

Frank Lovell, former leader of Socialist Workers Party, dead at 84

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Frank Lovell, who died on May 1 at the age of 84, spent some decades in the Trotskyist movement and was a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938.

Part of the generation which was radicalized during the Great Depression, Lovell joined the Trotskyists in 1935, when they were organized in the Workers Party. He had graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, and was attracted to socialism at the time of the San Francisco General Strike of 1934.

In the following years, Lovell became a seaman and was active in the Sailors' Union of the Pacific. He remained active in the labor movement over a number of years, and wrote numerous articles on struggles in the maritime industry, as well as a book, *Maritime*, published by Pioneer Publishers in 1943.

Lovell moved to Detroit in the early 1950s and remained there for about 20 years. For much of this time he was a National Committee member of the SWP.

Along with hundreds of other members, Lovell was expelled from the SWP in the early 1980s. The great majority of the party's veteran members, people with many decades of political experience, were tossed out by the leadership of Jack Barnes, as part of the SWP's open repudiation of Trotskyism. Lovell and the others were purged by Barnes because they could not bring themselves to accept his explicit attacks on Trotsky and his denunciation of the Marxist theory of permanent revolