move forward without cutting into the interests of the selfish classes. So nobody should be surprised that these sectors are attacking the revolution. Even if it is true that not everyone in these classes is trapped in the web of selfishness or completely possessed by the demon of prejudice, nevertheless it is a fact that a big part of them have no interest whatsoever in changing the rotten structures of the past. For this reason, the revolutionary measures that are being taken provoke fury and insecurity in some sections of the minority class."

At the back of the July 19 rally stretched a big banner of the Sandinista Workers Federation, the Sandinista-led union. It read, "After 20 years of struggle the working class swears to advance towards socialism."

The Sandinista leadership has correctly understood the central and leading role of the Nicaraguan workers—the decisiveness of their unity, their class consciousness, their independent organization, their struggles and mobilizations, their increasing control over industry, and their capacity to win the confidence of the working farmers. This they see as the key to advancing the socialist course of the revolution. And they are leading the vanguard of the Nicaraguan working class to carry out its role in doing just this, at the head of all the oppressed toilers—above all the peasants and the small farmers.

They have also systematically raised the internationalist consciousness of the workers and prepared them for the dangers and the consequences of the extension of the socialist revolution in Central America and the Caribbean. In Nicaragua, solidarity with El Salvador has gone hand-in-hand with constructing and strengthening the militias.

As Borge explained July 19:

"Our revolution has always been internationalist, ever since Sandino fought in the Segovias. There were internationalists from all over the world who fought alongside Sandino, men from Venezuela, Mexico, Peru. Another who fought alongside Sandino was the great hero of the Salvadoran people named Farabundo Martí. [Applause]

"It is not strange that we are internationalists, because this is something we got from Sandino. All the revolutionaries and all the people of Latin America especially know that our people's heart is with them, beats alongside theirs. Our heart goes out to Latin America, and we also know that Latin America's heart goes out to the Nicaraguan revolution. This does not mean that we export our revolution. It is enough—and we couldn't do otherwise—for us to export our example, the example of the courage, sensitivity, and determination of our people.

"How could we not be upset about the injustices that are committed in different parts of the world? But we know that it is the people themselves of these countries who must make their revolutions, and we know that by advancing our revolution we are also helping our brothers and sisters in the rest of Latin America. We know what is resting on our revolution—not only the aspirations of our people, but also the hopes of all the dispossessed of Latin America. This carries with it enormous responsibility, because as we have said before and repeat today, our internationalism is primarily expressed in consolidating our own revolution, working selflessly day in and day out and training ourselves militarily to defend our homeland."

Proletarianization of world politics

This course, consciously projected and led by the FSLN, confirms one of the central themes of the National Committee majority's Draft Political Resolution—the proletarianization of world politics. This is reflected by the increasing weight of the working class—its unions and other mass organizations, and its class-struggle strategy and methods—in all three sectors of the world revolution.

This report does not aim to assess these developments as such, parts of which have already been done in the presentation by George Saunders on Poland yesterday and in the report by Jack Barnes adopted by the convention yesterday, "The Reagan Offensive at Home and Abroad," [*Party Organizer* Vol.5, No.3].

The aim of this report is to assess what these trends mean for the development of proletarian leadership; for advancing the strategic line of march of the working class on a world scale; for the resolution of the historic crisis of working-class leadership; for building an alternative to the Stalinist, Social Democratic, and other petty-bourgeois and bourgeois misleaders that have dominated the workers movement for a half century to the detriment of the world revolution; and for moving closer to our historic goal of a mass world party of socialist revolution.

With the world revolution on the rise and the balance of forces in the world shifting toward the working class, new leaderships are rising. They are being tested and are challenged to deepen their Marxist understanding along with their revolutionary activity.

I want to point to three examples.

Poland

The historic battles in Poland over the past year are having a profound impact on the discussions and thinking among workers and the oppressed worldwide. The Polish industrial working class has taken the leadership of the farmers, of other sectors of the working class, and of the students, intellectuals, professionals, and technicians in a sustained and powerful battle against bureaucratic privilege and totalitarian misrule.

Their example has been an inspiration to workers the world over, including right here in the United States. It has helped revive a vision of the real social and political function unions should play in the workers states, that is, as schools of workers management and administration, "schools of communism," as Lenin put it. And Solidarity has led the opening battles of the political revolution in

Poland that could make it possible for the unions to really serve that function.

The Draft Political Resolution observes that the class-struggle leadership of Solidarity has shown in struggle its capacities, its integrity, its commitment above all to the interests of the Polish workers and their allies. It is a politically heterogeneous leadership, marked by its historic origins and by the political context in which it grew up and is forced to operate. To our knowledge, no section of it is yet a Leninist political leadership, nor evolving rapidly in that direction. In general, the leaders and the ranks of Solidarity have a distorted view of Marxism and Leninism as a result of the thirty-five years of Stalinist policies carried out in their name and surrounded by a web of lies and falsifications. That web is not so easy to untangle.

Comrades who have been to Poland are struck by the contradictions they run into. On one hand there is the power of the worker-led massive social upsurge and the commitment to the struggle for a society where the workers run the factories and govern. Yet, on the other hand, there is the lack of a consistent working-class perspective of the world revolution; the not-infrequent illusions in the U.S. and West European imperialist democracies; the lack of understanding of capitalism and imperialism; and the failure to identify with the struggles in Central America and other sectors of the colonial revolution.

This is the legacy of nearly four decades of Stalinism. The bureaucracy provides only the information that it wants to provide to the Polish people. It presents its negation of Marxism as the genuine article, which understandably meets revulsion and rejection. It does nothing to promote internationalism. Instead, its policies promote illusions in cooperation with world capitalism. Poland's national oppression by the Kremlin and Moscow's support for the hated bureaucratic caste in Poland, make it hard for the Polish masses to see the remaining historical conquests of the Soviet workers state.

There is no easy way around these facts of history. A Leninist party with a Marxist program must be built in Poland. But this can only develop out of the experiences and the struggles of the Polish workers—from *their* starting point, with all of its contradictions and along the road that they are currently marching.

We do not help advance along this road by prematurely picking sides in Solidarity's rich political life; writing off leaders; confusing tactical judgments, or even mistakes, with conciliation towards the bureaucracy; or by assuming that there are limits to the evolution of the class-struggle Solidarity leadership. Our job is not to seek out oppositionists or critics of Solidarity in Poland.

Instead, our challenge is to follow these events, learn from them, and seek to explain their lessons to American workers and others whom we can influence.

It is from that vantage point that we should watch the political differentiations that will arise out of the needs of the Polish workers struggle itself. Leaderships and programs are tested by how well they match up to and advance what needs to be done next.

We are confident that the class-struggle experiences of young Polish workers will continue to pose new questions, new challenges, and the need to search for new ideas and strategies. If a revolutionary political leadership does not emerge out of that process, then the fight for workers democracy will falter at some point. As part of that

process, what we say and what we do can and does influence the thinking and discussions among vanguard fighters and leaders. That's the value of the trips comrades are making there, the growing number of *IPs* we have been able to get into the hands of Solidarity activists, and the discussions we have been able to have.

Vietnam

For more than a decade, between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, our party correctly explained and acted on the *fact* that the Vietnamese war and revolution were at the very center of world politics. During that decade, the revolutionary war unfolded as part of a broad social and political upheaval throughout the cities and in the countryside of Vietnam. The National Liberation Front's 1968 Tet offensive—which marked the beginning of the end for U.S. intervention there—was characterized by simultaneous uprisings in some sixty-four South Vietnamese cities, towns, and rural population centers.

The oppressed and exploited masses of Saigon and other Vietnamese cities turned out massively in 1975 to hail the victorious freedom fighters at the time of the collapse of the U.S.-backed dictatorship. The Vietnamese leadership organized and mobilized that revolutionary energy over the subsequent three years to reunify the country and lead the workers to expropriate the bourgeoisie and carry out overthrowing the old property relations and extending the workers state to the south. This is quite a striking contrast to the treatment meted out to the urban workers and poor, the intelligentsia, and much of the rural population by the reactionary Pol Pot leadership in neighboring Kampuchea.

Since 1975, Washington has slapped a brutal economic boycott on Vietnam. It has consciously charted a course aimed at *starving it into submission*.

The Vietnamese had to fight off U.S.-inspired military attacks on two fronts. In response, they helped the Kampuchean masses rid themselves of the Pol Pot tyranny on the one front, and beat back an invasion by Peking on the other.

Today, the Indochinese peoples remain under crushing economic, military, and political pressure orchestrated by Washington—both directly through Washington's client regime in Thailand and other capitalist regimes in the area, and through its alliance with the Stalinist bureaucracy in Peking.

In the face of all this Moscow has proven to be an indispensable source of aid and assistance—but an unreliable, disloyal, and often treacherous one. There is much resentment among the Vietnamese over what they have had to submit to at the hands of the Kremlin, which treats them like poor cousins and has frequently sold them down the river to imperialism.

Given these experiences over nearly four decades, it's not surprising that some discussion and new thinking should emerge in Vietnam, especially in the new generation coming forward. It is clear from documents such as the one, "Differences Between the Chinese and Vietnamese Revolutions," which appeared in the September 25, 1980, issue of *Vietnam Courier*, an English-language magazine published in Hanoi, and reprinted in the *IP* and *Militant* several months back. [See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, March 23, 1981, p. 282.] Among the points made in that article were the following:

- the decisive social force in revolutions today, even in

backward, oppressed semicolonial nations such as Vietnam and China were, is the urban working class;

- this is the force that the Vietnamese leadership relied on to take over the factories and carry out the socialist revolution in both the northern and southern parts of Vietnam;

- it's necessary to reject the Maoist notion that the Marxist emphasis on the centrality of the industrial working class is a European idea that should be replaced by such non-Marxist conceptions as peasant armies encircling the cities and so on;

- the political character of the Chinese leadership was determined by its role at the head of a peasant army that came into conflict with the urban workers in China and used repression against them upon coming into power (such a prospect, by the way, had been foreseen as a possibility by Leon Trotsky in the early 1930s based on a similar analysis of the class character of Mao's course and the class composition of his army);

- China's growing political collaboration with American imperialism is the logical consequence of its abandonment of proletarian internationalism.

In one of his Discussion Bulletin articles, Comrade Nat Weinstein expressed dismay that our press ran this and other articles on Vietnam. "These articles challenge credulity," he writes. "They appear in our public press without comment! How are we to weight them?" [See *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No. 9.] He claims that these articles rewrite history, painting up some of the Vietnamese leadership's past practices and political conceptions. That's partly true. But that's not the significant feature of these documents. That's now what's new and worthy of interest to us. To have focused on that would have missed the entire point.

The Maoist ideas that this article polemicizes against have been taken as good coin—worse yet, as genuine Leninist politics—among the vast majority of Asians who consider themselves communists since the mid-1930s. So it is new when a major article in a magazine of an Asian workers state of 50 million people—one that deservedly has some authority among the toilers of Asia—rejects these perspectives and counterposes them to Marxist ideas grounded in the centrality of the working class.

The exposure of the character of the Pol Pot regime and its ties with Peking and U.S. imperialism, and the Chinese invasion of Vietnam and its defeat, are shaking up many of the long-held views of political currents in Thailand, the Philippines, and elsewhere in Asia, as well as among political currents throughout the world that have looked to Peking. This includes several thousand workers in the United States, who at one time or another have been members of or have been influenced by some variety of Maoist organization.

Documents such as those that we have printed and intend to print are a political leaven to this process of discussion and rethinking. Our job is to recognize the importance of such developments, to acquaint our members and supporters with them, and to jump in and take part in the discussion. This adds an important new dimension to the campaign in our press to defend Indochina—to demand food aid and reconstruction assistance, an end to the military threats by Washington and its cronies, an end to the economic blockade, and diplomatic recognition of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos.

There are tens and tens of thousands of revolutionary-

minded communists in Indochina today. And reports seem to indicate that the Vietnamese Communist Party is bringing more and more young and dedicated fighters into its ranks.

Vietnamese CP

The Vietnamese Communist Party was born out of a layer of nationalistic youth in the early 1920s. They were attracted to the Bolshevik revolution and the Comintern; they saw these as the road to Vietnam's liberation from imperialist oppression. The Vietnamese Communist Party leadership went with the Stalinist majority in the late 1920s, and henceforth it was trained in the methods and the political approach of the Stalin-dominated Comintern. It broke with and persecuted the Trotskyists, as well as other militant Vietnamese nationalists. The Vietnamese revolution paid a heavy price for this. Opportunities for victory were missed, partly because of the class-collaborationist training and policies of the Vietnamese leadership, but especially because they were constantly being sacrificed on the altar of class-collaborationist diplomacy by Moscow, Peking, and the French Communist Party.

It has never been the SWP's view that the Vietnamese leadership can simply be lumped together with Moscow and Peking. It has been at the head of an awesome struggle against imperialism for more than thirty years and today faces the relentless pressure and threats of the imperialist powers. During its long struggle against U.S. military intervention, our press often pointed to the congruence of its views with those of the Cubans at crucial turning points when Moscow and Peking were using Vietnam as a bargaining chip. The close relationship that has been built up between revolutionary Cuba and Vietnam is a positive factor for the Indochinese revolution, and for the world revolution.

The fact that Vietnamese leader Pham Van Dong was the first major foreign political leader to visit liberated Nicaragua, as well as the Vietnamese statements in solidarity with El Salvador, are expressions of internationalism that are positive for both the Indochinese and Central American revolutions.

We see reflections of these changes right here in the United States. We are coming into more contact with Vietnamese and Kampuchean revolutionaries who want to work with us to build solidarity with Indochina and to get out the truth about what's happening there. They are people who we can talk to about our views of what's happening in the United States, in this hemisphere, and around the world. And people we can learn from.

This opportunity, in some respects, is like the debate and discussion that broke out following the Stalin-Tito split in 1948. The Fourth International and the SWP immediately responded to this situation by siding with the Titoist forces and participating in the discussions.

This is the kind of opportunity that the National Committee resolution is pointing to in relation to the Vietnamese, and we should be alert to these developments and have the confidence to pursue them to the limits of our resources and our capacities.

This is especially true, since solidarity with Indochina was one of the three main tasks laid out in Jack [Barnes]'s report, "The Turn to Industry and the Tasks of the Fourth International," adopted by the 1979 World Congress of the

Fourth International. [See the special supplement to the *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, January 1980, pages 43-50.] Of the three main tasks outlined in that report—the turn to industry, Central American solidarity work, and solidarity with Indochina—the last of these is the one that has been least fulfilled, almost scandalously so. Our job coming out of this convention is to set an even better example for our entire world movement in regard to this vital arena of internationalist activity.

Proletarian internationalism

The rise of the class struggle in Central America and the Caribbean, and the advance of the revolutionary currents in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, are especially significant for us and for the entire world Trotskyist movement.

Unlike many of you, I have not yet had the good fortune to visit Cuba. Grenada, yes, but not Cuba. But I've heard a lot of stories that comrades have brought back, and I've read a few in the *Militant*—and even some in the *Discussion Bulletin* this summer.

One of the stories that I found most enlightening was by Lars Palmgren, the Swedish comrade whose articles on Central America have been run in *IP*, *PM*, and the *Militant*. Lars was in Cuba last fall, and one day he went into a small laundry. The woman who ran the laundry began to gripe about the quality of shoes in Cuba, the long lines, the scarcity of many basic commodities, and so on. So Lars decided to play the devil's advocate. He asked her whether she thought Cubans would be better off if their government didn't spend so much money sending troops to Angola, doctors and teachers to dozens of countries, and carrying out other such projects overseas.

She immediately shot back: "Oh no, you've got me all wrong. We'll never solve any of these problems just in Cuba. We've got to extend the revolution to other countries in Latin America. Only together can we begin making progress toward solving problems like these."

She was very interested to learn that Lars had just been traveling in El Salvador. She said that her husband had not been able to go to help out in Angola, but he's hoping that he'll get to go to El Salvador if Cuban help is needed there.

Well, I'm sure there are many other experiences like this that comrades who have visited Cuba have had. It points up the internationalism that the Cuban leadership has consistently worked to instill in the Cuban masses. As the Cuban Communist Party's 1975 platform put it, "The starting point of Cuba's foreign policy is the subordination of Cuban positions to the international needs of the struggle for socialism and for the national liberation of the peoples."

The Cubans feel a particular commitment to and affinity with the Sandinistas, the New Jewel Movement, and other revolutionary currents in Central America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere in the hemisphere.

While the doctors, teachers, and—where needed—arms and troops sent by Cuba are vital aspects of its contributions to these and other revolutions, its main contribution is political—the example it sets, the lessons it has drawn and imparts to all those who are willing to listen.

These lessons were summed up well in the *Granma* report on a speech by Cuban CP leader Jesús Montané Oropesa which you can find in Pathfinder's new book, *Fidel Castro Speeches* (page 377).

Montané says that the only guarantee for the develop-

ment of a program of radical anti-imperialist change is the elimination of the bourgeois state apparatus and the creation of a new army created from the people.

He also explains that, "Only an integral political-military concept makes it possible to pass at the right time from one main form of struggle to another depending on the stages and circumstances of each process."

And he concludes that Latin America is witnessing a merging of class and national liberation struggles, an original combination of democratic tasks linked to socialist objectives and the struggle for anti-imperialist liberation of the workers and peasants from capitalist domination.

These lessons are the product of the continuing evolution and maturing of the Cubans' own political views—based on the positive and negative conclusions from their own experiences in Cuba; their efforts throughout the 1960s to extend the revolution through a strategy of rural guerrilla warfare; the lessons they believe must be absorbed from the defeat in Chile; the new lessons they're drawing from the revolutionary struggles in Nicaragua, Grenada, and El Salvador; and lessons they have discussed with the Vietnamese.

What are these fundamental lessons that the Cuban leadership seeks to impart to revolutionary currents that it can influence?

1) The need to dismantle the old capitalist state and army and build new ones based on the armed workers and peasants;

2) the need for a political orientation toward the worker and peasant masses and their organizations—not just dedicated guerrilla nuclei such as those that failed in the 1960s;

3) the inseparable connection between national liberation and socialism, and the leading role of the working class in alliance with the peasantry in the anti-imperialist struggle; and

4) the defense of the revolution is bound up with its extension—socialism can't be built in a single country.

In addition, the Cubans have used their political authority to create greater unity among revolutionists, which was a critical factor in Nicaragua, and has been important in El Salvador and Guatemala as well.

Along with this need for unity among the revolutionary forces, the Cubans have also stressed the need for revolutionists to be in the vanguard of welding together the broadest possible anti-imperialist united fronts to weaken the social and political base of the U.S.-backed tyrannies and to create the best possible conditions for the workers and peasants to come to power.

Comrades Nat Weinstein and Lynn Henderson present a dramatically different view of the Cubans' political contributions.

This is how Comrade Weinstein put it in one of the documents in the National Committee minority's first platform [*SWP Discussion Bulletin* Vol. 37, No. 2]:

"In a nutshell: the two-stage guerrilla strategy endorsed, if not fashioned, by the leaderships in Cuba and Nicaragua has the effect of reassuring imperialism that the Nicaraguan revolution will not go beyond capitalist limits.

"And conversely, the restraining of the Nicaraguan revolution at the capitalist stage is reassurance to the Central American bourgeoisie, as well as to imperialism, that the aims of the Salvadoran insurgent leadership also

do not go beyond the 'anti-oligarchic, anti-imperialist, democratic revolution.'"

In other words, the Cubans contribute a class-collaborationist strategy aimed at reassuring Wall Street, Washington, and the capitalists throughout Central America. Yes, like the sound of a firing squad is music to the ears of a condemned man!

Comrades Weinstein and Henderson put it even more bluntly in the resolution they submitted toward the end of the preconvention discussion to define their tendency. ["The Transitional Program and Method: the Road Forward," Vol. 37, No. 18.]

They say that the Cubans, "despite their revolutionary thrust, slip inadvertently toward fostering class-collaborationist policies, and its concomitant political expression, the popular front."

This is quite a peculiar "revolutionary thrust"—one that leads to the subordination of the interests of the workers and peasants to the landlords and capitalists. If that's so, it's not a "revolutionary thrust"—it's a stab in the back. In what sense do Comrades Weinstein and Henderson still claim that the Cubans are "revolutionists of action"?

Regardless of the Cubans' good intentions—which Comrades Henderson and Weinstein assure us they are the last to question—the Cubans, in the main arena of their international activity, actually turn out to be "counterrevolutionists of action."

This is especially true, since a policy of subordinating the interests of the workers and peasants to what the capitalists will tolerate cannot be carried out *passively* and *peacefully* in a revolutionary situation. The Stalinists and the Social Democrats in the Spanish revolution had to *crush* worker and peasant struggles, *slaughter* revolutionists, and *demobilize* the masses in order to carry out a popular-front strategy.

Is El Salvador a nation of sheep? Won't the FMLN have to carry out repression to pursue its alleged aim of "reassuring the Central American bourgeoisie and imperialism"? Won't that blood be on the hands of their Cuban mentors?

All this, of course, is a fantasy world. It has nothing to do with reality—a reality in which the Salvadoran revolutionists are fighting uncompromisingly on behalf of the workers and peasants and refusing to subordinate their class interests to anyone.

Moreover, it's a reactionary fantasy, since it leads to the conclusion that the Cuban CP and the Sandinistas are gravediggers of the Salvadoran revolution.

Workers and farmers at the helm in Nicaragua

Comrades Weinstein and Henderson draw even more fantastic, and dangerous, conclusions about what is happening in Nicaragua. Here is what they have to say in their misnamed resolution, "The Transitional Program and Method: the Road Forward":

"Where the 'workers and farmers government' is conceived as a prolonged stage and thus is *counterposed* to the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is transformed, as Trotsky put it in the Transitional Program, 'from a bridge to socialist revolution into the chief barrier upon its path.'"

Is this what the Sandinista-led workers and farmers government is—the chief barrier on the path to the socialist revolution in Nicaragua?

Comrades Weinstein and Henderson state that they

think so. They say that, "the inability of the FSLN so far to drive through the dictatorship of the proletariat represents a major threat to the Nicaraguan revolution." And they say that the FSLN is holding back the Nicaraguan workers from the struggle for power.

These, once again, are not the characteristics of "revolutionists of action." They are the characteristics of reformists and centrist vacillators and betrayers of the workers.

Of course, this is hard to jibe with the true record of the Sandinistas since 1979, the new measures announced this July 19, or the escalating hostility by Washington toward the Nicaraguan revolution.

The facts show that the Nicaraguan government is a workers and peasants government—a government independent of the bourgeoisie—and is not "counterposed" to the dictatorship of the proletariat in Nicaragua. To the contrary, it has been the workers' most powerful instrument in marching toward the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Nicaragua.

How prolonged will that process be? We don't know. So far, it's been two years. It is a sign of strength of the Nicaraguan revolution, and the relative weakness of imperialism and counterrevolution that the Sandinista-led workers and peasants have been able to embark on the road toward the consolidation of a workers state in the most efficient and least disruptive ways possible. We don't condemn or criticize the Sandinistas for that. We welcome it.

The aim of the Sandinistas has correctly not been "to DRIVE THROUGH the dictatorship of the proletariat," as Comrades Henderson and Weinstein put it. Ultraleft sectarians roll up their sleeves and lecture about DRIVING THROUGH the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not revolutionary Marxists, not proletarian leaderships—not the FSLN.

Instead, the Sandinistas have *led* the workers, *organized* them, raised their *class consciousness*, *argued* and *convinced*, and *united* the broadest possible section of Nicaraguan toilers to defend and deepen their revolution, strengthen their workers and farmers government, and consolidate a workers state.

The National Committee minority resolution *advocates* the establishment of dual power in Nicaragua. That's a reactionary proposal in a country where the workers and peasants are at the helm. It's a call for opposition to the revolutionary government. Since the workers and peasants have already taken the power, the only interpretation they can give to the demand for dual power is some second, and bourgeois, power.

The National Committee majority draws opposite conclusions from those of Comrades Henderson and Weinstein about the Cuban leadership's political contributions toward a strategy for the Latin American revolution. We say that it's a strategy aimed at extending the socialist revolution.

Cuba's proletarian internationalism is closely linked to its progress on the home front—economically, socially and politically. Foreign policy always flows from domestic policy.

There is little need to remind comrades here, especially those of you who have been to Cuba, of the tremendous strides that have been achieved in social welfare, health, education, workers control, as well as economic development.

While Cuba is far from having overcome its legacy of

centuries of colonial economic underdevelopment, it has made important strides in raising the productivity of sugar production (still its major cash export) and in expanding its industrial capacity. A series of economic reforms throughout the 1970s have helped increase efficiency and reverse ultraleft errors in the late 1960s that had deemphasized the continuing need for material incentives, encourage organization of farmers markets, and so on.

These reforms have not only increased the availability of consumer goods and decreased the categories of goods still subject to rationing, it has also contributed to greater participation by Cuban workers in developing and implementing the national economic plan.

The workers-peasant alliance is very strong in Cuba today. At the same time, Cuba continues to make big strides toward large-scale socialized production in agriculture, using voluntary methods, material incentives, and political persuasion to increase the state farm and cooperative sectors.

Strides toward democracy in Cuba

One of the things we've learned the most about since our 1979 convention is the fight over the past decade against bureaucracy in Cuba and the strides toward institutionalizing workers democracy there.

The trade unions and other mass organizations were revitalized, activated, and democratized by the Cuban workers following an ebb in their role in the late 1960s. Workers involvement in developing and implementing the national economic plan has been increased, primarily through factory assemblies. And the Cubans are striving to make this more effective by correcting flaws and raising the cultural and skill level of the workers.

Most important, organs of People's Power have been set up and have begun to function on the local, provincial and national levels over the past five or six years.

These changes mark a significant step along the road towards a government based on councils of toilers in Cuba, a government of the Paris Commune type.

The forms will undoubtedly change and evolve. A constant critical effort is required to move forward and resolve the bureaucratic deformations that still stand in the way. But we have to begin by recognizing the progress and the direction.

At the time of our 1979 convention, we were still just beginning to catch up on what we had missed by not closely following Cuban developments throughout most of the 1970s. The report and resolution adopted there approached People's Power as, at best, irrelevant to progress towards institutionalized forms of proletarian rule in Cuba. [See *Revolutionary Cuba Today*, an Education for Socialists publication, 1980.]

Despite all that we have learned in the two years since then, Comrade Breitman's NC minority platform completely ignores the step forward marked by People's Power and the related measures that I have noted. *It doesn't even mention them.*

Nor do the amendments mention the significance of the big steps in the fight against bureaucracy in Cuba over the past couple of years. The high point of that struggle was the series of gigantic mobilizations in the spring of 1980, the most massive in Cuban history. These outpourings, and the speeches given by Fidel at the time, linked Cuba's uncompromising internationalist solidarity with the revo-

lutions in the Caribbean to the fight against social privilege, buddyism, bureaucratic habits, and conservative attitudes.

And a lot of the people who held those attitudes grabbed a boat at Mariel.

It was also during these events that the Territorial Troops Militia was set up—another blow *against* Yankee nuclear blackmail and *for* deepening involvement of the working class in all aspects of Cuban state functioning.

Yet Comrade Breitman's amendments insist that we take the war led by Trotsky and the Left Opposition against the bureaucratization of the Soviet regime between 1923 and 1933—the period during which the counterrevolutionary Stalinist caste consolidated its power and destroyed all links with Marxist policies—as our model to approach the Castro leadership today.

There *is* a lesson to be drawn from looking back at this period in the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state, but not the lesson drawn by Comrade Breitman.

The real lesson is this. The Left Opposition and Trotsky didn't abstract the fight to preserve workers democracy in the Soviet Union or in the Soviet Communist Party from the domestic and international course being charted by the rising bureaucratic caste. They saw it as integral to these reactionary policies, which were the *reversal* of Leninist internationalism.

The bureaucracy strangled democracy in the Soviet Union because that was the only way that it could prevent challenges to its mounting privileges, and to its course *away from* proletarian internationalism and *toward* the reactionary notion of building socialism in one country. These counterrevolutionary policies were at the heart of the political degeneration. The need to crush all workers democracy and party internal political life flowed from that counterrevolutionary course—not the other way around.

In Cuba, the trajectory is the opposite. It is toward greater internationalism and proletarianization, toward the struggle against bureaucratic privilege, toward the extension of the socialist revolution, against national egoism.

Comrade Breitman would "amend" our resolution to say that the Cuban CP "is patterned after the bureaucratic party structures in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union whose principal function is to keep the ruling stratum in power." It's true that this is the principal function of those party structures. But the principal function of the Cuban CP for twenty years has been to consolidate and renew a *revolutionary* proletarian leadership that can continue to lead the workers and poor peasants along the road that promotes their class interests, advances the world struggle against imperialist oppression, and extends the socialist revolution.

This is quite a flexible pattern or structure that can serve such opposite functions and opposite class interests—those of a petty-bourgeois caste that oppresses the workers and poor peasants, and those of the toilers themselves.

This is the heart of our disagreement with the Breitman platform on the question of workers democracy in Cuba. That platform approaches the question from the standpoint of abstract forms, not content; from the standpoint of limitations, not how those shortcomings have been and continue to be overcome.

Some of the limitations pointed to by Comrade Breitman's amendments are real limitations—the limited means for the organized expression and exchange of different points of view or platforms in the Cuban CP, in the elections to People's Power, in the People's Power organs themselves, and so on. These aren't strengths of the Cuban revolution, whatever their source and cause. And this is not our difference with Comrade Breitman's platform.

But this is not the *axis* of how Trotskyists approach the advance of the Cuban revolution, including the advance toward expanding workers democracy, workers participation and decision-making. And it's not the way to influence in life the progressive resolution of these contradictions.

Our axis is not to pinpoint our differences with the Cuban revolutionists, and then build our approach around these. That's a static and sterile approach. That's never how we approach revolutionary currents in the mass movement.

Our axis is the same fundamental one as that of the Castro leadership—leading forward Cuba's revolutionary course, both on the international arena and at home. Leading forward support for the Central American revolution. Leading forward campaigns to raise the educational level of the Cuban workers and peasants; to improve production and defense; to bring more workers, more women, more veterans of internationalist missions into the CP and its leadership. Placing the very existence of Cuba on the line in Africa, the Mideast, Southeast Asia.

Workers' democracy was stomped out in the Soviet Union during a period in which the Soviet workers were weakened, in retreat, more and more exhausted.

The Cuban workers are moving forward, gaining confidence, mobilizing to defend and extend their revolution. Their educational level is rising. They play a direct role in the nomination of their co-workers to membership in the Communist Party. And in nominating the best and most self-sacrificing co-workers, they are nominating the best candidates—not the toadies or Stakhanovites.

Isn't a Cuban worker who volunteered to fight in Angola, to help build an airport in Grenada, to assist in the literacy brigades in Nicaragua, or to work in a health program in Africa—isn't he or she among the better-equipped to push forward democratic participation in Cuba, in charting the course of government and advancing the revolution? Or a worker helping to organize the new militia, or the Committees to Defend the Revolution (CDRs) in the neighborhoods?

It is by pushing along this revolutionary course charted by the Castro leadership that Cuban workers will develop more democracy, improve the forms that currently exist, learn new lessons, and continue to advance.

Isn't the Cuban working class the most class-conscious working class in the world? Isn't it the kind of working class that will press in this direction? Aren't the cadres of the Cuban CP the kind of people, the kind of revolutionists, who will find a way to reform and improve the Cuban workers state?

The facts show that the answer is, "Yes." That's how they got where they are today. That's how the unions and the mass organizations have become stronger. That's how the need for People's Power became clear following the failure of the ten-million tons campaign at the beginning of the 1970s. That's how the factory assemblies, involve-

ment in economic planning, the CDRs, and the militias all fit together to advance towards greater democracy, greater involvement and input into administering the government, planning the economy, and controlling affairs in the workplace.

I urge comrades who have not already had the chance to read comrade José Pérez's contribution, "People's Power and the Fight against Bureaucratism in Cuba," in *Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No. 21, to do so. It gives a concrete feel for how the fight against bureaucracy and for proletarian forms of rule in Cuba has developed along with the advance of the internationalist course of the Cuban leadership.

Support for this revolutionary perspective is the axis of the Trotskyist approach toward the Cuban revolution—not a list of reforms, not some organizational blueprint that we think would be democratic. More advanced forms of proletarian rule will develop concretely in practice, out of the advance of the Cuban and world revolutions. Unless that advance is reversed, we have every reason to be confident and to work loyally and critically along that road.

On this question, the NC majority draft resolution is cautious, recognizing the preliminary stage of our knowledge. But it is accurate. It states:

"From their own successes and failures, the Cuban revolutionists have learned the need to institutionalize democratic participation by the working class in order to ensure Cuba's defense; promote economic and social progress; instill proletarian internationalism; and combat the tendency toward the growth of bureaucratic privileges and abuses, a tendency that is inevitable given Cuba's situation as a besieged fortress and the relatively backward state of its productive forces."

It goes on to say that, "Over the past decade, progress has been made toward institutionalizing democratic decision-making and participation by the working class." It then points to several examples.

And finally it observes that, "As the world revolution advances, and the working class increasingly asserts itself on an international scale, conditions for advancing the institutionalization of workers democracy in Cuba will be enhanced." We consider this to be an advance over our 1979 position.

There is much more that we still need to find out about this question. There's much about People's Power, about the functioning of the Cuban CP, and so on, that we do not know.

In this regard, I think that some of the points comrades made in the *Discussion Bulletin* and in some branch discussions about the recent *International Socialist Review* article on People's Power in Cuba have some merit. [See "Workers' Democracy in Cuba," by Peter Moore in the July *ISR*.] The article would have benefited by further editing to indicate some of the limitations that still exist, and the factors in Cuban and world politics that point toward a continuing positive evolution.

But its emphasis on the direction was correct—toward greater workers' democracy, toward improved institutionalization of proletarian rule, and against bureaucratization and privilege. This progress comes not through a reform movement, nor against the stream in Cuba, nor in opposition to the leadership of the Cuban CP. Instead, it comes as part of the advance of the revolution and

interrelated with the evolution of the perspectives of the Castro leadership.

Cuban leadership reinforced

The Cuban CP, the Sandinistas, the New Jewel Movement have much in common. But they also come out of different experiences and mutually influence one another. They mutually reinforce each other's respective strengths more than their respective weaknesses—once again because of the context of the rise of the revolution.

The process is one in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We see many examples of this.

The most obvious are all the positive lessons that the Nicaraguan, Grenadian, and Salvadoran revolutionists have learned from the Cuban workers state and its revolutionary leadership.

When the Cubans toppled Batista, they had no such recent experience to look to. As consistent revolutionary democrats, some of whom had a bit of knowledge about Marxism, they led the revolution forward to the establishment of a workers and farmers government and led the workers in consolidating the first workers state in the Americas.

Today, the FSLN and NJM don't have to simply repeat the experiences that the Cubans went through. They start with the example and concrete experience of the Cuban socialist revolution and its leadership.

In the *Discussion Bulletin*, Comrade Steve Bloom, who is the reporter here for the Breitman NC platform, says that Nicaragua is just another example of a "long detour revolution."

I'll leave aside here Comrade Bloom's incredible assertion in that same article that the Sandinista victory was made possible by what he refers to as the "extremely propitious circumstances" in that country at the time.

His main error was in missing the big and positive change in world politics that was confirmed by the Nicaraguan revolution. This is not part of the "long detour." The "long detour" was part of the renewal of the world socialist revolution after 1943, yes—but one characterized by such things as Stalinist misleaderships and predominantly nonproletarian forces. The Chinese revolution was carried out under the Stalinist Mao leadership at the head of a peasant army. The Yugoslav leadership, after breaking with Moscow, veered off toward imperialism and capitulated to Washington by supporting its intervention in Korea.

The Cuban revolution, while still exhibiting aspects of the "detour"—such as the advocacy of rural guerrilla strategy in its early years—was above all a *break* from the detour. Here was a socialist revolution led by a non-Stalinist leadership, a leadership that consciously mobilized the Cuban workers and its allies to take the factories, to deepen the socialist course of the revolution, to defend it, arms in hand, to extend it.

And the Nicaraguan revolution, far from being another "long detour revolution," is confirmation of the fundamental aspect of our epoch—the epoch of proletarian revolutions.

We are convinced that the Nicaraguan and Grenadian leaderships have from the outset sought to establish workers and peasants governments and to mobilize and raise the class consciousness of the workers and toilers to consolidate a workers state. They are the first leaderships

since the Bolsheviks in the time of Lenin to do this. And for that fact we have not only the proletarianization of world politics, but the deeds of the Cuban revolution and the Castro leadership to thank. In contrast to the Stalinists and Social Democrats, the Cubans are charting a course toward the extension of the socialist revolution in the Americas.

The Cubans have also sought to help the Sandinistas and NJM avoid some of the pitfalls that they themselves could not avoid. The Cubans endorse the strategy that the Nicaraguan and Grenadian leaderships have followed toward making the transition to workers states at the least possible cost and in the most efficient and advantageous ways possible. This has meant raising the class consciousness of the workers at each step, preparing them through the expansion of workers control for the tasks of workers management and involvement in national planning, and bringing along as large a section of the working farmers and middle layers as possible. The Nicaraguans and Grenadians refer to this as "mixed economy."

While the Cubans have no illusions that a confrontation with imperialism can be avoided, they correctly have urged the Sandinistas and the NJM to postpone such confrontations where possible, using the time to arm and prepare the people and to win the broadest possible international solidarity. To the extent that the Nicaraguans and Grenadians can avoid the type of economic embargo imposed on revolutionary Cuba, that's to the advantage of the entire revolution in Central America and the Caribbean. And to the advantage of U.S. workers, too.

The Nicaraguan and Grenadian leaderships will also benefit from Cuba's experiences with the fight against bureaucracy and the value of institutions such as People's Power. At the same time, the Nicaraguans' promotion of what they call "political pluralism" will affect the Cuban revolution, as well.

One thing that the Sandinistas have done is to avoid, up to now, the use of the death penalty. We hope that they can continue to do so. What an inspiring example to the toiling masses throughout the world of what a socialist revolution can accomplish! This helps win broad international support for the Nicaraguan revolution and takes wind out of the sails of the bosses' propaganda campaign. At the same time, it is powerful propaganda for socialism as a humane and civilized leap over the barbarity of capitalism.

This policy has not been universally accepted among Nicaraguans, who justifiably feel they have some scores to settle. When Commandante Daniel Ortega announced at the July 19 rally this year that the Sandinistas were going to stick by this policy, it was the one proposal that was not met with an overwhelming ovation.

But Ortega explained that the best way to fight against the counterrevolution was not to reinstitute the death penalty, but to "organize everyone here, anyone who can fire a rifle, into the Sandinista People's Militias." And that's what they have set out to do.

Three daily newspapers still circulate in Nicaragua, two of them prorevolution. *Perspectiva Mundial* is sold on newsstands and widely read, along with other publications both from inside and outside Nicaragua.

There are different currents in the trade-union movement. Progress has been made toward coordinated action by those whose leaders support the revolution, and toward trade-union unity. Likewise, the Sandinistas are collaborating with other political currents in the Nicaraguan

workers movement—such as the People's Action Movement and the Nicaraguan Communist Party—in a united front against the bourgeois parties and bosses' organizations.

This marks a big step forward from the earlier clashes and confrontations between these groups and the FSLN. These organizations have pulled back from their initial sectarian course towards a confrontation with the government, while the Sandinistas have corrected initial errors in handling these differences through administrative and repressive measures.

Altogether, this represents a positive new experience for the revolutionary movement in this hemisphere in workers democracy and in political methods of handling differences and seeking to resolve them. The conviction and political confidence won by the Nicaraguan workers in this process of an open clash of ideas, even with bourgeois parties and bourgeois forces, strengthens the Nicaraguan revolution and contributes to the experience of Cuban and Grenadian revolutionists, as well.

Discussion on Poland

Another example is the different ways many Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutionists seem to view the events in Poland over the last year. Statements by Cuban officials and articles in the Cuban press reflect little understanding of or identification with the Solidarity movement in Poland. They correctly diagnose many of the causes of the upheaval there: bureaucracy, the lack of democracy, the lack of integrity and fidelity to Marxist and internationalist principles on the part of the leadership of the Communist Party, and the division between the ruling Communist Party and the masses. But many Cubans fear that the cure represented by Solidarity will end up being worse than the illness, opening the door to capitalist restoration and counterrevolution.

The contradictory aspects of consciousness among Solidarity activists compounds the difficulties that the Cuban revolutionists have in seeing this as a force on the side of the world socialist revolution. After more than twenty years of a life-and-death battle against U.S. imperialism, they have a hard time coming to grips with illusions in Reagan or with the idea that the Salvadoran struggle is an example of "Soviet expansionism." Just as Polish fighters, so long oppressed by the Kremlin, undoubtedly have a hard time understanding how Cubans look at the world.

Both Robert DesVerney's article on "Counterposing the Cuban and Polish Revolutions" [*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No. 24], and Suzanne Haig's "On Poland and Cuba" [*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No. 18] make some useful points along these lines.

The Cubans simply don't share our view of the political revolution in East Europe and the USSR as an integral part of the world struggle for socialism. They now recognize the need for the Chinese workers and peasants to carry out a revolution to replace the reactionary regime there, and they understand from this, and other experiences, how a socialist revolution can slip back and degenerate.

But it will take more history and more victories in the international class struggle before the Cubans' views begin to change substantially on this sector of the world revolution.

The Polish events themselves are part of that process,

however. They pose the problems to the Cubans and other revolutionists around the world in a much sharper form than ever before, since it is hard to deny that the vast majority of the Polish workers support Solidarity. The depth and proletarian character of this movement raises the question: can 90 percent of the Polish workers be wrong? Is it likely that their struggles can be turned to the advantage of capitalist restoration and counterrevolution more than three decades after capitalism has been abolished?

Questions like these are head-breakers. They take some thought, and they have an impact.

We know that the Polish events are already having an impact on other revolutionists in this hemisphere. We've seen the articles supporting Solidarity in *Claridad*, the newspaper of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. *IP* recently ran an interview with Tomás Borge where he pointed to Poland as an example where the Nicaraguans have a political position distinct from their Cuban comrades.

And the Polish workers' struggle is far from over. Workers around the world will learn many more lessons as it advances.

The disease of fetishism

If there is one thing that we should have learned over the course of this discussion, and from the events of the past several years, it is the need to penetrate behind unfamiliar forms, labels, and terms to get at the actual class forces at work, the underlying political significance of events.

About a week ago a party supporter from Salt Lake City who has been following the *Discussion Bulletin* dropped me a note with a sentence from Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*:

"The fetishism of organizational forms," Trotsky wrote, "strange as it may seem at first glance, is an especially common disease in revolutionary circles."

This apt observation about fetishism can extend beyond organizational forms as well. Jack [Barnes] yesterday pointed to several examples of terms used today in Nicaragua—"mixed economy," "pluralism," "national unity." There are other examples.

Take the use of the word "peoples." This has gone through many evolutions. When Marx and Engels spoke of "a real people's revolution," they were indicating its revolutionary worker and peasant content; Lenin often used the term in the same way.

In the 1930s, however, the Stalinists gave it a different content. "People's" became a way of blurring the need for working-class independence and for justifying subordination of the workers to the exploiters in blocs on a program to preserve capitalist rule. This was the "people's front" and so on.

Last summer, a veteran Sandinista named Edelberto Torres, who has been around for several decades and was a political mentor of FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca Amador, spoke at a conference in Nicaragua.

In the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, he said, the word "people's" tended to mean, in normal political jargon, the whole people—including the bourgeoisie—against imperialism. It's taken on quite a different meaning, he said, over the past ten or fifteen years—as in the Sandinista *People's Revolution*, the *people's militia*, and so forth. It means the workers and peasants, the shantytown dwellers, the

market vendors, the oppressed and exploited.

What he was pointing to—without saying so—was the change in Latin American politics opened by the Cuban revolution, the emergence of the Castro leadership and its battle against Stalinism in this hemisphere, and the reversal of the detour, the proletarianization of world politics.

Today, more and more revolutionary-minded militants in Latin America look to Cuba as their model and their source of political education. And what they get there is not the Stalinist class-collaborationist strategy that was the misfortune of several generations of fighters, but the revolutionary perspectives of the Cubans.

If we expect the new rise of world revolution, the development of class-struggle currents and new revolutionary leaderships, to take the organizational forms, to speak the language, to root themselves in all the same traditions that we were taught and have become accustomed to, then we will not be ready for what's coming.

We have to be ready, armed with our program and our transitional method, to grasp the class essence of new forms, new language, new uses of old terms, unresolved contradictions, and an imperfect world with incomplete processes. We have to be able to understand where they come from, what remaining contradictions and problems have yet to be worked out, and in what world context they will be worked out. We have to see the underlying conflict of classes, to be able to discern the line of march of our class, and to recognize the young workers in the vanguard. Above all, we have to be able to *act* on these developments in a timely way.

The continuity of the program of Marx and Lenin, as the conscious guide to mass parties linked as part of an international, was broken half a century ago. We must never lose sight of that fact. Today, our class on a world scale is on the ascendancy. And currents such as the Cubans are fighting their way, through decades of Stalinist and Social Democratic underbrush, back to the main road, back toward Leninism.

We have to be able to look at every current, including ourselves, critically—in the true sense of the word—to sort out origins, strengths and weaknesses, of what needs to be done to push along the road we want to travel. That's what both the turn to industry and the correct relationship to these revolutionary leaderships and class-struggle currents are all about.

If we don't have the confidence to do that, then we're at the end of our rope. We're not ready to do what the Fourth International and SWP set out to do from the outset—to advance the construction of mass Leninist proletarian parties and a mass world party, of socialist revolution.

What is decisive is our stance to the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian revolutionists. We approach them as fellow revolutionary parties. Whatever our political differences, and there are differences, we say that Trotskyists can be loyal builders of these organizations. Our aim is not to build an opposition to them and to their leaderships—either inside or outside these organizations, but to listen and learn, to collaborate with them, and in the process to advance further—in program and practice—along our line of march.

This question, above all else, is at the heart of the difference between the NC resolution and the counterline presented in this discussion by the Breitman NC minority. Comrade Breitman insists that we cannot relate to these

organizations as fellow revolutionary parties, since we have always reserved that term for parties of the Fourth International. He says that it's wrong to recognize these currents as revolutionary Marxist or revolutionary proletarian or proletarian internationalist or any similar term, because despite their actions and their trajectory, they don't stand on our program.

This approach, if adopted, would condemn us and our world movement to head in the direction of a lifeless sect. It would mean that after forty years of building the SWP and the Fourth International—waiting for our time to come—that when our time did come, we turned and ran the other way.

Things *are* going to be different for the SWP and for the Fourth International the next several decades from the way they've been in the past several decades. Yes, that's true. That's what we've been preparing for. That's what the turn anticipates. That's what our activity—applying and advancing our program as a world party—has prepared us for. But now we have to know what to do, we have to be capable of acting, of acting confidently.

We have everything to gain from collaborating with, learning from, and sharing our ideas with these revolutionary currents. It's vital for us. And it's damned important for them too. It helps them link up with revolutionary parties in Western Europe, North America, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico, Colombia, Japan. And if these are parties that are turning to the industrial working class and mass workers' organizations, then the chemistry is going to be so much the better.

Over the past couple of years, the SWP has shown that we're a party that can be counted on when the going gets rough, when the imperialist propaganda machine starts cranking up.

We could be counted on to stand up to the media hysteria around the occupation of the U.S. embassy in Iran.

We could be counted on during the Vietnam intervention in Kampuchea, when many petty-bourgeois veterans of the antiwar movement deserted.

We could be counted on to take on imperialism's campaign using the sending of Soviet troops to Afghanistan to take another step in its war preparations.

We could be counted on during the Mariel events in Cuba. We explained what was happening through the *Militant*, *PM*, and *IP* week after week, against a barrage of capitalist lies and a combination of collapse and confusion in most of the left.

Big class confrontations are on the agenda in Central America and the Caribbean. The Reagan administration is still pouring aid into the murderous hands of the Salvadoran generals, denying aid to the people of Nicaragua, hatching counterrevolution in Miami, moving toward restoration of the draft.

That was the line of our 1979 report and resolution on Cuba, too. But we've learned enough since that time to say that if this resolution and report were put up to a vote again here at this convention in 1981 against our current resolution, we would vote against them. What prepared the party for what it needed to do two years ago would not equip the party today. The NC majority resolution *does* equip the party.

The discussion leading up to this convention has been a big advance over our 1979 convention, building on what we accomplished at that time and what we have learned since then. We should come out of this convention not

convinced of how much we know, but how much we still don't know and how much we need to know and to learn in the months and years ahead.

The stance proposed by the NC majority is the necessary road along which we can advance the perspectives of a mass Leninist international today, the perspective that the Fourth International and the SWP are committed to.

If we cannot confidently make this advance toward the new revolutionary currents on the world arena, then we will not be able to accomplish the turn in our own countries either. And vice versa.

The SWP began our turn to industry in 1978—before the Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions, before the new events in Indochina, before the development of the mass workers movement in Poland, before the left-wing developments in the British Labour Party and the urban explosions there, before the Mitterrand election in France.

This put us right where we need to be. And the decision at the 1979 World Congress to carry out the turn to industry laid the basis to put our entire world movement right where it must be, too.

But if we can't carry out the right approach to the Cubans, the Nicaraguans, the Grenadians, then the *same* schematism and resistance against going beyond the customary and the comfortable modes of existence will mean that the class struggle in the United States will pass us by, too. New currents among the oppressed nationalities and the young workers will pass us by.

We say that a party that can jump into the National Black Independent Political Party, that can look for every opportunity to advance the perspective of a labor party, that can respond the way our coal fraction and the entire party responded to the miners strike, that can catch and correct an error such as that we made on the May 3

antiwar demonstration, that can throw ourselves into September 19—that kind of party is a fellow revolutionary party of the Cuban CP, the FSLN, the New Jewel Movement.

We have no secret plan, no special buddy-buddy ties with these currents. There's no new international in the offing.

This is a perspective for the long haul, and for those who are in revolutionary proletarian politics for the long haul. We say that unless there is reversal of their trajectory, the Cubans, Nicaraguans, and Grenadians are merging with the main line of the rising world proletarian revolution that will continue to shake the foundations of world capitalism, overturn the exploiters, and sweep aside Stalinist, Social Democratic, and centrist obstacles along the way.

The program of the Fourth International, our transitional method and Leninist strategy that interlink the three sectors of the world revolution, our cadres and parties that, as part of a world movement, apply it and enrich it in practice—these are an irreplaceable component of the mass world party of socialist revolution that must be forged out of the new world rise of our class.

That is the line projected by the NC majority draft political resolution. The orientations proposed by the two NC minorities veer off that road.

Our job is to push forward with our cadres and parties along the line of march of our class in all three sectors, to build new bridges, to help generalize experiences and enrich our program—and, above all, to keep our eyes and ears open and learn to apply the new lessons that living socialist revolutions and our class-struggle experiences are teaching us.

Summary

It is important for the entire party to recognize the scope and meaning of the events in Indochina since 1975 and their importance for the class struggle here in the United States.

These include the defeat in 1975 of U.S. imperialism and its client regime; the extension of the socialist revolution into South Vietnam; the brutal pressures that Washington and other imperialist powers brought to bear against Indochina and are increasing; the significance of throwing out the Pol Pot tyranny; the extension of the revolution to Kampuchea and Laos; and the defeat of the U.S.-backed Chinese invasion. The list indicates the political stakes in the class struggle there now and the elementary responsibilities of internationalists.

There are tremendous pressures against Indochina now. There's the campaign by Washington to starve the Vietnamese revolution and the peoples of Kampuchea and Laos, and apply military pressure on all the borders. That is what we have to keep our eyes on. That is what we have to fight.

This is the task—laid out at the last World Congress of the Fourth International—that our world movement has most basically defaulted on. That must be turned around. As we carry out our campaign of solidarity with the peoples of Indochina, we will meet and work with more people there and learn more about the discussions taking place.

* * *

Now a couple of comments on the points made in the discussion by the reporters for the Weinstein-Henderson minority. The differences are now even clearer. Comrades Nat Weinstein and Roland Sheppard ask us a series of questions, evidently based on their reading of an article in the *New Republic* by a notorious right-wing reporter for the *Miami Herald*—as Nat says, “a Pulitzer Prize winner.” They want to know what we think about what's happening in Nicaragua on the basis of *this* article!

They argue that it's irresponsible, until more information is available, to take a position on the character of the government in Nicaragua.

Well, the party has to have a line on this question. And we are not exactly without information. We have had practically a permanent press bureau there since about ten days after the July 19 victory two years ago. We have followed this revolution from the beginning of the assumption of power by the workers and peasants. We have done so more closely than our party has ever had a chance to follow any revolution. We have reviewed a lot of information, and the vast bulk of it is far better than what you can get from the *New Republic* and the *Miami Herald*.

We say that it's a workers and farmers government, a government that's independent of the bourgeoisie. The line that's being projected by Comrades Henderson, Weinstein, and the supporters of their minority position would put our whole world movement in opposition to the revolutionary

government and its revolutionary leadership in Nicaragua. That line must be rejected.

The same thing can be said about the line they have presented on El Salvador. Comrades Henderson and Weinstein claim the struggle there is being led by a class-collaborationist leadership, that the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) is a popular front, and, under the tutelage of Fidel, it is subordinating the interests of the Salvadoran workers and peasants to the exploiters. They have a political approach that would put us four-square in opposition to the leadership. We reject that.

We are champions of the revolutionary forces in El Salvador and of their struggle. As I said in the report, it is absolutely out of this world to say that a class-collaborationist policy is being followed there at this time.

Comrade Weinstein's contribution to *Discussion Bulletin*, No. 18 even said that one of the slogans we should push in El Salvador today is the demand for elections to a Constituent Assembly. In the present context, this is a reactionary slogan.

It is being counterposed by the U.S. and Salvadoran governments to the FDR's call for a revolutionary-democratic government “made up of representatives of the revolutionary and people's movement, as well as the democratic parties, organizations, sectors, and individuals who are willing to participate in the carrying out of this programmatic platform [the FDR's program].”

The FDR platform makes clear the class forces that will comprise such a government, giving it a worker and peasant character. “The government will rest on a broad political and social base,” it says, “formed above all by the working class, the peasantry, and the advanced middle layers.”

Instead of this, Comrade Weinstein would have us advocate elections to a constituent assembly. This comes in the midst of a civil war, when the main propaganda ploy of the military junta, the capitalist Christian Democratic Party, and the Reagan administration is to call for “free elections” in 1982 to a constituent assembly.

This slogan is widely recognized by the Salvadoran masses, as well as their supporters throughout Central America, as an effort to put a democratic veneer on the junta, while it proceeds with its efforts to wipe out all opposition. The regime has stepped up repression in connection with its election propaganda.

So this is not such a good slogan in El Salvador today.

We reject the idea presented by the National Committee minority that the source of the FMLN's and FDR's so-called class-collaborationist policies is Cuba. The political course that the Cuban leadership is following in Central America, that it attempts to persuade others whom it can influence to follow, is proletarian internationalist. The Cubans recognize and act on the need to extend the socialist revolution. They see the need for destroying the capitalist state apparatus and building a new state apparatus, including a new army, from the ground up. They explain the absolute inseparability of the fight against imperialism for national liberation, and the struggle for

socialism. That's the line that they've been pushing, and that is the line being followed in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Now on the comments made by some of the supporters of the Breitman caucus. Here, once again, the question of our stance towards these revolutionary currents is right at the heart of the question. The points that were made in the discussion by Comrades Jack [Barnes], Mary-Alice [Waters], and Eric [Flint] pinpointed the key difference here. We say that these leaderships represent something fundamentally new in this hemisphere and in the world; that they are converging with the line of march of the working class internationally; and that we have to relate to them *on that basis*. In Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua, we can and must be loyal builders of the CP, the New Jewel Movement, and the FSLN.

Comrade Bloom asks if we approach these organizations as an opposition in any sense. The answer is no. This doesn't mean that we approach them uncritically. One must be critical, in the Marxist sense, if one is serious as well as loyal. But we don't approach them as oppositionists.

George [Saunders] raises what I think is a false argument. He says that Comrade Breitman once wrote an article in disagreement with Malcolm X on his evaluation of the United Nations. The implication is that our press *never* expresses a different point of view from the Cubans on key questions. That's obviously not true. In fact, we have done it much more than we ever did in the brief evolution of Malcolm's politics. That's not what's at issue. But Comrade Saunders says that he expects from what I've said in my report, to see a "correction" appear next month on the article in the *International Socialist Review*, "Workers Democracy in Cuba."

Well, he'll be disappointed. What I said, and what I strongly hold, is not that I believe that the general approach of that article was wrong. I believe it was fundamentally correct. I especially think that one of its strongest points was comparing the extent of democracy for working people in Cuba to the lack of it in capitalist United States. This is an effective educational way to present it to our co-workers, the people we work with on the job. It's an inspiring answer to the slanders that socialism cannot go hand-in-hand with democracy.

We say: "Look what the Cuban workers and peasants are doing. Look at what the Cuban workers state is doing. Look what they're doing internationally, what they're doing in Africa, what they're doing in Central America. Look what they're doing at home. Compare it to what we should be able to do given the wealth we have created."

That's our approach, that's the axis. That's what we were trying to accomplish in that article. As I said, the article should have been edited to indicate places where progress is still needed, and to point a bit more towards the advances in workers democracy as part of a process that is headed in a positive direction.

Comrade Bloom says that he agrees that People's Power has been a positive thing in some respects. Good. That's one step forward. He didn't develop this further. We'll see.

What we have explained in the report and the discussion is that the Cuban revolution is going to be advanced along the course that it is now following—both in the international arena and at home. It is a positive course. It is the course for proletarian internationalism against the notion of socialism in one country, and the fight for democracy against privilege and bureaucracy. We place ourselves in that framework, too. That's the Leninist approach to the Cuban revolution. Any difficulties and errors that we might raise come from within that framework.

Comrade Bloom read us a translation from *Inprecor* of a paragraph from the majority resolution on Cuba presented to the International Executive Committee in May. He asked if we would vote for it. But you can't just grab a paragraph out of a resolution and decide whether or not you'd vote for it. You have to look at the whole context of the resolution. We'll all have a chance to do that when the IEC resolutions are published soon in *IP*.

But Comrade Bloom pointed out a very interesting thing about the paragraph that he read—something that in and of itself would lead us to vote against it. The paragraph lists the organizations in the Caribbean and Central America that revolutionary Marxists can participate in as "loyal revolutionary militants." But it quite consciously *excludes* the Cuban Communist Party from this category. Now Comrade Bloom says that he disagrees with that exclusion, but apparently it is a minor point to him. We disagree.

Everything we've done over the past two years in our solidarity work, in our trips to Cuba, to Nicaragua, and Grenada, and the discussions with young people in the factories and on campuses in this country has convinced us that the party is on the right course on this question—that the approach outlined in the National Committee Draft Political Resolution is the course that will take us further along a correct line. It has convinced us this is the course which our entire world movement must see as part and parcel of the turn to the industrial working class, to our class on a world scale, and to these new revolutionary currents.

Greetings to the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) of France

by Cindy Jaquith

[The following greetings were presented by Cindy Jaquith of the Socialist Workers Party Political Committee to the December 1981 congress of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire.]

* * *

Comrades, I want to thank you for giving me a few minutes to speak to your congress.

We think that this period is the most important ever for the Fourth International, for the LCR, and for the SWP. So I would like to speak about four tasks of the International:

1. Our attitude toward the Cuban leadership;
2. The struggle against imperialist wars;
3. Poland; and
4. The turn.

First on the Cuban leadership. We think that this is the first time since the Russian revolution that we are seeing a leadership of a socialist revolution that is Marxist, proletarian, and revolutionary. This is a great thing for us in the International, because Trotsky founded our movement precisely to create a new international leadership that could again raise the banner of Bolshevism-Leninism.

The key test for communists, for Bolsheviks today, is are you fighting to advance the socialist revolution and to mobilize the workers and peasants toward that goal? We can see in Nicaragua and Grenada that this is exactly what the Cuban leadership did, with the result that in those places we have two workers and farmers governments that are on the road to becoming workers states. And now, in the face of the imperialist threats, the Cubans are not retreating, nor are the Nicaraguans or the Grenadians. As Comrade Fidel says: "We are without fear — we are prepared to die, the thing the imperialists understand best."

The proletarian thrust of the Cuban leadership does not appear only at the international level. It also appears in its policy of advancing the participation of the workers and peasants in the leadership of the Cuban CP, which was done at the last CP congress; of mobilizing the workers into the territorial militias against the imperialist threats; of increasing democracy through the assemblies of "people's power"; and of leading the struggle against bureaucratism in Cuba.

That is why the center of the world revolution today is in Central America and the Caribbean. That is why the U.S. imperialists are preparing a military intervention. They cannot tolerate a workers state being created in Nicaragua and Grenada — two new Cubas. They cannot tolerate the masses in El Salvador driving out the dictatorship, as well as in Guatemala.

They are going to try to block these events through force.

The threat is real. Yesterday the U.S. government announced that it is going to establish a military school for at least 1,600 Salvadoran soldiers. They also say they are going to double the aid to the murderous junta. At the

same time, they say that military plans are ready for sending contingents against Cuba.

For us in the International, the question remains to continue and deepen solidarity with the revolution in Central America and the Caribbean. The efforts that we have already made have given the comrades more time to prepare for the confrontation, but we must continue.

And for us in the imperialist countries, where the movement against the missiles and for peace is growing, we have another task. There are thousands of people who have participated in demonstrations against the missiles and the nuclear bomb. We have the responsibility of explaining to these people that there is an immediate, concrete threat of war in Central America. That the most effective way to mobilize against the dangers of war in general is to expose the imperialist operations taking place today in that region.

It's not that the imperialists are never going to use the nuclear bomb, or that they are never going to use it in Europe. It is that the danger today is not the threat of a nuclear war against the Soviet Union, but of a war against the colonial revolution.

The threat is greatest in Central America, but the imperialists can also attack other countries, as they have already done in Libya and in Iran.

And by stressing this question of imperialism we can also give a class line to the anti-missiles movement. We can unmask the Social Democrats and those who place equal blame on the United States and the Soviet Union on this question.

We think that in the coming period the question of military service is going to become more and more important. In the United States the draft was abolished due to the antiwar movement. But now they are trying to reestablish it.

We have had a big debate with the bourgeois feminists in NOW. The leaders of this organization totally accepted the idea that the draft could be a way to win equality for women.

We, along with others, fought hard against this idea. Because it is really a justification for imperialist wars. It is an attempt to give a "feminist" coloration to militarization and the draft.

The question is not *who* is in the army, nor is it the question of "rights" in the army. It is what is the *aim* of that army? In all the imperialist countries the army has no aim but to crush revolutions, strikes, demonstrations. It makes no difference if the U.S. army that intervenes in Nicaragua includes women — it's an imperialist intervention. In my opinion, it doesn't matter if the French

army that intervenes in Africa is a conscript army or a professional army — the goal is the same.

And the most effective way to defend the rights of soldiers is to struggle against military service in all its forms.

It is in this world context that we must discuss the situation in Poland. Because the events that are developing, and our tasks, are totally linked to the other questions of the world revolution. The attack against Solidarity is a blow struck against the world revolution. It weakens the defense of the workers states against imperialism. It weakens the struggle in Central America and the movement against the missiles in Europe. It strengthens the imperialists in the United States, in Britain, in France, and in Germany.

The Trotskyist movement is in a unique position. We are the only ones who can clearly explain Stalinism, socialist democracy, the political revolution, in order to fight the lies of the imperialists and Stalinists on Poland.

In the United States, for example, the right Social Democrats have joined with ultrareactionary Polish groups who demonstrated to chants of "Down with communism!" And the "left" Social Democrats hold demonstrations where they reject slogans against imperialism and for the revolution in Central America.

We in the Socialist Workers Party are doing two things. We have prepared an issue of our paper with slogans condemning the attack against Solidarity and the imperialist intervention in Central America at the same time. And we are also holding meetings where we explain the Marxist position on the Polish revolution. We will not participate in the demonstrations with the Social Democrats.

I think that the problem is the same for all the groups in the International. Everybody is "for" Solidarity — Reagan, Haig, Thatcher, Schmidt, Mitterrand, even Giscard and the fascists. The question is not to be just "for" Solidarity, but also to be for the defense of the gains of the workers states and against imperialism.

And it is on these three axes that we can most effectively organize in solidarity with Solidarity. And also respond most effectively to the Stalinist lies.

We can recall what we said in the statement of the Fourth International on the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

I will briefly quote that statement:

"At the same time that they condemn the Kremlin's crimes, the workers must not forget for a moment the bloodier crimes committed daily by imperialism in Vietnam. We are going to rip off imperialism's hypocritical

mask!" (retranslated)

Finally, I would like to say a few things about the turn. What the last World Congress decided — that the overwhelming majority of members and leaders must get into industry — remains the central task for the whole International.

We must also remember that the turn is not simply an organizational measure, but is a political measure. That it is a turn toward the working class, toward its aspirations, toward the revolutionary proletarian forces in the whole world. That is why we in the SWP feel that the turn also means a turn toward the Cubans, the Nicaraguans, the Grenadians.

It is also the turn toward the most oppressed layers of the class — toward the women, the youth, the oppressed nationalities and the immigrant workers. Our task is to win these layers in particular and to bring them into the leadership of our movement.

In the United States we now have a little more than 50 percent of the members and leaders in industry, as blue collar workers. At the last convention, 90 percent of the delegates were comrades who have made the turn. But we think that 50 percent of the party in industry is not enough. We should have an overwhelming majority — perhaps 80 percent — the rest being made up of full-timers and retirees.

The turn, therefore, is for us, too, a central task for the coming period.

In England, I attended the last congress of the IMG, where the comrades have made progress on the turn. They have 23 percent of their members in industry and I think 30 percent of the outgoing leadership. They have linked this turn to a turn toward the Labour Party and they have begun a discussion on the character of the Cuban leadership. That's a big step forward for the IMG and the International.

To conclude, I want to return for a moment to the question of Poland. We could say that making the turn is one of the most important things we can do to help the comrades of Solidarity. Because by making the turn, we put ourselves in the position to make the socialist revolution in our country.

As the statement of the Fourth International on the invasion of Czechoslovakia explains, and I quote:

"The Fourth International reminds the workers in all the capitalist countries that the most effective aid they can give to the struggle of their Czechoslovakian brothers is to redouble the efforts to overthrow the rule of capitalism, and to even further commit themselves along the path of the socialist revolution."

Some Thoughts on Some 'Greetings'

[A response by the French LCR PC to greetings given by Comrade Cindy Jaquith on behalf of the SWP to the LCR Dec. 1981 Congress.]

* * *

The greetings given to the delegates at the Vth Congress of the LCR by Comrade Jaquith on behalf of the SWP were surprising to say the least. They implicitly questioned the

policy of the French section on four points.

1. On the Cuban leadership

From the first words of her message Comrade Jaquith

stated: "We think that this is the first time since the Russian revolution that we are seeing a leadership of a socialist revolution that is Marxist, proletarian and revolutionary."

It is true that the Cuban leadership places itself within the Marxist tradition. It is also true that it can be defined as proletarian by its programme and social base. It is the case that it is revolutionary to the extent that it supports the extension of the revolution in certain countries and in particular in Central America.

But this accumulation of adjectives avoids a clear characterisation by giving a unilateral image of this leadership. It supports revolutions in some countries, but from the point of view of the world revolution as a whole it vacillates between the revolution and stalinism. That has just been confirmed with the positions published in its press on Poland, which comes after its position in 1968 on Czechoslovakia.

Now after having said that this leadership is marxist, proletarian and revolutionary, Comrade Jaquith adds: "This is a great thing for us in the International, because Trotsky founded our movement precisely to create a new international leadership that could again raise the banner of Bolshevism-Leninism."

This appears to us to create a lot of confusion. Is the Cuban leadership raising the banner of bolshevik leninism when it amicably echoes the Jaruzelski line?

The Fourth International was founded for a much more precise objective than raising a flag — *to work to resolve the crisis of the international leadership of the proletariat*, in order to resolve the crisis threatening all humanity.

The evolution of this crisis is today marked by new factors in the decomposition of stalinism and by the impasse of social democracy. The result of this are extreme differentiations inside the working class and its vanguard through which the process of recomposition of a revolutionary leadership will proceed. The differentiations in the mass reformist parties, the emergence of new revolutionary organisations, and certain currents in Solidarnosc in Poland or in the PT in Brazil are an integral part of this complex process.

The Castroist current plays an important role in this, particularly in Latin America. But it neither constitutes the axis nor the central element of this. The solution of the crisis of the revolutionary leadership on the international scale pre-supposes a programme for the world revolution and not for just one of its sectors. For us there is a combination between the colonial revolution, the political revolution in the degenerated workers state and the socialist revolution in the imperialist countries. There cannot be a subordination of one sector to another, for example, of the political revolution to the colonial revolution.

It would be absurd to discuss what is the most important, Central America or Poland, and we must be wary of any theory of epicentres. We find traces of the latter in the greetings to the LCR congress: "That is why the center of the world revolution today is in Central America and the Caribbean. . . ."

For us the rise of the political revolution in Poland is not any less important from the point of view of the world revolution than the revolutionary developments in Central America.

To contribute to the resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership on an international scale and to intervene

among both the elements of the Castroist current and the layers emerging from the radicalisation inside the big reformist parties, the only viable instrument that we have is the building and strengthening of the Fourth International as it exists today. Not through sectarian self-proclamations. But because, from the perspective of the world revolution as a whole, it is the only force to defend a programme which defends the historic interests of all the proletariat and not just one of its components or sectors.

This conviction does not imply any sectarianism, but on the contrary a firm and confident approach to all the currents open to participating in the tasks which we ourselves set.

2. The war drive and the draft

In Europe we have seen mobilisations with unprecedented broad support against the planned deployment of American missiles. The political bases of these mobilisations are varied and partly confused. It is an expression to a significant extent of pacifist sentiment and ideas favorable to multilateral disarmament.

But since it is a case of movements inside the imperialist centres against the installation of Pershing missiles or the presence of NATO bases, they have generally taken on the objective significance of a movement for the unilateral disarmament of imperialism. That is why we must be active in them and help to build them.

Comrade Jaquith tells us: "We have the responsibility of explaining to these people that there is an immediate, concrete threat of war in Central America. That the most effective way to mobilize against the dangers of war in general is to expose the imperialist operations taking place today in that region."

It is true, the most immediate danger is in Central America. We must explain this. We are explaining it. The extraordinary USec in mid-November adopted a declaration on this question. We don't just explain things. We mobilise. The LCR participated in the November 6 demonstrations in Paris. Our Mexican comrades are playing a leading role in the preparation of an international forum in solidarity with El Salvador in Mexico on March 27.

But we have to recognise the fact that these mobilisations, in any case in Europe, are much smaller than the anti-missile actions. If it is a question of explaining things, we are in agreement. If it is a case of organising specific actions on Central America, we still are agreed. If the point is to bring up this solidarity inside the anti-missile movement, we still have agreement. But if you are talking about forcing the anti-missile movement to transform itself into a movement of solidarity with Central America with the risk of dividing it, then we no longer are in agreement with you. It really comes down to the problem of our conception of campaigns based on broad demands which permit unity to be achieved yet which obviously does not exclude mobilisations on other demands and at other levels.

In the same part of her greetings, Comrade Jaquith takes up the question of the army and the draft: "In my opinion, it doesn't matter if the French army that intervenes in Africa is a conscript army or a professional army — the goal is the same. And the most effective way to defend the rights of soldiers is to struggle against military service in all its forms."

We can only take this statement as a scarcely-veiled criticism of the JCR-led campaign for "six months military

service as promised.”

Let's have no misunderstanding. For a long time now there has been no qualitative difference between a draft army and a professional one. Both are bourgeois armies designed for colonial and civil war. One is not more progressive than the other.

Having said that, Comrade Jaquith is mistaken when she says that our objective is to fight against military service in all its forms. That is to get the target wrong. In the tradition of revolutionary anti-militarism we struggle against the bourgeois army and for its disintegration, not against military service.

In countries where there is a draft army we do not fight alongside the pacifist conscientious objectors or the right wing for a career army. Following the tradition of the Communist International, we struggle for the democratic rights of soldiers, for increased pay, for the reduction of service and against the army being organised in barracks separate from the people, for the sponsoring of soldiers by the trade union movement, etc.

In countries where there is a professional army, we do not campaign for the re-establishment of the draft which can be used in times of crisis to “militarise/integrate” youth and cover up unemployment. We are therefore in agreement with the anti-draft campaign of the SWP comrades.

Taking the concrete example of France, six months of military service is not our programmatic demand. But in the general framework of the struggle for the reduction of military service, we take up the promise of the social democratic president of the republic in order to develop a united mobilisation which poses in practice other problems in relation to both the army (democratic rights) and the general situation of youth (unemployment). Are the comrades in disagreement with this approach?

Do they see this question of the draft as one of programme or principle?

For us, the only *principle*, which was laid out in the conditions for joining the Communist International, is *the obligation of all revolutionary organisations to carry out political activity aiming at the disintegration of the bourgeois army as an imperialist, anti-worker and civil war army.*

3. Solidarity with Solidarnosc

The message from Comrade Jaquith was read at the LCR congress less than one week after the proclamation of the state of siege in Poland. Many delegates were shocked by the tone and the lack of energy in her appeal for solidarity.

But it is not just a question of tone. The tone is an expression of a more fundamental question.

The comrade said: “The attack against Solidarity is a blow struck against the world revolution. It weakens the defense of the workers states against imperialism. It weakens the struggle in Central America and the movement against the missiles in Europe. It strengthens the imperialists in the United States, in Britain, in France and in Germany.”

All that is true. But the first link in this chain of consequences is missing —it is first of all a blow struck against the rise of the political revolution in Poland itself and against the possible overthrow of the bureaucracy.

This approach has consequences on how solidarity

actions are seen. The comrade explains: “We in the Socialist Workers Party are doing two things. We have prepared an issue of our newspaper with slogans condemning the attack against Solidarity and the imperialist intervention in Central America at the same time. We are also holding meetings where we explain the Marxist position on the Polish revolution. We will not participate in demonstrations with the Social Democrats.”

Okay, in our propaganda, we must denounce the hypocrisy of imperialism. We did this in the LCR pamphlet, published almost immediately, on December 17 which denounced imperialism, the bureaucracy, the French government, the Pope, etc. But the necessity of propaganda is not a reason for abstaining from any concrete actions.

We understand that the conditions in the United States for organising demonstrations are delicate and complex. But the comrade is laying out a rule here — not to join in demonstrations with Social Democrats — which is judged to be valid for the whole International: “I think that the problem is the same for all the groups in the International. Everybody is “for” Solidarity — Reagan, Haig, Thatcher, Schmidt, Mitterrand, even Giscard and the fascists. The question is not just to be “for” Solidarity, but also to be for the defense of the gains of the workers states and against imperialism. And it is on these three axes that we can most effectively organize in solidarity with Solidarity.”

First of all, it is not quite precise enough to say that Reagan, Schmidt, Mitterrand and the Pope (and certainly not Giscard) are “for” Solidarnosc. They make use of the Polish events. But they have no enthusiasm for Solidarnosc nor for what it was doing. Most of these heads of state, while weeping crocodile tears, are rather satisfied with the idea of order being restored in Warsaw.

Then Comrade Jaquith tells us that we can only demonstrate about Poland with people who at the same time are in agreement with us on defending the gains of the workers states. With such a line there is little chance of building a mass movement. But more important, is the reciprocal position true, too — can we only demonstrate in solidarity with El Salvador with people who support Solidarnosc and in function of accepting such a condition do we therefore reject any common demonstrations with the stalinist parties?

Or else is it the case that the pre-conditions are valid for Social democrats on Poland but not in relation to stalinists for Central America? If this is so, it is within what framework of hierarchy between the sectors of the world revolution? *Is the betrayal of the colonial revolution supposedly a capital sin and the betrayal of the political revolution only a venial one?* In our opinion this type of priority or hierarchy does not exist. On the basis of correct demands we seek the broadest mobilisation on Central America. The only difference when it is a case of Poland, is that on correct demands we seek the largest possible mobilisation of forces, parties and trade unions which place themselves within the workers movement.

Comrade Jaquith limits herself to expressing a general rule that we must not demonstrate our solidarity with Solidarnosc alongside the social democrats. The issue of *Militant* that came out the same week as her greetings explicitly denounced the demonstrations organised by the SP in France without saying that we had participated with our own slogans.

On the contrary we think it is positive, as opposed to

what happened in 1956 or at the time of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, that the initiative for solidarity with Poland has been taken, at least in France, principally by the workers movement. We consider the "motor" role we have played in this very positive. This weight of the workers movement has meant that the bourgeois forces who wanted to join in with these demonstrations, like on December 14 at Paris or in other towns, were treated as they should be and were kept apart from the demonstrations.

4. On the Turn

We approved the general line of the XIth World congress on the turn. We tried to work out more precisely the conditions and forms of its implementation in the first meeting of the European political bureaux which dealt with the subject in Spring 1980. The UEec Bureau made a written report on this discussion.

As concerns the situation in France, we consider that the results of this turn are too slow and limited. The report that Comrade Aubin made to the Vth LCR congress centred around this question, trying to resolve particular difficulties that face a section which already has a significant trade union implantation. We are interested in having this discussion and exchanging experiences with all sections of the International — just as we have already done during the IEC meeting of May 1981 and at different European political bureaux meetings.

But the way in which Comrade Jaquith takes up the question of the turn in her greetings worries us. She outlines two fundamental ideas.

The first concerns the extension of the turn to industry: "We think that 50 percent of the party in industry is not enough. We should have the overwhelming majority — perhaps 80 percent, the rest being made up of full-timers and retirees."

That is a new conception of things, including in relation to the content of the report Comrade Barnes made at the World Congress.

By the turn we want to see to it that the centre of gravity of our organisations, their backbone and their "sinews" are in the big industrial centres, where we want to form factory cells to lead our trade union work, to develop our campaigns and recruit worker militants to our party.

But we never envisaged reducing our organisations to their "sinews" or to their backbone.

To say that we want 80 percent of our membership in industry is already to begin to transform the turn into a permanent turn or in other words into a vicious circle. Nobody claims that we will recruit more and more quickly among workers as opposed to office workers, teachers or youth in school or training. Present experience in the SWP does not demonstrate the contrary. Nor even the balance sheet of Lutte Ouvriere in France. And even less does the record of the big workers organisations.

If we want to continue to be a leninist organisation which intervenes with a communist programme in all layers of society, we will continue to recruit teachers when

there is a teachers strike, postal workers during post strikes and students when there is a student movement. Unless we win each time, and simultaneously, two or four times more workers these gains will make the percentage of workers in the organisation fall — at least unless we:

- abandoning all interventions into non-industrial sectors;

- or refusing to recruit any office worker or teacher who do not commit themselves to "make the turn" within six months.

Each of these choices draws us away from being a leninist party which gives a response to all expressions of the capitalist crisis and brings us closer to being a workerist sect. The postal workers, the teachers (primary/secondary) or students that we win to our programme come to us first of all because of the answers we give to their problems and to the struggles that take place in their sector. They come to support our programme in order to make our party their instrument of struggle. Some of them can be convinced to make the turn. But if we become the party which proposes the turn and not the party which puts forward its programmatic solutions for all sectors, we will be inexorably heading to a diminishing of its historic function.

The other idea of Comrade Jaquith is that the turn "also means a turn toward the Cubans, the Nicaraguans, the Grenadians." Once again we must define what a "turn to the Cubans, the Nicaraguans, the Grenadians" means.

At the XIth World congress we all declared together, against the sectarians, our willingness to turn towards the developing revolutions, particularly in Central America, and to put ourselves in the front ranks of those in solidarity with these revolutions.

As for the Castroist or Sandinist leaderships of these revolutions, we are ready to give solidarity, have fraternal discussion, but without ignoring what separates us. These leaderships do not propose building an International. This is neither a detail nor an oversight given the key problem which is that of the crisis of international leadership.

One may think that they do not do so because they are submitted to diplomatic imperatives, because they must operate in the framework of their alliances and count on the economic weight of the Soviet bureaucracy. This is even more reason then to use our liberty and to say clearly what certain people inside these currents perhaps think but cannot say. They would not understand it if we kept silent.

We should add that this diplomacy does not consist in a simple abstention or silence on two of the sectors of the world revolution. It has a price. The attitude of the Cubans and Sandinists to the political revolution in Poland has just again demonstrated this.

The turn to industry is not therefore the same movement as a turn to the Cubans and Nicaraguans, but an organisational tactic to strengthen our parties, to implant them and permit them to weigh more heavily in the process of formation of a vanguard on the international scale, which includes the discussion and the necessary polemic with these currents.

The Nicaraguan Workers and Farmers Government and the Revolutionary Leadership of the FSLN

by Jack Barnes

[The following report on behalf of a minority of the United Secretariat was presented to the November 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International. The theses on which the report is based are published in the special supplement to *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* containing the major reports and resolutions of the World Congress.]

* * *

Revolutions are acid tests. Weaknesses that are underneath the surface are suddenly exposed in the heat of the struggle of great class forces that are outside the control of anyone.

The Nicaraguan revolution precipitated a major split on a world scale among those who call themselves Trotskyists. Some currents reacted to this revolution in a completely sectarian way, placing their own organizational concerns and formal schemas ahead of the interests of the Nicaraguan toilers and the world revolution. These forces included Nahuel Moreno's Bolshevik Faction, which engineered the criminal Simon Bolivar Brigade adventure in Nicaragua; the so-called Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International; and other sectarian groupings.

Since the leaders of these groups who were also elected leaders of the Fourth International persisted in their maneuvers against the Nicaraguan revolution, its Sandinista leadership, and the Fourth International, we correctly threw them out a few days ago. Now they are giving aid and comfort to the imperialist campaign against Nicaragua by holding rallies against alleged political repression in Nicaragua.

But the Nicaraguan revolution has also precipitated important divisions within the United Secretariat. When the revolution first occurred last summer, we hoped this would not be the case. In early August, a majority of the Secretariat Bureau reached agreement on a statement on the revolution, and a large delegation travelled together to Nicaragua. There, further agreement seemed to be reached, including a common approach toward condemning the Simon Bolivar Brigade adventure and a common political stance toward the necessary measures taken by the FSLN to deal with this problem.

Not long after the Nicaraguan trip, however, differences began to appear. And they center not on the label of workers' and farmers' government. They are over the political approach to this revolution and to its leadership.

On the one hand were those who embraced the revolution, saw its worker and peasant character, recognized the revolutionary qualities of its leadership, sought to learn from it, and reflected this approach in their press and political activity. On the other hand were those who, because of preconceived schemas or parochial concerns, adapted to sectarianism and, to one degree or another, recoiled from identifying with the Sandinista leadership.

At the heart of this discussion today is this political approach to the Nicaraguan leadership. And this is

intimately connected to the different approaches in the world movement to the revolutionary Cuban leadership and the current in the Caribbean and Central America that looks to the Cuban socialist revolution and its leadership team.

How our movement approaches this current is decisively important. Because a wrong approach is an obstacle to our very reason for existence—constructing a mass revolutionary proletarian international.

That's the debate that's being opened here today.

The Nicaraguan revolution sent shockwaves throughout the imperialist ruling classes, and they have begun to respond. Just in the few days since we've been here at the World Congress, the imperialists and sections of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie have made a number of probes. And we can expect many more as the revolution continues to advance and deepen.

At the same time, something totally unplanned and unanticipated is occurring in the United States, precipitated by what happened in an embassy thousands of miles away in Iran. A chauvinist, war-mongering propaganda campaign has been launched by the Carter administration. This will bring to a new stage the battle in the United States for the minds of the American workers, a battle over the *political* capacity of imperialism to use its military power as the ruling class probes to see what possibilities are open to it. And this will have a great deal to do with the coming showdowns in Central America and the Caribbean.

These are the kinds of things we can't predict. We can't predict all the moves of the bourgeoisie, or their reaction to sharpening struggles. We can't predict or control the actions of the masses. And we can't predict all the tactical moves a pragmatic imperialism will make.

There is no single imperialist tactic being used against free Nicaragua. When Washington was surprised by the manner in which the Somoza regime was overthrown and the Sandinistas took power, they backed off tactically from seeking to block the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front] from wielding governmental power. But economic aid was withheld and reactionary imperialist-backed probes, and eventual military action, remain constant threats.

I will concentrate on four basic aspects of what the position of the Fourth International should be on: 1) the nature of the post-July 1979 government; 2) the FSLN leadership, and our attitude towards it; 3) the contradic-

tions that the toilers of Nicaragua inherit and how they are being resolved to move the revolution forward; and 4) our responsibilities from the point of view of the new opportunities opening for building a world party of socialist revolution.

* * *

To understand the character of the government in Nicaragua today, we have to begin with the fact that no one, including the FSLN, anticipated what was going to happen in July. A mass upsurge and insurrection occurred in face of the last-minute attempts of imperialism and a sector of the non-Somozaist bourgeois opposition to block this powerful intervention of the masses, including attempts to get the FSLN to lay down their arms and last-ditch attempts by the Somozaists to hold on when Somoza fled. The scope and power of this mass uprising led to the final shattering and demoralization of the National Guard. In this process, not only was the Somozaist state apparatus smashed, but much of the bourgeois opposition became discredited. Thus, an unanticipated situation faced the FSLN—the leadership of the insurrection—after July 19.

Before July 19 the FSLN leadership thought that the relationship of forces would make it necessary to incorporate a certain number of National Guard units into the new army and police. They were convinced that the provisional revolutionary government that they would participate in would initially be a coalition regime with a substantial bourgeois majority. Such a regime had already been outlined in formal agreements with bourgeois opposition forces.

The First Big Test

But something else happened. The FSLN had another option, thanks to the intervention of the masses. And this was the first big, post-insurrection test facing the FSLN.

They did not set up a bourgeois coalition regime. They took the power and used it to begin the national reconstruction of devastated Nicaragua.

What was this bourgeois regime that they thought would come into being, and that they had agreed to in San José, Costa Rica, only ten days before the insurrectional victory?

It did not center around the proposed five-person junta alone, but this junta combined with a Council of State. The Council of State was not only to share all legislative powers with the junta, but was also to have veto power over any junta decision, to be able to pass any laws of its own with a two-thirds majority, to draft a constitution, to draft electoral laws, to set up the entire judicial structure, and to set up the Interior Ministry and all the police forces of the country.

This Council of State was to have an overwhelming majority of bourgeois forces. Of the thirty-three seats agreed to in the Council of State, between six and nine at maximum were partisans of the FSLN. The bourgeoisie, through their own parties, through the Chamber of Commerce, through organizations of industrialists, through the Catholic hierarchy, would have dominated the government. All were to receive representation with full vote.

But this bourgeois-dominated institution did not come into existence.

In the month to six weeks following July 19, the opportunity appeared for the FSLN to follow another course. And they took it.

There was a bourgeois coalition regime in Nicaragua—on paper. It had been set up in Costa Rica. But it was violently aborted before it came to life.

Instead the FSLN-led junta alone named the ministers. The convocation of the Council of State was repeatedly postponed. Finally it was announced in October [1979] that it would be set up in a number of months, probably in May 1980, but that its original composition was now totally invalid because of the revolution. Its composition would now reflect the preponderant weight of the new mass organizations in Nicaragua.

In the light of this evolution, a debate among partisans of the Nicaraguan revolution opened up over whether the junta rules by a majority vote or unanimous vote. The truth is that it rules by neither. It rules by the relationship of class forces. Three junta members are partisans of the FSLN, two are bourgeois figures. The FSLN controls the interior ministry, the army, the police, the agrarian reform. It leads the mass organizations.

Unlike Cuba in early 1959, the ministers do not form a legislative cabinet; there is no bourgeois president with veto power.

The FSLN-led revolutionary army is not an element of an alternative power outside the governmental framework. Each and every move of the Sandinista army, each and every decision, has been ratified by the government, as have been such moves as setting up INRA [the National Institute of Agrarian Reform], which was done immediately following the insurrection, in the same weeks as the decision to abort the bourgeois coalition regime.

So to understand what happened, it is necessary to realize that before July 19 the FSLN had agreed there was going to have to be a coalition government, to a large degree dominated by the bourgeoisie. This government was going to find itself in a series of contradictions with the rebel army, which the Sandinistas had every intention of holding onto and building. In many ways this would have been similar to what occurred in Cuba for a number of months after January 1959.

But the masses themselves, in the weeks of fury in July, created an entirely unanticipated relationship of class forces and smashed the maneuvers of the imperialists. In the face of the new opportunities this created, the FSLN did something different from what they had planned on doing. And a different governing power came into being.

Revolutionary Measures

The character of this new power, though, could only be determined by what it did. And what it did is outlined in our resolution before you. [See pp. 21 of this bulletin.]

To date, the steps taken by the new government include the nationalization of all the assets of Somoza and his associates; nationalization of domestic banking, and controls on all foreign banking; beginning the agrarian reform under the control of INRA; concentration within the agrarian reform on cooperativism; beginning the organization of the agricultural workers; state control over the export of all cash crops in the countryside; nationalization of land, sea, and air transport; taking over the necessary equipment to give the FSLN one of the two

major daily papers in the country and radio and television outlets; the launching of large-scale programs, under conditions of harsh austerity, for education, health, and social security. A bill of rights making the interests of the workers and peasants dominant was proclaimed. And the new government has adopted a firm anti-imperialist and internationalist stance concerning Indochina, the Mideast, and Carter's war moves in the Caribbean. It responded to the coup in El Salvador by immediately and unconditionally supporting the revolutionists and the masses against the new regime.

The FSLN has led the mobilization of the masses, including in large demonstrations, like the one to greet Pham Van Dong and the Vietnamese delegation. On November 7, 100,000 Nicaraguans were mobilized in Managua to honor the FSLN's founding leader Carlos Fonseca, who fell in the struggle, and, de facto, to answer the rightist involvement in the demonstration of 8,000-10,000 to greet the archbishop of Managua that had occurred a few days earlier.

The FSLN-led government set up a centralized Sandinista army. The leadership has taken the most dependable of the fighters in the militias and the guerrilla units and integrated them as the political-military cadres to carry out the necessary job of building up an effective revolutionary army.

At the same time, it has publicly pledged to build broad-based militias. These volunteer forces will be based in the workplaces and will receive professional training.

The organization of the CDSs [neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committees] and the unions has continued. The nationalization of the banks was followed by the nationalization of the insurance companies. A couple of weeks ago, the first imperialist property was hit, with the nationalization of the American and Canadian-dominated gold and other mines. Housing reconstruction has begun.

The list of accomplishments of the new Nicaraguan government is contained in the resolution, so I won't attempt to repeat everything. But the nationwide literacy drive is especially important, not only as a way of eliminating illiteracy—a precondition to expanded workers control—but as a means of carrying the revolution to the countryside and forging a link between the peasantry and the government and urban masses. And as a way of educating revolutionary youth about the real life of the rural toilers. It also plays a role in the organization of the defense of the country against counterrevolutionary forces along the Honduran border.

These are not the type of actions that a Council of State dominated by the Chamber of Commerce, the industrialists' organizations, the Catholic hierarchy, and all the bourgeois parties would carry out.

These are not the initial moves of a bourgeois coalition government in a poverty-stricken, devastated country.

These are the moves of a workers' and farmers' government.

One thing must be very clear. Recognizing that a regime is a workers' and farmers' government is not a matter of praising it or pinning a medal on it. It's not to give it moral credit, if anyone is so arrogant as to believe that can be given from outside. It's not to express certainty that it is foreordained under all circumstances to expropriate the bourgeoisie and become a workers' state. It's to recognize a tendency and a fact, in order better to learn from it and

throw our weight in the scales to help the revolutionary leadership move it forward.

There can be a workers' and farmers' government where an objective analysis of the facts would lead to pessimistic conclusions about its capacity to move forward to mobilize the masses to expropriate the exploiters and more and more directly govern. But in any case, it's important to recognize the fact of the existence of a workers' and farmers' government.

The workers' and farmers' government in Nicaragua had its origin in a movement with a radical anti-dictatorial and anti-imperialist political program. The new government has not yet proclaimed the revolution to be socialist, but it has spoken more clearly in class terms than the Cuban leadership did for the first nine months of the Cuban revolution.

The FSLN-led government came to power as a result of popular mass struggle, culminating in a civil war. The FSLN was resolute in combatting bourgeois armed power, disarming it, and calling for the masses to arm themselves, in organizing a revolutionary army to defend the conquests of the masses. It has organized and mobilized the CDSs, the unions, the youth and women's organizations, the agricultural workers, and opened a war on illiteracy in a determined drive to crush counterrevolution and to educate the toilers to govern.

The tendency of the new government is not to attack the masses. Its tendency is to respond to the masses and their initiatives to move forward.

Capacity and Tendency

The determination that the new government is a workers' and farmers' government is not made by measuring the extent of the nationalizations, or the scope of the remaining problems and difficulties, which are very real. As Joe Hansen put it in reference to Cuba nineteen years ago, such a determination is made by the government's "tendency to respond to popular pressures for action against the bourgeoisie and their agents, and its capacity, for whatever immediate reasons and with whatever hesitancy, to undertake measures against bourgeois political power and against bourgeois property relations.

"The extent of these measures," Joe said, "is not decisive in determining the nature of the regime. What is decisive is the capacity and tendency"—as shown by its *deeds*. [*The Workers and Farmers Government* by Joseph Hansen, Education for Socialists, page 4; or *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* by Joseph Hansen, Pathfinder Press, page 68.]

Beginning the week of the insurrection, up to the actions it took last week, this new government has acted in just this way. There is no bourgeois coalition government that has acted like this, or *could* act like this.

Confrontations Down the Road

This is neither a bourgeois government nor yet a proletarian government. It's a workers' and farmers' government in a country in which bourgeois property and social relations weigh heavily.

Such a situation is inherently unstable. Class confrontations will arise that will be decisive in determining which way the process will develop. As each one arises, the government throws its weight to resolving it in a proletarian direction—toward socialism—or in a bourgeois direc-

tion—toward reversing the toilers' gains. So far the direction in Nicaragua has been unambiguous.

Making this characterization involves a recognition that further decisive challenges for the FSLN are down the road. The same was true in Algeria—our recognition that the Ben Bella regime became a workers' and farmers' government did not imply a guarantee that the FLN would lead the socialist revolution to victory. The same characterization of the Cuban government after the summer of 1959 also did not mean placing confidence in the July 26 Movement, at that stage, to lead the process to culmination in socialist revolution. The Fidelistas at that point did not even claim to be socialist. They denied they were Marxists at the time the government became a workers' and farmers' government.

The process in Nicaragua will either go forward to the establishment of a workers' state, or backward to the overthrow of the workers' and farmers' government and the consolidation of a bourgeois government and the capitalist state. This government will support and lead the masses to establish a workers' state, or it will be eroded, weakened, and overthrown.

But this fact—that the key conflicts will be between the masses and the remaining bastions of capitalist power—does not obviate the fact that the class character of the government is crucial. Its weight in the coming struggles will be decisive. The government is a government that is supported by the masses—and correctly so. It is seen by them as a government that acts in their interests, that can help them move forward. This is a correct perception, not a wrong perception.

Cuba 1959—Nicaragua 1979

It's instructive to compare the new Nicaraguan government to the provisional revolutionary government that was formed in Cuba in January 1959, before the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government. Even those of us who went through the early Cuban experience tend to telescope in our memory the different stages.

The situation in Cuba in the first part of 1959 was, in certain ways, a situation of dual power. But not primarily dual power on a military level. In fact, if we were just referring to two opposed military powers, there wasn't much dual power, because the rebel army was controlled by the July 26 Movement.

The duality was not on the military level, but between two genuine conflicting *political* powers. The government, in which sovereignty and legitimacy on that level resided, acted as a political power, whose course was not in the same direction as the course that began to be charted by the July 26 Movement. The two courses more and more diverged from each other. More and more, the government majority—President Urrutia, many ministers, the judiciary—became an *antagonist* of the leadership of the revolution, both within the government and without, not one of the *components* of the revolution.

To a large degree, then, you had what could genuinely be called dual power, which was solved by the action of the masses and reflected on the governmental level. You don't resolve dual power like this simply by removal of some ministers. The removal of the bourgeois ministers was the reflection of a change in the class character of the

government and the class relationship of forces in the country.

What was the real situation in Cuba? At first, the police were virtually unpurged. The first purge of the police didn't happen until the summer and fall of 1959.

The judiciary was relatively unpurged, too. It was *used* by the bourgeoisie to block agrarian reform measures and other changes. While a dual judicial system existed for the few weeks necessary to try the Batista torturers and murderers, the first purge of the judiciary didn't come until November 1959, and then a second one came later. In Nicaragua, the FSLN has prevented the emergence of an independent judiciary that can block revolutionary decisions in spite of the fact that this was called for in the pre-July 19 agreements. Many judicial matters are handled by the FSLN-controlled Ministry of the Interior.

The militia in Cuba was not even proposed until late October 1959. It was set up in the next three months with no effective military training, as Fidel later pointed out, and that was changed only after the Bay of Pigs.

G-2, the secret police, was not in the hands of the July 26 Movement until June 1959, when Ramiro Valdez took over command from a bourgeois army officer. INRA was not even set up until the end of May or beginning of June. There was no July 26-led union organizing efforts until the end of May, when the Humanist Workers Front was set up. There was no union organizing in the countryside until after that, with the setting up of the union structures by INRA.

There was no equivalent of the CDSs, because the victory over Batista did not result from a mass urban insurrection. There was no equivalent to the organization of the CST (Sandinista Trade Union Confederation) and the ATC (Rural Workers' Association). There was no equivalent to the immediate launching of a mass women's organization, or of the organization of a revolutionary youth organization. And the last major bourgeois minister, López-Fresquet, was not even purged until February 1960—many months after a workers' and farmers' government had come into existence in Cuba.

These differences between the early period of the Cuban revolution and the new Nicaraguan revolution do not mean the FSLN is "better" than the Castro team. No. What these differences mean is that in Cuba there was a real conflict, with a real bourgeois coalition government, facing another power center—the revolutionary armed forces, increasingly backed by mass mobilizations. This contradiction and conflict was resolved between June and October, 1959.

This is the opposite of the reality in Nicaragua today.

Character of the FSLN Leadership

On the question of the character of the FSLN and our attitude towards it.

They have one great advantage over the Cubans of 1959—they *stand on the shoulders of the Cubans*.

Their heritage is not just Sandinista, not just anti-imperialist. They were trained, molded, and even carried out faction fights in a framework of looking to the Cubans as the leadership of a Marxist current the Sandinistas were part of.

One cannot read the speeches of FSLN leaders like Carlos Fonseca—speeches in the late 1960s and early

1970s, which have been published and are now circulated in Nicaragua—without seeing the difference in how the FSLN posed class questions, as compared to the positions of the early July 26 Movement.

The FSLN leaders have proven themselves to be revolutionists. They not only responded to pressure from the masses, but they seized the opportunity created by the masses, took power, and have led the way forward.

The coming task will *not* be establishing a workers' and farmers' government. It will be to use this governmental power in dealing definitively with the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie when it is used to obstruct the revolution. In the countryside, this power is symbolized by ownership of cotton and coffee, and in the cities, by bourgeois ownership and control in industry and commerce.

There will be no way of avoiding this confrontation because the bourgeoisie will begin to react to incursions on its prerogatives. *This* is what the confrontation will be about.

Of course, the difficulties facing the revolution are great. The extent of bourgeois ownership, its strength in the countryside, its positions of influence not only in these areas, but through its connections, especially international monetary connections, with its imperialist allies are real. The bourgeoisie also wields a certain amount of *de facto*, day-to-day, decision-making power through technocrats and in the economic ministries.

At the same time, terrible austerity has been forced upon the FSLN led toilers by the devastation they inherited from Somozaism and imperialism. It would be false, however, to deduce from these objective difficulties facing the revolution that it will be halted or fail. Not at all. It will be the mobilization and organization of the masses, and the capacities of the leadership, that will determine which way the coming conflicts will be resolved.

Neither the imperialists nor the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie are orchestrated by Robelo [one of the two bourgeois members of the junta] or anyone else. The current tactics that imperialism and the "anti-Somoza" national bourgeoisie are using are not permanent. The tactics they try at any one time are one thing. The coming conflicts, in which there will be uncontrolled elements, are another.

The masses will have a decisive say in these confrontations, as well. They will respond. They have joined and are building their mass organizations to respond to challenges from the capitalists. They've been taught by their leaders that this is the purpose of their mass organizations, and they will attempt to use them to further their own class interests. Their actions can even go beyond what the FSLN thinks is possible. The last time this happened, in the insurrection, the FSLN itself responded to the masses.

It is important not to misjudge the stage of the revolution, and therefore misjudge the tasks before it. The government is not the center of bourgeois power, opposed to a center of power of the toilers. To the contrary, the government, as shown by its actions, is *in harmony with* not *in opposition to*, the proletarian direction and tendency of the leadership of what Lenin called a real peoples' revolution.

It is this very fact that poses the following alternative: Either the bourgeoisie must change the government, or its economic power will progressively be crushed and a workers state established.

If you have the wrong position on the government, if you

think the new Nicaraguan government is more or less the kind of government that existed in Cuba the first six months of 1959, if you think that kind of conflict is the central contradiction, then you will be wrong on the timing, pace, and ultimately the tasks of the Nicaraguan revolution. You misjudge the leadership; you misorient our members. An increasingly sectarian stance is bred.

Revolutionary Cuba and the Coming Confrontation

A factor that will be decisive to the future of this government is how Cuba will respond to conflicts and confrontations down the road. Those who, unlike me, are pessimistic on this score should feel even more obligated to throw everything into mobilizing defense of the Nicaraguan revolution, because what Nicaragua will face will be awesome if this pessimistic view is correct.

We are being tested in these events like everyone else.

We believe the stakes in Nicaragua are enormous. What is being fought out now is whether or not the socialist revolution in the hemisphere that opened with the Cuban victory will be extended and the second workers' state in the Americas will be consolidated.

A positive outcome of this struggle will have a gigantic impact on Central America, on the Caribbean, on Latin America, on North America. It is inconceivable that this could happen without attempts by Yankee imperialism to stop it from occurring. Regardless of what tactics they use, they will not simply sit back and allow that to occur. Although they are not in good shape given the world relationship of class forces today, the exact political shape they will be in when this showdown happens will be decided in struggle.

We must assume, as the Nicaraguans assume, as the Cubans assume, that the showdown stage of the revolution, which could coincide with the struggle for power in other parts of Central America, will be met by the power of Washington. And in this conflict, Cuban aid will be extremely important.

I'm convinced that the Cubans will come to the defense of Nicaragua when it comes to a confrontation, even war, with American imperialism. I'm absolutely convinced that not only are the masses of Cuba ready to die for Nicaragua, but that the Castro leadership will respond decisively to any United States use of military force. I believe they will do this no matter what Moscow's position is.

The fate of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions are now intertwined. It's too late to separate them. And their intertwining extends toward Grenada, and could encompass El Salvador and Guatemala in the future.

It's important—as the Cubans insist—to recognize that this relation is not a one-way street.

If Nicaragua moves toward greater workers' democracy, and forms of workers participating in governing, toward further development of mass organizations, this will have a powerful impact on Cuba.

If the socialist revolution is extended, it will deepen the revolutionary spirit and atmosphere in Cuba. And if the Cubans have to come to the aid of the Nicaraguans in such an international showdown, it will affect the relationship of class forces on a world scale. It will deeply affect the class struggle in the United States. Because any showdown like this will pose the question of war or peace to the American working class. It will test whether we are correct

in what we say about the depth of the antiwar attitudes among American workers.

It will also mean a total new shake-up favorable to building a world movement of socialist revolution.

If a defeat takes place, the consequences will also be enormous.

We're convinced that the stakes are high in Central America. We're convinced that regardless of the exact timing, a showdown cannot be avoided. It must be assumed that imperialism will intervene, and it must be assumed that Cuba will respond. And we must act on that assumption.

This helps explain the deep going internationalism of the Nicaraguan leadership.

Building a World Revolutionary Party

How can we use this opening, meet this responsibility, which the emergence of a new levy of revolutionists onto the world scene offers, to build the world party of socialist revolution?

This is not a new question for us. It's one we've been grappling with and acting on since the emergence of the Castro leadership, an anti-Stalinist revolutionary leadership, two decades ago. But the victory of the Sandinistas marks a major extension of what Joe Hansen—in his 1967 preface to *Che Guevara Speaks*—pointed to as "the rise of a generation of revolutionary fighters. . . . effective leader[s], committed to the socialist goal, whose outlook converged more and more with the classical revolutionary Marxist tradition that stood behind the October 1917 Russian Revolution."

What does this mean for our movement? How must we respond to this opportunity?

We place ourselves with the FSLN leaders, with the militants, with the workers, on the road to reconstructing Nicaragua, to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the defeat of imperialism and to the extension of the revolution. That's our common road with them—the elimination of bourgeois power and the defeat of imperialism. Within that common framework we learn, we present our ideas, we apply our program.

Here there is a big difference between the majority resolution and the one I am reporting for. The differences are not mainly about the objective contradictions the revolution faces, on which the two resolutions agree. It's

recognizing where the government and where the masses are in the revolutionary process, the character of the leadership, what that means about the coming confrontations, and how we act as part and parcel of that process.

The Fourth International must turn outward toward the Nicaraguan revolution and its revolutionary leadership, away from responding to sectarian pressures, away from narrow preoccupations. If we write a single word in a single resolution because some sectarian accuses us of "liquidating" or not wanting to build a party, that's a betrayal, a dereliction of our duty as revolutionists. We say what we have to say about the Nicaraguan revolution not to answer sectarians, not to cover ourselves in case the FSLN doesn't measure up to its historical responsibilities—and they have measured up just fine so far—but in order to train the cadres of the International as part of the vanguard of the workers of the world on how to move in a situation like this to join with other revolutionists in building an international current capable of moving toward a real mass world party of socialist revolution.

This means approaching this leadership as fellow revolutionists, as fellow revolutionary leaders, who are proving themselves in action and correctly expect us to do the same where we have forces. It means reversing the dangerously sectarian, and ignorant, underestimation of the Castro leadership. It means gladly accepting, rather than resisting, when a chance presents itself not to swim against the stream.

We have to see the Nicaraguan revolution as *our* revolution. *Our* future is deeply involved in the outcome in Nicaragua. It's not just in the United States and Canada, or in Colombia and Mexico, where Nicaragua will have a great amount to do with building the Fourth International, but throughout the entire world.

It was not the Fidelistas or Sandinistas who were riven with sectarian responses to the revolutionary events in Nicaragua—it was the Fourth International. It is not only the Fidelistas and Sandinista leadership who will be tested by the coming events—it is us. They have passed mighty tests; we must recognize this to do so ourselves. If we can do this, if we can *learn* from living revolutions, if we can *act* as revolutionists when the opportunity arises we can play an indispensable role in taking another step toward a mass world party of socialist revolution. This is our challenge and this is our opportunity—the greatest since the founding of the Fourth International.

Poland: An Exchange of Views — How to Aid Workers' Struggle

[The following exchange was printed in the March 1,
1982 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.]

1. Letter by Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, and Ernest Mandel

Dear Comrade,

The last issue of 1981 of *Intercontinental Press* published an article by Larry Seigle under the title "How to aid Polish workers." While we obviously agree with much which is being said in this article, it contains errors which are so grave that we cannot keep silent on them.

1. The article does not clearly say what "the imposition of martial law, the arrests of workers' leaders and the use of force against strikers" objectively means. The truth is that what has happened in Poland since December 13 is the beginning of a *political counterrevolution*. The Polish workers had conquered *de facto* legal autonomous mass organizations of a semi-soviet type. These have now been suppressed, at least temporarily, through massive repression and terror. It is important to understand that the Polish and international working class have thereby suffered a serious defeat.

2. The article states: "It is no coincidence that the most democratic workers state in the world, revolutionary Cuba, is also the land where the toiling masses have achieved the highest level of political consciousness, including international consciousness. It is the most politically advanced working class in the world. And it is this understanding that makes Cuba an unshakeable defender of the Soviet workers state and at the same time places Cuba shoulder to shoulder with revolutionary fighters throughout the world — from Indochina to Nicaragua."

This statement is factually wrong and politically irresponsible.

It is true, and all to the honor of Cuba, that that small workers state fully supports revolutionary fighters in many countries of the world, at great risks and at great costs to itself. We are enthusiastically on the side of Cuba in all such solidarity actions. But it is unfortunately untrue that "Cubans [are] shoulder to shoulder with revolutionary fighters *throughout the world*." In Poland, where a political

revolution was developing in which 10 million workers and large allied forces were engaged, which constituted one of the highest forms of proletarian activity and self-organization which the world has seen since the Russian revolution, the Cuban press is now supporting *counterrevolution and not the revolutionists*, in full contradiction to what it is doing in relation to other parts of the world. The Cuban workers, systematically misinformed on that issue through the only mass media to which they have access, cannot, under these circumstances, autonomously manifest internationalist solidarity with the Polish working class. The limitations of workers democracy have led to a demise of proletarian internationalism. This is a serious blow against the interests and the defense of revolutionary Cuba and of the revolution in Central America and Latin America. We have to say so clearly and openly, not irresponsibly hide that fact.

3. The article states: "In France, the imperialist propaganda campaign carried out under the guise of 'solidarity' with Poland reached unrivaled heights. In Paris, the Socialist Party leadership, along with SP-led unions, organized a protest march against the actions [*sic*] of the Soviet and Polish governments. The major bourgeois parties held a demonstration at the same time and the same place."

This statement is again factually wrong and politically misleading. The truth is that the march to which comrade Seigle alludes was called by all French working-class mass organizations outside of the CP and the CGT [General Confederation of Labor] majority (a large sector of CP oppositionists and the CGT minority participated). The tens of thousands of demonstrators were overwhelmingly working class in composition. The attempt of less than 1,000 Gaullists to join the march failed because the Trotskyists expelled them from it. Contrary to what happened in 1956 after the crushing by the Soviet army of the Hungarian revolution, and in 1968 after the entry of Warsaw Pact armies in Czechoslovakia, this time

the Socialist Party was forced by the changed relationship of class forces and by working-class pressure to refuse any common action with bourgeois parties. The foreign representatives of Solidarnosc also directed themselves exclusively toward the French trade unions.

It also has to be added that short, token strikes in solidarity with the Polish workers took place, called by the trade unions. Several million workers participated in these strikes in France and Italy, and hundreds of thousands in Belgium and Norway.

The defense of the Polish workers through such class-struggle forms of working-class activity today calls for a long-term solidarity campaign essentially based on the mass organizations of the working class. That is what the Fourth International is fighting for, through a correct application of the united front tactic.

So, far from being a triumph of the "imperialist propaganda campaign," the solidarity demonstrations in France with the Polish workers were highpoints of elementary proletarian internationalism. It is through the development of such solidarity actions with the *three sectors of the world revolution* that proletarian internationalist consciousness will be raised in practice in the international working class. This is the only way today to achieve bigger and bigger success in our campaign for the defense of the Central American revolution, threatened by imperialism and its stooges.

This is what Trotskyists everywhere in the world — including the USA — clearly understood and practiced in 1956 and 1968. Comrade Seigle's article represents a departure from that tradition. We have to dissociate ourselves from that departure.

Comradely greetings,

Pierre Frank
Livio Maitan
Ernest Mandel
Contributing Editors

2. A Reply by Steve Clark, George Novack, and Larry Seigle

Comrades Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, and Ernest Mandel take issue with the news analysis entitled "How to aid Polish workers" in the December 28, 1981, *Intercontinental Press*. They charge that it contained "grave" errors

and "politically irresponsible" assertions. Most importantly, they contend that the line of the news analysis is a "departure from [the] tradition" of Trotskyism. It signifies, they state, a rejection of "what Trotskyists everywhere in

the world — including the USA — clearly understood and practiced in 1956 and 1968."

The charges are serious ones. But they are entirely misdirected. Far from being a departure, the offending news analysis simply reaf-

firmed the positions taken by revolutionary Marxists not only in 1956 and 1968, but also, as we shall see, in 1953 and still earlier.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel begin by finding fault with the news analysis because it failed to explain what the December 13 declaration of martial law in Poland and the subsequent events there "objectively means." This is true. The news analysis did not attempt an assessment of the longer-term impact of the crackdown on the political revolution in Poland. This was not its topic or purpose. Its subject was clearly indicated by its title: "How to aid Polish workers."

The point was to explain how the labor movement in the imperialist countries can help the struggle of Solidarity. The framework was clearly stated: "the imposition of martial law, the arrests of workers' leaders, and the use of force against strikers are criminal acts, condemned by working-class fighters everywhere." In its concluding paragraph, the news analysis said:

Once again the bureaucratic rulers of the Soviet Union and Poland have revealed themselves to be the betrayers of the ideals of communism, obstacles to its advancement, and deadly enemies of the fight for workers democracy and self-determination, which were an essential element of the program that the Bolshevik Party in the time of Lenin fought to implement.

What Polish events 'objectively mean'

A separate article in the same issue of *Intercontinental Press*, entitled, "A revolution for workers democracy," by Ernest Harsch, did take a look at what the events in Poland "objectively mean." This article was put together in the days after the declaration of martial law, when information from inside Poland was hard to come by because of the total news blackout imposed by the Polish regime. Harsch stressed that "despite the suddenness of the move [the declaration of martial law] and the detention of many of their leaders, Polish workers immediately responded. Workers in factories around the country went on strike, in many cases occupying their plants."

Harsch added, in assessing the events, that "the Polish revolution is not over. It has entered a new — but critical — stage."

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do not express an opinion one way or the other about this assessment. Certainly it was not as detailed as the further analyses that *Intercontinental Press* has published based on more recent information coming out of Poland. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that Harsch's article avoided a mistake made by many radical and petty-bourgeois commentators, whose immediate reaction to the crackdown against Solidarity was to despair, and to draw the impressionistic conclusion that the heroic Polish working class had been crushed, and its struggle ended for an historic period.

The bureaucracy has succeeded in driving Solidarity underground, dispersing it to a large extent, and arresting many workers' leaders. But it has not definitively destroyed Solidarity, nor has it broken the back of the workers strug-

gle. Decisive battles are yet to be fought.

What kind of solidarity is needed?

The most extensive part of the criticism offered by the three comrades concerns what revolutionists in the imperialist countries ought to be doing to advance the interests of the Polish workers.

In addition to pointing to the hypocrisy of the likes of Reagan and Thatcher, the news analysis went after the misleaders of the labor movement in France and in the United States. It said, "In the United States, the bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO trade-union federation jumped into the anticommunist campaign with a vigor noticeably missing when it comes to defending the rights of workers against the capitalists — in the United States or anywhere else."

With regard to France, the news analysis noted the extreme hypocrisy of the leadership of the French Socialist Party, the governing body in imperialist France. It observed that "the SP government of François Mitterrand has given wholehearted support to Reagan's military buildup in the name of countering the Soviet 'threat.'" It pointed out that the enthusiasm of the French SP leaders for the demonstrations against the crackdown in Poland was in marked contrast to their boycott of a demonstration held in Paris a few weeks earlier to protest the planned introduction in Europe of new nuclear missiles by NATO.

The news analysis stated, "In Paris, the Socialist Party leadership, along with SP-led unions, organized a protest march against the actions of the Soviet and Polish governments. The major bourgeois parties held a demonstration at the same time and same place."

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel assert that this is "factually wrong and politically misleading." First, they say that the "tens of thousands of demonstrators were overwhelmingly working class in composition."

But the news analysis did not say anything about the composition of the demonstration, and there is no reason to dispute the fact that the overwhelming majority of those who participated were people who work for a living. Since in France, everyone from ships' officers to doctors, engineers, and even cops and judges belong to unions, it might even be true that most of those participating were unionists.

However, that does not determine the political character of the demonstration. Just because an action is called by trade unions, and workers respond, does not automatically make it progressive.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel report that the "attempt of less than 1,000 Gaullists to join the march failed because the Trotskyists expelled them from it." (The news analysis did not say that the Gaullists joined the march, but that they and other bourgeois forces "held a demonstration at the same time and same place." This in fact happened.)

'High point of proletarian internationalism'?

But the question is posed, why did 1,000 Gaullists want to join the demonstration? Could it be because they found themselves in

agreement with the social democrats and other labor lieutenants of the capitalist class who organized the action and established its political character? Doesn't that point to a problem in what Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel characterize as one of the "highpoints of elementary proletarian internationalism"?

Shouldn't we explain to other workers who participated in the march that there is a better way to differentiate a working-class line on Poland from that of the Gaullists than by organizing demonstrations that the bourgeois parties have to be physically restrained from joining? For example, shouldn't those concerned about aiding Polish workers have directed their fire against French imperialism and not limited themselves to condemning the crackdown in Poland? Are the interests of Polish workers different from those of French workers?

Perhaps the comrades took offense at the remark in the news analysis that the proimperialist hypocrisy around Poland reached "unrivaled heights" in France. This point was aimed at the French SP officialdom, which in the name of socialism is administering capitalism in France and its colonial possessions, and defending the French bourgeoisie's imperialist interests.

By all reports, none of the organizers of this "highpoint of proletarian internationalism" held in the streets of Paris raised demands on the French government for withdrawal of French military forces from Africa and other parts of the world, independence for the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe, or any such anti-French-imperialist slogans. This kind of hypocrisy, if not unrivaled, at least has yet to be surpassed.

Referring to this Paris demonstration, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel state, "The defense of the Polish workers through such class-struggle forms of working-class activity today calls for a long-term solidarity campaign essentially based on the mass organizations of the working class." But a working-class approach needs to include more than that it be "based on" the trade unions and the mass reformist workers parties.

The only meaningful solidarity activities are those that objectively advance the working class in the capitalist countries along its own strategic line of march. Our starting point must be to find ways to deepen the class consciousness, political understanding, and combativity of workers who are motivated by solidarity with the Polish struggle. That means promoting awareness not only that Stalinism is counterrevolutionary, but also that social democratic anticommunism and "third campism" are deadly enemies of the workers movement and workers democracy.

How revolutionary Marxists responded in 1968

This essential element is missing from the line proposed by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel. In leaving it out, they discard the approach that has guided revolutionary Marxists in the past, as can be seen by looking at the

line the Fourth International has followed throughout its history. Our response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 is a good place to start.

The *Militant*, which expresses the views of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the United States, protested the invasion with a banner headline demanding, "Soviet troops, go home! U.S., get out of Vietnam!" In a front-page statement, SWP presidential candidate Fred Halstead emphasized the connections between opposition to the Soviet invasion and defense of the Vietnamese revolution against Washington's occupying army. This sharply differentiated the SWP from "third camp" and openly proimperialist defenders of national self-determination and democratic rights.

Halstead said:

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia directly injures the Vietnamese revolution since it is being exploited by the U.S. imperialists and their allies to sanction the continuation of their war against the Vietnamese people. It serves to dishearten the antiwar forces within the United States. A call for the invading Warsaw Pact armies to get out of Czechoslovakia must be coupled with an equally vigorous demand for U.S. troops to withdraw immediately from Vietnam.

The same general stance was adopted by the French Trotskyists. Eight members of the banned Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR) issued a statement on their release from prison August 23, just days after the Soviet tanks rolled into Prague. The eight had been imprisoned on charges of reconstituting the JCR, which had been dissolved by the French government following the massive upsurge of May-June 1968. They focused their fire on the French government, as well as expressing opposition to the Soviet invasion. They said:

The Soviet aggression has dealt a blow to the entire international workers movement. It has encouraged the imperialists to step up their aggressive policy throughout the world and especially in Vietnam. It has given ammunition to the French bourgeoisie which pretends to believe that the May movement wanted to establish a bureaucratic dictatorship in France, although the May revolutionists are in solidarity with the Czechoslovak workers as they were with the Polish students.

The socialism we want assumed total democracy for the workers and students. It is with this aspiration that tens of thousands of young people have entered into struggle today. The fact that in many capitals demonstrations of support for the Czechoslovak people have marched behind red flags to the tune of the 'Internationale' testifies to this. But we will never add our voices to those who support [Lyndon] Johnson and [Francisco] Franco.

Hypocrisy of British Labour Party

This approach was also followed in London, at a rally organized by the Labour Party on August 25. Alan Harris, writing in the September 9, 1968, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, recounted what happened when radical youth, prominent among them members of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, confronted leaders of the Labour Party and the British union federa-

tion, the Trades Union Congress. The Labour Party was then in office, lending full support to Washington's dirty war in Vietnam.

Despite a battery of high-wattage loudspeakers, government orators George Brown, Jennie Lee, Richard Crossman and Fred Layday of the Trades Union Congress had a hard time making themselves heard above the din.

Protected by police, they were jeered, booed, and pelted with pennies.

When Brown lost his temper and called the hecklers "fascists," large sections of the audience chanted back, "Hypocrites!"; "What About Vietnam?"; "What About Biafra?"

Loud laughter greeted Brown's solemn declaration: "We are in the fight. New ideas are bound to win and Labour pledges to be there when the fight is won."

The response to Brown's cynical pledge indicated the audience's awareness of the record of the Labour party leaders. In violation of official Labour party policy they have not organized a single solitary rally on Vietnam; they have done absolutely nothing in defense of the French workers and students; they apologized for the military takeover in Greece; they did not say a single word in defense of the Dominican Republic against the U.S. invasion; in short, they have not dissociated themselves in the slightest way from U.S. foreign policy — they are anti-Communist to the core. Yet within five days of Moscow's invasion of Czechoslovakia, they had the gall to speak in the name of the communist workers of that country!

The stance of the revolutionary-minded comrades at the demonstration was one of exposing the fakery of the social democratic politicians and trade-union officials of the Labour Party, which, like the French SP leadership today, was administering an empire on behalf of the capitalist rulers of the country.

The comrades participated in the demonstration and expressed their point of view — vigorously. But it never occurred to them to label the demonstration organized by the governing party of imperialist Britain as a "highpoint of elementary proletarian internationalism."

'Tear away the hypocritical mask'

This approach was in line with the position adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in response to the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In a statement issued the day after the invasion and published in *Intercontinental Press* on September 2, 1968, the United Secretariat condemned the Soviet move, and answered the lies offered by the Stalinists in self-justification. It then went on to state,

While condemning the crimes of the Kremlin, the workers must not forget for one moment the bloodier crimes committed by imperialism every day in Vietnam. Let us tear away the hypocritical mask worn by imperialism. The imperialists are shedding crocodile tears over the violation of the right of the Czechoslovak people to determine their own destiny, but they rain napalm and poison gas on the Vietnamese people to prevent them from setting up the kind of government and social regime they want.

Then, turning to the question of the tasks facing the workers movement in the imperialist countries, the United Secretariat said, "The Fourth International reminds the workers of all

the capitalist countries that the best help they can give to the struggle of their Czech brothers is to redouble their efforts to overthrow the regime of capitalism, and to commit themselves even more wholeheartedly to the road of socialist revolution."

'How to aid Hungarian Revolution'

In 1956, when the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Kremlin directed the crushing of the Hungarian workers revolution, revolutionaries likewise worked to advance class consciousness inside the capitalist countries as well as in the workers states.

Marxists rejected the idea of an all-inclusive front of "anti-Stalinists" within the labor movement to mobilize support for the Hungarian revolution, arguing that solidarity with the Hungarian workers in the capitalist countries had to start from the standpoint of opposition to imperialism. This point of view, in the context of U.S. politics, was expressed in an editorial entitled "How to Aid Hungarian Revolution" in the *Militant* of December 3, 1956.

The editorial explained:

The principle of international working class solidarity gives world and U.S. labor the obligation to aid the Hungarian workers who are leading a historic struggle for national independence. But such aid must be so designed and executed as to further the aims for which the Hungarian workers are fighting — an independent socialist Hungary.

Genuine support to the Hungarian revolution by American labor therefore means, first of all, to expose and to combat the reactionary aims of U.S. Big Business in Hungary. For despite their hypocritical display of concern for the Hungarian masses, the Wall Street politicians are working to thwart their socialist objectives.

The *Militant* focused its fire on the line being proposed within the labor movement by Walter Reuther, head of the United Auto Workers. Reuther was a "progressive" labor faker of the American breed — that is to say, he acknowledged that he had been a socialist in his youth and was now a loyal Democrat.

Reuther launched a UAW campaign around Hungary, including calling for lunchtime protest meetings in the auto plants and collections by the union for Hungarian relief. Reuther also urged that Washington "take the lead" in the establishment of a "United Nations International Police Force to move in and maintain order and resist aggression in such cases as that of Hungary."

The *Militant* said, "The American working people are sympathetic to the Hungarian struggle for national independence. But this sympathy is being subverted by the official leaders of the union movement to further the policies of the U.S. State Department."

The editorial argued that this anticommunist and anti-Soviet "labor" campaign was reactionary. It pointed out that Reuther's "real concern is not to defend the interests of the Hungarian workers but to further U.S. cold-war objectives." And it concluded by addressing the responsibilities of class-conscious workers in the United States:

"U.S. labor must couple its support for the

Hungarian workers' demand on the Kremlin — 'Get your troops out!' — with demands of its own addressed to the U.S. government: 'Hands off the Hungarian Revolution!' 'Withdraw all American troops from foreign soil and waters!' " (Emphasis added.)

In 1956, the Fourth International was divided into two public factions. However, the common reaction by both wings of the international to the events in Hungary was one of the key factors that led to the reunification process. This line in the *Militant* reflected the general approach of experienced leaderships of the sections of the Fourth International.

East German uprising in 1953

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel speak of what Trotskyists "understood and practiced in 1956 and 1968." This omits the year 1953, when the East German workers staged the first massive uprising against the bureaucratic overlords in the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe.

Differences over the East German events, which reflected a broader divergence over what some in the Fourth International had come to believe was a new capacity of the Stalinist bureaucracies to reform themselves, played a central role in the 1953 split in the international.

However, if we look at the 1953 position of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, as reflected in the *Militant*, we will see that its approach was exactly the same as in 1956, 1968 — and today.

The *Militant* greeted the strike demonstrations in East Berlin in June 1953 as pointing "to the only progressive way in which Stalinism can be destroyed — the independent action of the working class, fighting militantly for their own economic, political and social interests."

In its lead editorial the following week, the *Militant* stated its view of the task of the labor movement in the United States in regard to solidarity with the East German workers.

"To mobilize their forces for a definitive settlement with their oppressors, the German workers need our help. *American labor has the duty to demand that Washington keep its hands off East Germany, withdraw all U.S. troops from Germany, and allow the German people to handle their own affairs.*" (Emphasis added.)

The *Militant* also ran a front-page story by George Breitman entitled, "Lessons for U.S. Labor from East Germany," explaining how class-conscious unionists should respond to Walter Reuther and George Meany (then head of the American Federation of Labor), who were spouting off about the need for labor to "support" the courageous East German workers.

Breitman wrote,

The real test of political courage is the willingness and ability to oppose the government in your own country on its reactionary policies, both domestic and foreign. The East German workers meet this test. Meany and Reuther don't.

Nothing is cheaper or safer than opposing the

crimes of a government that is far away. The East German workers, in the face of tanks, oppose their own government. Meany and Reuther oppose — the Kremlin and its agents. Nothing is more respectable in Washington today.

Is the old framework out of date?

Thus, we submit, the line of the news analysis was consistent with what U.S. Trotskyists and most others understood and practiced in 1953 as well as in 1956 and 1968. It was not a departure. The same, however, cannot be said of the line being advanced by some leaders of the Fourth International today and being implemented by some of its sections.

An example of such a departure is the article by Comrade Jacqueline Allio in last week's *Intercontinental Press*, entitled "Protests Against Polish Crackdown." Comrade Allio is a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International who has written extensively on the events in Poland and is active in organizing solidarity activities throughout Europe. Her article was distributed as an advance promotional issue of *International Viewpoint*, a new English-language magazine published by the United Secretariat. We can assume that her article does not express a line different from that of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel.

Under the subheading "For unity of action" Comrade Allio writes, "mobilizations in support of the Polish workers resistance make the battle for unity in action of the various forces of the workers movement a priority — whether actions organized for food aid and financial support for Solidarity or commissions of inquiry and sponsorship schemes aiming to establish direct links with the Polish workers of such and such a town, sector, or workplace."

The political basis for this "unity in action" is to be the single issue of opposition to the Stalinist repression in Poland. What it leaves out is what must be at the heart of working-class solidarity with Polish Solidarity: opposition to our own capitalist governments, and genuine proletarian internationalism, which necessitates defense of the workers states against imperialism.

Have the social democrats adopted 'advanced positions'?

Comrade Allio goes so far as to hail the "advanced positions adopted by the leadership of the CFDT" (the French union federation dominated by the Socialist Party).

But what do these "advanced positions" consist of? Have the social-democratic bureaucrats who head the CFDT come out in defense of the Soviet Union and all other workers states against imperialism? Have they declared political war on the capitalist government of France?

What Comrade Allio ignores is that the CFDT official leadership is firmly supporting the current capitalist government of France. Its "advanced positions" do not extend to launching a campaign inside France against the introduction of new NATO nuclear missiles in Western Europe, nor a fight against French im-

perialism's own "nuclear strike force."

Nor do its "advanced positions" include opposition to the imperialist draft, which the Mitterrand government is dutifully enforcing. Nor do they include a campaign against French imperialism and colonialism in Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere.

To be proimperialist and militantly anticommunist is hardly an "advance" for social democrats. This has been the case since 1917. They have never wavered for an instant from their steadfast opposition to the Soviet workers state, and to every workers state that has been established since. Their "solidarity" with workers' struggle in these countries has always been in this framework. What is new is to see this reactionary position winning praise from revolutionary Marxists.

Stalinism and anti-Stalinism

The framework for the working-class approach to this question was spelled out by James P. Cannon, one of the founding leaders of the Fourth International.

In 1945, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Russian revolution, Cannon gave a speech reaffirming the stance of the Fourth International in defense of the Soviet workers state against imperialism. This was an important speech for the whole world movement, since it was the first opportunity for such a public declaration by any of the central leaders of the Fourth International since before World War II.

Cannon took aim in that speech at the development — already discernable in the United States — of what would become known as "Stalinophobia," as the postwar imperialist onslaught against the workers states and the witchhunt at home reached full steam. Cannon said:

The Trotskyists understood the nature of Stalinism better, and explained it earlier, and fought it longer and harder than any others. Therefore nobody needs to incite us against Stalinism. But vulgar "anti-Stalinism" is no more revolutionary, and no more attractive to us. We know where this "anti-Stalinism" leads. Up to now it has always led to the camp of "democratic" imperialism.

We can have no quarrel whatsoever with those who denounced Stalinism for its bloody crimes against the workers — and they are legion. But excessive zeal in criticizing and denouncing the Soviet Union and those who still defend it — that part of it which is worthy of defense — against imperialism is subject to suspicion. The unbridled antagonism bordering on Russophobia — which one can notice in the atmosphere these days — is a very dangerous sentiment.

Cannon returned to the same theme two years later in response to a proposal from Ruth Fischer, an exiled former leader of the German Communist Party, who had in the mid-1930s served on the International Secretariat of the International Communist League, the predecessor of the Fourth International. She had since left the Trotskyist movement.

In 1947 Fischer proposed the establishment of a "united front" against Stalinism. Cannon responded with a series of articles in the *Mil-*

itant, later published as a pamphlet under the title, *American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism*. (This pamphlet is now included in the Pathfinder Press book, *The Struggle for Socialism in the "American Century"*. It is available for \$8.95 from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014.)

Cannon wrote:

"So that there may be no misunderstanding, let us make our position clear at the outset. We believe that the greatest and most menacing enemy of the human race is the bipartisan imperialist cabal at Washington. We consider the fight against war and reaction in the United States to be the first and main duty of American revolutionists."

(At the risk of oversimplification, we might observe that had he been living in France, Cannon would have written, "We consider the fight against war and reaction in France to be the first and main duty of French revolutionists.")

He continued:

This is the necessary premise for cooperation in the fight against Stalinism. Those who disagree with us on this point do not understand the reality of the present day, and do not talk our language.

An understanding of the perfidious character of Stalinism is the beginning of wisdom for every serious class-conscious worker; and all anti-Stalinists who are also anticapitalist should try to work together. But anti-Stalinism, by itself, is no program for common struggle. It is too broad a term, and it means different things to different people. There are more anti-Stalinists now than there were when we started our struggle eighteen years ago, especially in this country where Stalinism is weak and Trumanism is strong, and they are especially numerous in New York and not all of them are phonies. But very few of the current crop of vociferous anti-Stalinists have anything to do with us, or we with them. That is not because of exclusiveness or quarrelsomeness, either on their part or ours, but because we start out from different premises, conduct the struggle by different methods, and aim at different goals.

'Clearly and unambiguously anticapitalist'

Cannon approached the question from the standpoint of how to win to the genuine communist movement — our movement — radicalizing workers who were repelled by Stalinism's crimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and in the labor movement in the capitalist countries. That remains our framework today. As Cannon put it in 1947:

"The fight against Stalinism is first of all, and above all, a political fight. This political fight will never make any serious headway with the radicalized workers — and they are the ones who are decisive — unless it is clearly and unambiguously anticapitalist from beginning to end."

Turning specifically to the proposal of an "all-inclusive united front" against Stalinism, Cannon added the following:

We Trotskyists, as everybody knows, are also against Stalinism and have fought it unceasingly and consistently for a very long time. But we have no place in the present "all-inclusive" united front against American Stalinism. The reason for this is that we are anti-capitalist. Consequently, we can

find no point of agreement with the campaign conducted by the political representatives of American capitalism in Washington, with the support of its agents in the labor movement and its lackeys in the literary and academic world. We fight Stalinism from a different standpoint.

We fight Stalinism not because it is another name for communism, but precisely because of its betrayal of communism and of the interests of the workers in the class struggle. Our exposition of the question is made from a communist point of view, and our appeal is directed not to the exploiters of labor and their various reactionary agencies of oppression and deception, but to the workers, who have a vital interest in the struggle against the capitalist exploiters as well as against perfidious Stalinism.

Cannon concluded this argument by stressing his central point: "The problem of advanced and progressive workers is to learn how to fight Stalinism without inadvertently falling into the camp of capitalist reaction and thus hurting only themselves."

'Passivity' of European social democrats?

Rejecting this framework for the fight against Stalinism leads quickly to the adoption of political positions that are an obstacle to working-class struggles, both in the workers states and in the capitalist countries.

Thus, Comrade Allio criticizes the social democrats not for their support to imperialism, their anticommunism, or their refusal to defend the workers states — but for displaying insufficient vigor in translating their tough talk on Poland into action. She bemoans the "passivity of the trade-union leadership in countries where the workers movement is dominated by social democracy. . . ." This "passivity," she says, is responsible for the fact that in countries such as West Germany, "the activity of the churches, right-wing organizations, and the anti-communist Polish émigrés occupies an increasing place in mass media coverage."

Is vigorous social-democratic anticommunism really more in the interests of the working class than "passive" social-democratic anti-communism or bourgeois anticommunism?

Comrade Allio is even led into the position of giving higher marks to the leadership of the French SP than to that of the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD). She writes:

There is no doubt that the most massive solidarity campaign in Europe since the military coup d'état [in Poland] has developed in France. This certainly has to do with the favorable situation — the positions taken by the Mitterrand-Mauroy government, whose declarations, however formal they might be and outside of the clangers dropped by various ministers, is an encouragement to the mobilization of the working class. This is contrary to what happened in West Germany, for example, when Chancellor Helmut Schmidt had decided once and for all that it is a Polish domestic question and that above all it is necessary not to get mixed up in it.

The West German bourgeoisie, ruling through the SPD, judged its interests to be best served by a diplomatic policy that did nothing to jeopardize its plans for the multi-billion-dollar deal involving a natural gas pipeline from the Soviet Union. In this decision, it considered its competition with other imperialist

powers, especially the United States and Japan.

The French bourgeoisie, ruling through the French SP, judged its interests differently. Mitterrand also kept in mind the opportunity to deal political blows to the French Communist Party, which maintains a substantial influence in France, especially among industrial workers, thus posing a constant problem for the French ruling class.

By overlooking the fact that this conflict of rival imperialist interests was behind the differing diplomatic and political reactions to the Polish events by the French and West German governments, Comrade Allio can inadvertently leave her readers with the impression that she believes the position of the Mitterrand-Mauroy government is somehow more progressive than its imperialist counterpart in Bonn.

Comrade Allio starts from the premise that class-conscious workers should lend support to any action called by a trade-union or a political current within the workers movement for the ostensible purpose of demonstrating solidarity with the Polish workers. This false beginning has already led some revolutionists very far afield.

Publications edited by the United Secretariat, and newspapers published by some sections of the Fourth International, have gone so far as to advocate that trade unions in the capitalist countries organize a boycott of trade with the Polish workers state. Such boycotts can serve only the interests of imperialism. Advocacy of them is a reversal of the position the Fourth International has always held.

Comrade Allio, in her article, holds up a four-day strike in Århus, Denmark, as a model solidarity action. She reports that this strike was called by the dockworkers union "to protest against the arrival in their port of a Polish boat which was loaded in Poland by workers who had a rifle stuck in their backs."

A similar position was presented in the January 28 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, published by supporters of the International Marxist Group in Great Britain. In an interview with a *Socialist Challenge* supporter at Massey Ferguson's Coventry plant, the paper reported with approval a vote by the union members to accept a recommendation from the stewards that they refuse to handle parts supplied by Poland's Ursus tractor plant on contract to Massey Ferguson.

"When work on the Massey's order stops," explained this *Socialist Challenge* supporter, "the Polish workers will know they have support despite the bureaucrat's attempt to isolate them from the international workers' movement." In an accompanying article, *Socialist Challenge* stated that while it feels that such boycotts are not necessarily "the most effective way to help Solidarnosc," the paper nonetheless "supports the actions" of the Massey Ferguson union.

Should workers support U.S. longshore boycott?

It is no coincidence that the one trade union

in the United States whose leadership has decided to boycott trade with Poland is the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), which is controlled by a corrupt and notoriously right-wing class-collaborationist bureaucracy.

The ILA misleaders have in the past favored tightening the imperialist blockade of Cuba, and periodically have ordered workers not to handle "Communist" cargo. The ILA president, Thomas Gleason, has also urged the International Transportworkers' Federation to issue a call for its affiliated unions to join in the refusal to handle cargo moving to or from Poland.

The AFL-CIO bureaucracy has hailed the reactionary stand taken by the ILA officials. Lane Kirkland, AFL-CIO president, has also called on Reagan to halt the sale of "grain, goods, and factories" to the Soviet Union.

Comrade Allio, while hailing the decision by the dockworkers association in Århus, omits any reference to the similar decision by the ILA officialdom in New York. But the Mexican section of the Fourth International, following the same line, saw no reason not to include the ILA's boycott as a positive example for the workers movement everywhere. The January 18 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, published by the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) says the following:

Certainly, the Polish workers need solidarity in their fight against the bureaucracy, not that hypocritical and demagogic kind voiced by their enemies, but solidarity from their class brothers. They need actions like the demonstrations of support carried out by the workers of France, the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Denmark, Japan, Argentina, Mexico, etc.; like the boycott of the 110,000 dockworkers of the International Longshoremen's Association of the United States."

In her article pointing to the example of the Århus union boycott of trade with Poland as the way forward for the solidarity movement, Comrade Allio tries to draw a distinction between such boycotts carried out by trade unions and trade embargoes by capitalist governments. She argues that while revolutionists should support such union boycotts against Poland, they should oppose any move by capitalist governments to do the same thing.

Comrade Allio correctly points out that an economic embargo by "the West" would only serve to "cut off the Polish workers from their class brothers and sisters in the West a little more. Above all its negative effects could only fall on the backs of the Polish workers themselves." This would "only aid the regime in carrying out the austerity plan it has been trying to introduce without success for months."

But what Comrade Allio avoids is the fact that a refusal by a trade union to handle cargo going to and from Poland would harm the working class just as much. Cutting off trade would further undermine the Polish workers state, create still more bitter hardships for the Polish working people, accentuate the economic crisis, and strengthen the position of the bureaucracy.

Moreover, such a boycott would deal a di-

rectly political blow to the Polish workers by handing a golden opportunity to the Stalinists to argue anew that the solidarity movement in the capitalist countries is really aimed at bringing down the workers state in Poland.

What is more, arguing within the labor movement that unionists should conduct such a boycott on their own but not demand the same from the government introduces still another problem. If it is correct for our union to boycott trade with Poland, a West German unionist might ask, why shouldn't we demand the same of the government, which is in the hands of those who claim to be leaders of the workers movement?

If British trade unionists ought to reject Polish goods, shouldn't British workers insist that the Labour Party adopt the same stand, and vow to make it the policy of the next Labour government?

And if American workers should back the ILA boycott, then why *shouldn't* they agree with Lane Kirkland that the AFL-CIO should fight to force President Reagan and Congress to go along?

Workers interest lies in more trade with Poland

Advocating any kind of boycott of trade with Poland amounts to a complete rejection of the position the revolutionary workers movement has fought for since the first workers state was born in Russia. As everyone who has seen the movie *Reds* — Hollywood's version of the Bolshevik revolution — is well aware, the imperialists tried to starve the young workers republic to death with an economic blockade as well as by military assault.

From the day the workers took power in Russia the international communist movement has campaigned for full and normalized trade and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. In many countries, in the 1920s, this was one of the central agitational slogans of the young Communist parties.

Communists pointed out that expanded trade with the Soviet Union was not only in the interests of the workers state, and therefore in the long-term interest of workers everywhere. It was also in the immediate interest of the labor movement in the capitalist countries, since trade meant jobs and expanded markets for farmers.

With Stalin's rise to power and the consolidation of bureaucratic rule in the Soviet Union, revolutionary Marxists continued to fight against any efforts to embargo or quarantine the Soviet workers state. The Trotskyist movement has always explained that the imperialist encirclement of the Soviet Union helped to create the conditions that gave rise to the Stalinist bureaucracy. Helping the Soviet Union to break out of this encirclement is a necessary part of the fight to restore workers democracy in the Soviet Union.

Never in the history of the Trotskyist movement — not in 1968, 1956, 1953, 1947, nor at the time of the worldwide campaign to condemn the infamous Moscow Trials in the 1930s — has it ever advocated that workers or-

ganizations call for or organize a boycott of trade with the workers states.

Rather than imposing economic sanctions against Poland, revolutionary workers ought to be proposing that the labor movement take up the campaign for an end to all restrictions on trade with Poland and every other workers state. That would be a good way to demonstrate to the Polish workers — and to the ranks of the Communist parties in the capitalist countries as well — that their leaders are lying when they claim that the international solidarity movement is hostile to the interests of the Polish workers and farmers.

This campaign should also include the demand for an immediate halt to the economic blockade enforced by the United States against Cuba, as well as the world imperialist campaign to starve out the Vietnamese revolution.

That is the perspective that all those who consider themselves revolutionists and proletarian internationalists ought to be fighting for.

Cuba and the Polish events

Advancing in this direction requires a sharp rejection of the phony solidarity campaign being waged by the officialdom of the European Social Democracy, trade-union bureaucrats, and those on the left who are increasingly orienting to the social democrats. Adopting the framework proposed by Cannon, as we have seen, means campaigning *as part of* the international camp of the proletariat, and *against* those within the labor movement who function as lieutenants of the capitalist ruling class.

Those who adopt this working-class perspective today are part of the same camp politically as the revolutionary leadership of the Cuban workers state. This is true despite differences of opinion — including on Poland. A discussion of such disagreements with fellow revolutionists is a different kettle of fish from the political war that must be waged against counterrevolutionary misleaders such as Mitterrand. Proletarian revolutionists must give battle against these social democratic demagogues, who are trying to draw into their class-collaborationist framework those workers who are motivated by class solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Poland, and by hatred for the counterrevolution that is being pressed by the bureaucratic caste.

The news analysis pointed to the example of Cuba, a workers state with a revolutionary government that advances the interest of the workers and farmers there. It contrasted this to Poland, a workers state saddled with a government that rules on behalf of a privileged, petty-bourgeois social layer whose interests are opposed to those of the Polish toilers.

The news analysis put it this way:

Privileged bureaucracies, like the one ruling Poland, view revolutionary struggles in other countries as a threat to the stability that they see as necessary to preserve their privileges. Their orientation is to reach an accommodation with imperialism in order to protect that stability.

In contrast, a government that represents the interests of the workers and farmers, such as the revolutionary government of Cuba, understands and acts

on the view that victories for proletarian revolutions in other countries and defeats for imperialism everywhere are in the interests of the workers in their own country.

That is why the imperialists view with horror the prospect of a successful political revolution in Poland. Despite their hypocritical statements of support for union rights in Poland, they understand that a victory for the Polish working people would open the possibility of bringing to power a revolutionary government, like the one in Cuba. And the thought of a Cuba in Eastern Europe is a horrifying one for them.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel object to pointing to the proletarian internationalism of the Cuban leadership and contrasting that with the positions of the Polish regime on the grounds that the Cubans have a wrong line on Solidarity and on the crackdown. They say that references to Cuba in the news analysis were "politically irresponsible" because the Cuban leadership "is now supporting counter-revolution and not the revolutionists" in Poland.

The actual position of the Cuban leadership as reflected in the Cuban press, and a discussion of where this position goes wrong, was the subject of an article by David Frankel in last week's *Intercontinental Press*. The wrong view that the Cubans have presented on events in Poland cuts across working-class solidarity with the Polish workers and miseducates all those who look to the Cubans for leadership. This is a subject that all serious revolutionists are interested in discussing with the Cubans.

Cuba's defense of the workers states

But Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel present a false picture of the Cuban position on the struggle to advance the socialist revolution in the workers states. They do so by entirely leaving out of the picture essential facts about the Cuban position. Among the points they omit are the following:

- The Cubans begin from the correct standpoint of understanding that the overturn of any workers state by imperialism would be a historic blow to the world revolution. They believe firmly in the right and duty of the workers in all the workers states to collectively defend their anticapitalist conquests against any attempts to subvert or reverse them. This places the Cubans on the right side of the class barricades, as opposed to the counterrevolutionary positions of the social democratic and "third camp" forces, who do not defend the workers states against imperialism.

- The Cubans publicly express their sharp disapproval of the bureaucratic abuses and privileges in the party and state apparatus in Poland that have been spotlighted by the struggle of Solidarity. They openly point to the fact that the relationship between the party and the working class in Cuba is the opposite of what exists in Poland.

- Unlike the bureaucratic castes in power in other workers states, the revolutionary Cuban government does not utilize the imperialist blockade and U.S. military threats as a justification for abandoning support for revolutionary struggles in other countries.

Nor do they use the CIA's efforts to disrupt Cuba from within as an excuse to explain away problems or defend bureaucratic privilege and repression at home.

- The Cuban leadership believes that the working class is the only force that can resolve the crisis facing humanity, and they believe that this is just as true in the workers states as in the capitalist world. Their views on this have been expressed the most clearly, as one would expect, in relation to Cuba itself, where they seek to mobilize and organize the working people to fight bureaucratic deformations and privilege-seeking social layers. Moreover, they strongly link this mobilization against bureaucratic abuses to defense of Cuba's internationalist foreign policy and political perspective.

The Cubans mistakenly view the workers struggle led by Solidarity as posing a threat to the Polish workers state by increasing the danger of successful imperialist intervention and capitalist restoration. In fact, the opposite is true. By trying to crush the workers' own movement, the Polish regime is weakening the workers state itself. Only the Polish workers can ultimately defend their workers state against imperialism's counterrevolutionary aims.

'Demise' of Cuban internationalism?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel evidently believe that because the Cubans are wrong on their assessment of events in Poland we should now abandon our traditional use of Cuba as a living example of an alternative to the Stalinist regimes. In arguing for this position, they state:

"The limitations of workers democracy have led to a demise of proletarian internationalism. This is a serious blow against the interests and the defense of revolutionary Cuba and of the revolution in Central America and Latin America. We have to say so clearly and openly, not irresponsibly hide that fact."

Does the Cuban position on the events in Poland really signal the "demise of proletarian internationalism" in Cuba? Such a far-reaching conclusion does not square well with the actual development of the Cuban revolution. Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel confuse a default on an important question by proletarian internationalists with the "demise of proletarian internationalism."

In gauging which direction the Cubans are headed with regard to proletarian internationalism and workers democracy, it is advisable to keep in mind that the Cuban leadership emerged on the historical scene, and developed as internationalists and Marxists, despite two large historical handicaps. First, there is no mass Leninist international in existence. Second, the most powerful workers state, and the one on which Cuba depends militarily and economically, is governed by a bureaucratic caste that more than half a century ago overturned the Marxist policies and program of the Bolshevik Party, which led the October Revolution.

Despite these obstacles, the Cuban revolu-

tionists have followed an internationalist course and set an example that has inspired and educated anticapitalist and anti-imperialist fighters throughout the world. The attraction of the Cuban revolution has grown stronger in recent years as Cuba has responded to the favorable shift in the world relationship of forces opened by Vietnam's historic victory over U.S. imperialism in 1975.

At the same time, the Cuban Communist Party has brought increasing numbers of workers into its ranks and leadership bodies, further strengthening its role as the vanguard of the Cuban proletariat. It understands that the Cuban working class is the only social force that can combat the problems of bureaucratism that impede the progress toward socialism in Cuba. In face of this record, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do not make a persuasive case for seizing the errors on Poland as a basis for concluding that Cuba's proletarian internationalism is dead.

Moreover, one has to ask, what is the purpose of issuing such a death certificate? Neither Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, nor any other responsible leader of the Fourth International, made such a proposal in 1968, when Fidel gave a speech in which he concluded that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had been justified as a lesser evil to the overthrow of the workers state, which he believed had been an imminent danger.

Why such a departure now?

* * *

The rise of the workers struggle to democratize the workers state in Poland has been a historic advance for the world revolution. Whatever the immediate stage of the ongoing struggle inside Poland, Solidarity has brought the day closer when the proletariat in those workers states ruled by bureaucratic castes will establish governments based on the broadest workers democracy, governments genuinely advancing the interests of the workers and farmers.

In the capitalist countries, the birth of Solidarity has been a gain for the workers movement as well. The heroic struggle of the Polish unionists has inspired class-conscious workers to see more clearly their own potential. The determination of the Polish toilers to fight for socialism and for workers democracy has helped to cut through the lie — which the capitalists spread by their propaganda and the Stalinist bureaucrats by their example — that socialism means tyranny.

Thus, the struggle of Solidarity has helped to win new forces to the organizations representing the continuity of the communist tradition of the Bolshevik Party that led the October Revolution.

The most important task for revolutionary Marxists in the imperialist countries in connection with Poland is to provide leadership to those workers who are inspired by the struggle of Solidarity and motivated by genuine feelings of class solidarity, organizing them to fight more effectively and more consciously against their own capitalist governments. □

Criticisms on the U.S. SWP's Opinion on Cuba

by Peng Shu-tse

The historical evolution of the International's views on the Cuba question

In 1959, the Cuban revolution gained victory. In 1960, the International had official response to this question. The first responses came from the US SWP, which was very natural. The United States and Cuba are neighbours and are closely related. At that time, the SWP delegated Hansen and Dobbs to visit Cuba. Afterwards, Hansen wrote a pamphlet. At that time, they had high hopes, if not "illusions," for Cuba, and they totally supported the Cuban revolution. The support was correct, but they had not seriously and profoundly analysed the nature of the new-born regime. And so, in 1963, Hansen and Dobbs wrote a document which approved of the method of the Cuban revolution: the guerrilla warfare strategy of besieging the cities. They considered this new strategy correct and practicable, and this became the excuse for those who later advocated guerrilla warfare strategy in Latin America.

In 1961, differences on the Cuban question occurred between the US SWP and the Socialist Labour League of England. On the part of the SWP, the resolution in support of Cuba drafted by Hansen considered that the Cuban regime had excluded bourgeois representatives and confiscated the properties of the bourgeoisie, and thus had gone on the road of a workers state. The Socialist Labour League led by Healy fundamentally opposed this view, and considered that in Cuba, it was merely a dual power; the nature of the state had not changed, and it had not progressed to be a workers state.

Under this situation, I wrote a document titled "The question of the Cuban revolution" in which I considered that since Cuba had excluded the bourgeoisie from the regime, and had confiscated and nationalized the properties of the bourgeoisie, it could be termed as a workers state in its property relations. On this point, I supported the SWP and criticized the opinion of the Socialist Labour League as wrong. The Cuban regime was not one of dual power but was Castro's unique power. At the same time, I called for caution from comrades because Cuba was a very small and backward island country, and without the help of other countries, especially the help of revolutions in the Latin American countries, it would be under great isolation and danger and would be difficult to sustain. Therefore, we must not excessively exaggerate the perspective of this revolution.

Soon afterwards, since the International Committee was to convene to discuss the Cuban question, I wrote a draft for discussion. It was in July 1961. The draft was cautious and objective. I pointed out that the Cuban revolution was a revolution independent of Stalinism and it had then gone on the road of permanent revolution; it was a very important event in the western hemisphere, and we must support this revolution. And I particularly reminded the comrades that Cuba, in order to survive, had received support from the Soviet bureaucracy. We must view this dialectically: it had its duality. According to the system of

ownership of the October Revolution, it was certainly natural that the Soviet Union supported Cuba — and so we could see that the property ownership system of the October Revolution was still exerting its impact. Without the Soviet Union's support, it was out of the question that Cuba could sustain itself. The United States blockaded it and proposed that the Latin American countries blockade it; the Soviet Union bought Cuba's only product, sugar, and gave it material and ammunition supplies. It can be seen that it was absolutely necessary for Cuba to accept aid from the Soviet Union. But, on the other hand, the Soviet Union was no longer the Soviet Union of the Lenin era when it selflessly devoted itself to proletarian internationalism; it had long degenerated. Directed by Stalin's policy of "socialism in one country," the aid given by the Soviet Union which was under bureaucratic dictatorship to other countries was to be exchanged for a price. Thus, the Soviet Union's support of Cuba at least would bring the Soviet Union's Stalinist ideology to Cuba; in other words, Cuba was to be stalinized. Such a situation was not only possible but was also inevitable. If Cuba was stalinized, then it could not have a great prospect. And so, I proposed that the Fourth International and, in particular, the Trotskyist organizations in America, convene a special American conference to discuss the support of the Cuban revolution. Our organization was materially weak and could not provide any material aid, and we could only help it in ideology and hope that a Marxist party could be set up inside Cuba. At the same time, Trotsky's most important works were to be translated into Spanish and sent to Cuba, and it would even be better if a publication in Spanish was published to influence the Cuban masses.

But the convention opposed my resolution, and in particular Bander and Healy; the former even said that Castro was another Bastista, the Chiang Kai-shek of Cuba.

I also sent this draft to Pierre Frank, and I meant that I hoped the International Secretariat and the International Committee would jointly discuss the Cuban question and help the Cuban revolution. But I had not received any reply from Frank.

Later, I saw the document by the Pabloists (International Secretariat) which supported the Cuban revolution. In order to support the Cuban revolution, I strongly advocated the unification and cooperation of the IS and the IC. At the unification convention in June 1963, although there was no particular discussion on Cuba, it was all agreed that Cuba was already a workers state. The difference in opinion on the nature of the Cuban state was one of the reasons why the Healyists and the Lambertists did not participate in the unification convention. (See my article "Where is Healy taking the Socialist Labour League?")

Then a new question happened. Castro called a Latin American conference in Havana and called for the employment of the guerrilla warfare strategy in Latin America. Castro said that the Latin American countries could

liberate themselves only by employing the guerrilla warfare strategy. Under his open appeal, the youth in Latin America enthusiastically aspired to Cuba and its guerrilla warfare strategy. After Castro had stressed the decisiveness of guerrilla warfare, guerrilla wars surged in Latin America — in Bolivia, Columbia, Venezuela, Argentina. This situation even had its impact on the Fourth International and especially on some leading cadres in Europe like Livio Maitan and Mandel. In February 1968, Maitan drafted a resolution to be presented to the IEC for discussion, and it was adopted by the IEC meeting, which meant that the IEC accepted the guerrilla warfare strategy, i.e., accepted Castro's appeal. At the meeting, only I cast an opposition vote, and so my objection was in vain. Although the resolution was only a draft, it reflected the impact of the guerrilla warfare strategy on some leaders of the Fourth International. Under such circumstances, I had to wage a struggle.

First of all, I requested the SWP leadership to consider this question prudently; otherwise, the Fourth International would forsake the program of Trotskyism and go on the road of degeneration. Besides, I also wrote "Return to the road of Trotskyism" and this document influenced some Trotskyists in the United States and in other countries. Finally, at the 1969 World Congress, serious differences occurred on the question of guerrilla warfare in Latin America, and two factions were formed, i.e., the later International Majority Tendency and the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

In "Return to the road of Trotskyism," there was a subtitle called "Castroism or Trotskyism?" I emphatically pointed out that under Castro's influence, some cadres of the Fourth International had gone on the road of guerrilla warfare strategy. The differences remained and at the 1974 World Congress, the Majority Tendency still retained its views.

Here I must emphatically point out that: at the beginning, the SWP supported guerrilla warfare strategy, but it later accepted my persuasion and opposed guerrilla warfare. Hansen wrote an article criticizing the draft resolution on the Cuban revolution, which was very close to my views. This viewpoint was maintained until the unification of the two factions in 1977. From then on there was not much difference on the Cuban question because the International Majority Tendency totally abandoned guerrilla warfare strategy and admitted its mistakes.

But the question was posed under new circumstances. Starting from 1975 up to 1978 when Vietnam invaded Cambodia, due to Cuba's support of Vietnam (Cuba stood on the side of Moscow, and China on the side of Cambodia), Cuba's revolutionary role was being exaggerated.

When Mary-Alice Waters wrote articles to criticize the question of Vietnam and Cambodia, she turned away from previous positions and tried all means to adorn Vietnam. In the past, when the French section supported Vietnam and adorned the Vietnamese Communist Party, the SWP, together with us, opposed the opinion of the French comrades. Now, the French section had changed their previous position, but it had become the SWP which particularly supported Vietnam. Previously, we gave our critical support to Vietnam. Since the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the SWP not only did not criticize Vietnam, but instead adorned it. Its views on Cambodia were also different from ours.

Our opinion is: under Pol Pot's rule, Cambodia was very contradictory. On the one hand, it had confiscated the properties of the bourgeoisie and established socialist property relations; on this basic point, it was a workers state. But on the other hand, since Pol Pot was the most stupid and the most brutal among the Stalinist bureaucrats, and a butcher killing over a million people, its regime was an extremely brutal and ugly dictatorship deeply hated by the Cambodian people. From a dialectical viewpoint, the progressiveness of its property nationalizations could not be denied, and should be supported. But its blind adventurism in abolishing the currency and halting all commerce should be criticized; as for its ugly bureaucratic rule, it should be exposed and attacked to the maximum. But the SWP held different opinions. It stressed the crimes of the bureaucratic dictatorship and denied the fact of its confiscation of private properties, and so defined Cambodia as a capitalist country. Such a view is queer because a capitalist country without private property and without commerce has never existed in the world. Because Cuba supported Vietnam, the SWP also followed to support Vietnam.

Most important is: in December 1979, the Soviet Union sent troops to invade Afghanistan; this incident caused new differences in the Fourth International. At the beginning, the SWP totally supported the Soviet Union's sending of troops into Afghanistan. The majority of the European Trotskyists adopted a different position, demanding Soviet troops to withdraw from Afghanistan. The difference was also reflected in the RML in Hong Kong: Yip Ning supported the US position, and Wu agreed with the European position. Recently, the SWP's position on the Soviet troops' invasion of Afghanistan has changed and a more critical attitude has been adopted.

Is Cuba a state with the dictatorship of the proletariat?

To clarify on this question, some basic questions must first be discussed. In the article "Proletarian leadership in power" written by M.-A. Waters, it was said that Cuba was practising dictatorship of the proletariat. The reason given was that Cuba's foreign policy was a policy of proletarian internationalism. At present, Cuba's support and aid for Nicaragua and El Salvador are facts. Its previous support and aid for Angola and Ethiopia, and even the sending of troops to support them, are also facts that we acknowledge. But how do we analyse and evaluate these facts?

First of all, is Cuba a state with the dictatorship of the proletariat? This is the most basic question. The SWP's documents implied that Cuba has the kind of dictatorship of the proletariat like the one established by Lenin in the October Revolution era. Though this opinion was not explicit, it was often implied. We must ask: what is the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat?

We will leave out the Paris Commune and simply talk about the October Revolution. The regime of the October Revolution was set up on the basis of the workers', peasants' and soldiers' soviets. The soviets were produced through democratic elections by workers, peasants and soldiers. Therefore, the Soviet regime was dictatorship of the proletariat in respect to the bourgeoisie, but most democratic in respect to the proletariat. Such kind of political power existed only twice in history: the first time was the Paris Commune which was directly elected by the

members of the Paris Commune, and the second time was the Soviet regime after the October Revolution, a regime elected by the worker, peasant and soldier masses.

Has Cuba had any organizations of workers', peasants' or soldiers' soviets? The first state power that was established when Castro's guerrilla forces went into the cities from the countryside was a government in coalition with the bourgeoisie, similar to the government established in China in 1949. Later, the bourgeoisie was excluded from the regime, and Castro's July 26 movement fused with the Cuban Communist Party to form the Communist Party which alone has been holding power. Has this regime ever had any basis of workers', peasants' and soldiers' soviets? Absolutely not. Surely, workers have trade union organizations and peasants perhaps have some sort of organizations (I do not know much about this). But in all, it cannot be denied that Cuba does not have the kind of mass organizations that had existed in the Soviet Union. And so, what is the mass basis that one bases on in saying that Cuba is a dictatorship of the proletariat?

There is not at all any democracy but there is only centralism in Castro's party organization, like the Communist Parties in the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe and in China. Such a party is absolutely beyond the supervision of the masses. If Cuba can be said to be dictatorship of the proletariat, then China, Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union can be said to be dictatorship of the proletariat!

How should we evaluate and define these Stalinist so-called workers states? It can be said that the dictatorship in Cuba is better than that in China or Eastern Europe. It is possible and is a fact that Cuba's bureaucrats are less arbitrary or brutal. Nonetheless, its government officials are appointed by the party and not directly elected by the worker and peasant masses. Castro is the party. There is no democratic centralism in the Cuban Communist Party, because it is copied from the Soviet Union. Castro's words are supreme. On this point, there is no difference in nature from Mao Zedong in China. The difference is only that: the former is younger and more vigilant, and the latter was more muddled and brutal. And so, the Cuban bureaucrats are less brutal or centralized than those in the Soviet Union or China, and are closer to the masses.

What sort of regimes are Angola and Ethiopia that Cuba supported?

M-A. Waters' main argument was Cuba's internationalism. She talked mostly about Cuba's aid to Nicaragua, Grenada, El Salvador, and its previous dispatch of troops to aid Angola and Ethiopia. Here, I will make some analysis of the political situation of Angola and Ethiopia at that time and the nature of these regimes.

Cuba sent troops to aid Angola entirely in relation to the Soviet Union. After the Portugal revolution, the Soviet Union supported one group in Angola, the MPLA and China supported another group (there were three groups at that time). Later, China withdrew its support, and those groups turned to imperialism, seeking aid from Zaire and South Africa; and so the civil war occurred. Cuba sent troops to Angola under the Soviet Union's support — the sending of Cuban troops to Angola and Ethiopia would not have been possible without the Soviet Union's arms, and material and financial support. Nevertheless, such an action had its progressive and even revolutionary signifi-

cance, because those groups had degenerated and openly turned to the imperialist camp, and they waged a civil war in Angola under the aid of imperialism. If the Soviet Union and Cuba had not supported Angola, it would very probably have been partitioned by South Africa and Zaire, and fallen under the control of US imperialism, which would have been very bad. I have long said that, withstanding the fact that Cuba sent troops to Angola under the support of the Soviet Union, the action had its progressive significance and should be supported. At that time, it was the SWP that disagreed with Cuba's sending troops to Angola.

However, the Angolan rulers that Cuba supports are not socialists but nationalists. They have waged a struggle to get rid of the rule of Portugal, and with Cuba's support, they are free from the rule of imperialism but they are hostile to leftist socialist elements and are ready to suppress the latter. Such a ruling layer is the greatest obstruction to Angola's socialist prospect. Therefore, this ruling layer is afraid of a change in the property ownership system and it staunchly maintains capitalism. Under such a system, socialist movements will inevitably develop — they may have developed now — and this ruling layer will certainly suppress these movements in order to maintain the continued existence and development of the private property ownership system. If at that time the Cuban troops have not yet withdrawn from Angola, they will be in a very embarrassed position; if they continue to support the present ruling layer, they may even play a counter-revolutionary role.

Compared to Angola, Ethiopia is much bigger, and more ancient and civilized. This country has gone through the opposition of monarchical dictatorship and the driving away of the emperor, which are without doubt progressive. The present rulers are those leaders who opposed the monarchy. They at first received support from US imperialism, but they later turned to the Soviet Union. I do not quite know why they had such a turn. Perhaps it is because the Soviet Union gives them some advantages. The Soviet Union had helped Egypt to build dams, gifted it with ammunition, sent military advisors to train the Egyptian army, and by all these tried to gain Egypt to its side; the result, however, was that Sadat drove away all Soviet personnel. The Soviet Union met the same failures in Somali and Sudan. And so, the Soviet Union tried its utmost to win Ethiopia. Although US imperialism at that time supported Ethiopia, it was not polite to those who received its aid. Perhaps this is the reason for Ethiopia's turn to the Soviet Union for aid, since the Soviet Union not only gives Ethiopia ammunition and material aid but also tries its best to ingratiate itself with the country's ruling layer.

In the North East part of Ethiopia is a national minority called Eritrea with about 3 million population. It was a threat to the new regime and so the new government closed in to the Soviet Union and asked the Soviet Union to tell Cuba to send troops to support it: At that time when Ethiopia and Somali had confrontations, the Cuban troops supported the former. The rulers of Ethiopia are worse than those of Angola. They were previously military officers of the monarchy and their lives have been very corrupt. Although they have carried out partial land reforms after overthrowing the monarchy, and distributed land held by the previous royal family and by some big

landlords to the peasants, they still continued to preserve the system of private ownership. In order to suppress about 3 million national minority people, they requested the support of the Cuban troops. On this point, Cuba dared not send its armies to attack the national minority. These rulers are hostile to the youth, the students and the leftists. In the future, they will surely suppress the mass movement like Chiang Kai-shek did. It was worse for Cuba to support Ethiopia than to support Angola, because the former was not under the attack of reactionary forces supported by imperialism, and it still preserved private property relations and even brutally repressed its national minority. It is a very reactionary regime. Castro was very embarrassed over this and so it did not send troops (but only supplied arms) to attack that national minority.

In the past, the Soviet Union had also helped China; it gave large amounts of money, advisors and ammunition to support Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei of the Kuomintang, and what were the results?! Are the military rulers of Ethiopia the same sort like Chiang Kai-shek? It is difficult to say, and no one can guarantee that they are not. And so, clarifications should be made on these so-called internationalist supports. We Marxists must ask: what sort of people are the supports given to? Are they the revolutionary masses or the bourgeoisie? Evidently, Cuba supports the bourgeoisie and not the revolutionary worker and peasant masses because it is the bourgeoisie that is in the ruling position in Ethiopia. A big problem exists with this sort of "internationalism." On this point, Hansen's article "Cuba's role in Africa" (See *October Review* Sept 1978) had a view very close to ours. But the SWP now does not mention this article any more.

Nicaragua and Grenada are small countries and they cannot play an important role. Grenada only has a population of 100,000 and Nicaragua only 2 million, though the latter can play an explosive role in the Central American countries like El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. These countries long under the control and exploitation of US imperialism, are very poor and so revolutions can easily happen. In Nicaragua, it was because the US puppet Somoza regime was too bad that the people were forced to rise up in revolt, as the Cuban people did in the past against Batista. We should of course try our best to give support and help promote revolution in these countries despite their shortcomings. But we should not adorn or exaggerate them and say that their impact can change the world situation.

We say that: revolutions in these countries will be a blow to US imperialism and so we hope these countries will develop towards socialism. But we must understand that these countries are too backward, the weight of the workers is very small, and it will be difficult for them to build the dictatorship of the proletariat; at most they can build up Cuba-type regimes.

It is natural that Cuba supports the Nicaraguan revolution because it is too isolated in Latin America. Of course, it needs the aid of revolutions in other places, and aiding these countries means aiding itself.

It must be remembered that these countries cannot play a decisive role in the politics in Latin America. If the revolutions in these countries can continue to develop, they can of course have some impact and function on the Latin American countries. But there are only several countries in Latin America that can influence the whole situation, such

as Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. Although Argentina is not big in size or population, it is industrialized, has a rather big trade union organization, and so its political influence in Latin America is big. Mexico has 60 million population and its industry has quite some foundation. Brazil is even bigger in its size and its population (100 million). Of course, I do not mean that other countries like Venezuela, Peru, Chile, Bolivia or Columbia do not play a role in their revolutions; it is only that they do not play so decisive a role as compared to the above-mentioned three countries.

Therefore, the Fourth International should build up mass parties in Latin American countries like Mexico, Brazil and Argentina to lead the working class to carry out revolutions. But the attitude of the SWP is the contrary. Due to the split with the Moreno faction, the SWP feels disappointed with the Trotskyist movement in Latin America, and so can only see countries like Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada. It does not have an overall view and plan for the Latin American countries. It can be conceived that a strong section built by us in Mexico, Argentina, etc. will be more useful than several Nicaraguan revolutions.

As mentioned before, Cuba, due to its isolation in the western hemisphere, must of course support the Nicaraguan revolution and try its best to put Nicaragua, etc. under its influence as Cuba's satellite countries. But when Cuba supports these countries, it must still look to Moscow's attitude. Moscow is very hesitant in this respect, because if the Soviet Union wants to establish its influence in Central America, the USA will inevitably intervene. It has already given the warning, and it will go so far as to intervene militarily; its present attitude to El Salvador is an obvious example. The attitude of the Moscow bureaucracy is very hesitant; it only wants to act through Cuba.

Therefore it can be said that Cuba's internationalism is under the influence of the Soviet Union and is decided by the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. The basic foreign policy of the Soviet Union is: no revolution, especially no revolution in advanced countries. But it must make some movements to place the USA in a difficult position so as to increase its bargaining power. This is the meaning of its activities in African countries like Egypt, Somali and Ethiopia. Under this kind of control by the Soviet Union, Cuba cannot have much room for activities.

What then is an internationalist policy? Lenin and Trotsky set up the Third International and through it, set up communist parties in various countries to help the revolution. Lenin's policy towards backward countries was not simply to help the bourgeoisie but was to have the bourgeois democratic revolution go on to socialist revolution. And for advanced countries, socialist revolutions were to be conducted. These are very clear and do not need repetition.

How then is Castro? He stresses aiding oppressed peoples. It is correct. Lenin had considered nationalist democratic revolutions in backward countries as a very important factor of the world proletarian revolution, because they can weaken imperialism, can help proletarian revolutions in the imperialist countries, and at the same time means helping the oppressed peoples to go on to socialist revolutions through democratic revolutions. But what does Castro base on? He only looks up to the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union, under the control of the Stalinist bureaucracy, has become a most reactionary

country opposing world revolution. There are two main reactionary camps in the world today: one is the imperialist countries headed by the USA, and the other is the degenerated and deformed workers states headed by the Soviet Union. The latter is even more brutal than imperialism; an example is Eastern Europe under its control. There cannot be the final victory of socialism without elimination of these two reactionary forces. Castro said, without the October Revolution, there is no Cuba. Such a saying is half correct. A new property relationship was produced by the October Revolution, and Cuba is helped by this relationship. But he said not one word about the bureaucratic dictatorship. This bureaucratic dictatorship is an obstacle to world revolution and it is playing the most reactionary role — on this Castro also has not said one word. He does not at all comprehend that the October Revolution has been betrayed, that what is left of the October Revolution is only the nationalized property relationship but the nationalized properties are totally controlled and held by the bureaucracy; it is only for its own interests that the bureaucracy occasionally aids some countries in order to facilitate its dealings with imperialism.

Castro entirely drops out this point because Cuba needs the Soviet Union's support or else it cannot survive. So, it can perhaps be forgiven that Castro dares not speak the truth about the Soviet Union's bureaucratic dictatorship. But it cannot be forgiven if our SWP leaders also do not mention this but, following Cuba, also conceal the truth about the Soviet Union. Such an act would be objectively a betrayal of Trotskyism because it excessively concedes to Castro.

Finally, I have three points of summary:

Firstly, the SWP stresses that there is no bureaucratic system in Cuba.

No one denies that there are bureaucrats in Cuba, and the SWP documents also admit this. Of course, bureaucrats must be distinguished from bureaucratic dictatorship. Bureaucrats inevitably exist in the revolutions of backward countries. Only in advanced countries where the proletariat forms the majority and the workers have a high cultural level that the most democratic dictatorship of the proletariat can be established — most democratic for the workers and dictatorship for the bourgeoisie. Is the bureaucratic situation in Cuba so serious that it has become bureaucratic dictatorship or autocracy? If it has developed to such a dictatorial level, then it requires a political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy. A young comrade in the SWP wrote to me and said that he thought a dictatorial bureaucratic caste has been produced in Cuba, which must be overthrown by a political revolution. I am very prudent in considering this question. I consider that there exists a bureaucratic system in Cuba because it does not at all have any soviet organizations. Without the democratic election by the proletariat, the regime will inevitably be produced in a bureaucratic way. The problem is to what extent has this bureaucratic system developed. At that time, I answered that comrade that, I do not have much information on the development of the bureaucratic system in Cuba, but it can be certain that a bureaucratic system exists in Cuba; however, it is not as hardened as the ones in the Soviet Union or in China, because the Cuban people still enjoy a certain extent of democracy.

An article by Hansen said that there exists a bureaucratic system in the Cuban army. This is natural because

there is a hierarchical system in the army which easily gives rise to bureaucratization. The article also mentioned a poet named Padilla who was arrested and forced to repent. This fact should be noted because the Soviet Union and China also oppress dissidents in this way, not allowing any democracy or freedom, not allowing the publication of any different ideas or viewpoints, including literature.

Later, some SWP members visited Cuba and when they returned, they reported that the Cuban people have freedom of activities, etc. I think this is possible. Castro is not as arbitrary as Stalin or brutal as Mao Zedong. He has some intelligence and knows that Cuba is only a small country in extreme isolation and the masses must not be too oppressed or else Cuba will find it difficult to survive.

And so, I do not agree to the opinion that it now requires a political revolution to overthrow the Cuban regime. But I also do not agree with people who think that there does not exist a bureaucratic system in Cuba. The arrest of that poet has its symbolic significance. Moreover, there is no soviet in Cuba and no democratic centralism in the Cuban party. For all the time, there is only Castro who gives speeches; he is like a little emperor in Cuba, and his words are royal decrees. This situation is obviously the manifestation of a bureaucratic system. The SWP over-adorns Cuba and so overlooks its fact of bureaucratism.

Secondly, the SWP thinks that Cuba is practising the dictatorship of the proletariat, practising proletarian internationalism, and there is no bureaucratic system; it is like the Soviet Union of Lenin's era. It even parallels Castro with Lenin and the Cuban revolution with the October Revolution.

What are the similarities and differences between the Cuban revolution and the October Revolution?

The October Revolution was carried out after several decades of preparations. From Plekhanov's founding of the Group of Liberation of Labour to the later setting up of Social Democratic Labour Party, there had been many serious ideological struggles, in particular the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and the struggle between the theory of revolution by stages and the theory of permanent revolution. Later, there was the world war and the attitude towards Russian imperialism became a decisive struggle and the most profound Marxism was developed, represented by Lenin and Trotsky. And so, the October Revolution could be carried out smoothly basically basing on *words previously said*. Conjunctural decisions were derived from past ideological basis. Therefore, the October Revolution was a typical proletarian revolution whereby under the leadership of radical Marxism, the proletariat led the peasants to carry out a profound socialist revolution in a big country. The revolution shook the whole world and changed the course of human history.

How was the Cuban revolution? Before the revolution, Castro was a democrat and even a humanitarian; he had never received any education of Marxism. Under the impact of the 1949 revolutionary victory of the Chinese Communist Party, he conducted guerrilla war. Under particular circumstances — that is before the US could intervene, he led the guerrilla army to take political power. It was a petty bourgeois revolution. It was only after seizing power when he wanted to obtain the aid of other countries — i.e., of the Soviet Union — that he cooperated

with the Communist Party and engaged in a little bit of Marxism. Castro is an action-type figure, that is in his carrying out guerrilla warfare. Now the SWP leaders stress that they themselves are action-type, which means stressing guerrilla warfare. They do not understand Lenin's words: "Without revolutionary theory, there is no revolutionary action." Castro was originally a petty bourgeois revolutionary, i.e., a petty bourgeois nationalist and democratic radical. He by luck obtained victory due to Batista's excessive corruption. But after the victory, he still cooperated with the bourgeoisie to set up a coalition government. It was only because the bourgeoisie was a threat to him that he was compelled to exclude the bourgeoisie from political power and set up his own government. But this government did not go through the democratic election by the proletariat. Therefore, the Cuban revolution is totally beyond comparison with the October Revolution, and to parallel Castro with Lenin is indeed degrading Lenin.

It must be pointed out that in the 1980's, a person who does not understand the October Revolution, does not understand the degeneration of the Soviet Union, does not understand the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin, cannot at all be called a Marxist, and is simply an idiot who can only in a simple way recite quotations from Marx and Engels. Castro has never mentioned Trotsky's name, and he even insulted the Trotskyists in 1963 and vilified the SWP members as agents of US imperialism.

Thirdly, it is the question of whether Cuba can lead the world revolution. This is a central question.

Mary-Alice Waters has not expressed this point clearly in her articles, but on some other occasions, I heard the SWP propose that the Fourth International should cooperate with Castro to lead the world revolution. Waters' articles also reflect the viewpoint of Cuba going on the road of leading the world revolution.

This is a central question and is very serious because it will affect the fate of all mankind.

Trotskyism and Castro's tendency are fundamentally different. Towards Castro, we can only say that because up to today, he is still going in a revolutionary direction and so we should give him critical support. But it is only a joke to say that we will join with him to lead the world revolution.

It is because Castro does not at all have a program of world revolution — even if he has one, it is only such actions like aiding Angola and Ethiopia. He understands nothing at all about Trotsky's political program of world

revolution — the Fourth International's Transitional Program.

The Soviet Union has degenerated for half a century. The Soviet bureaucracy's oppression of workers and peasants of the Soviet Union and its squeezing of the people of Eastern Europe is a universally known fact. A person who speaks not one word about this fact is, if not an idiot or blind, deliberately covering up for the Soviet bureaucracy. It can still be forgiven if Castro covers up for the Soviet bureaucracy in order to obtain the Soviet Union's material aid. But for the world revolution, the Soviet Union's bureaucratic dictatorship must absolutely not be covered up. At present, there are two types of revolutions in the world revolution: one is carrying out socialist revolutions in capitalist countries (including in advanced and backward countries), and the other is carrying out political revolutions in workers states. People under the oppression of bureaucratic dictatorships constitute over one-third of the world population. Carrying out these two types of revolutions is clearly written down in the Transitional Program. Will Castro agree to carry out a revolution in the Soviet Union? Will he agree to overthrowing the Soviet bureaucracy's oppressive rule and establishing the system of proletarian democracy in Eastern Europe? It is very difficult, because this will fundamentally destroy its aid from the Soviet Union's bureaucracy. Can it be conceived that Castro will be able to do so? If we, in order to concede to Castro, abstain from mentioning the political revolution in the Soviet Union, it will be fundamentally betraying Trotskyism and the Fourth International, and surrendering to Stalinism and becoming captives of Stalinism.

Must we insist on the two kinds of revolutions in the Fourth International's program? Can Castro agree to wage a revolution to bring down the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union? These two questions must be answered by the SWP leaders.

March 16, 1981

Postscript: The questions involved in this talk are not only extensive but are also very realistic, because the SWP's opinions have caused many differences and in particular have led to the formation of two opposing positions within the United Secretariat, and which was manifested in two draft resolutions on Cuba. This question deserves particular attention and discussion so that one can express one's ideas.

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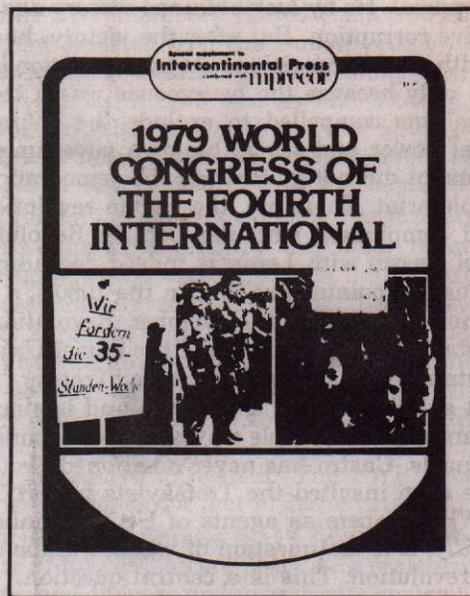
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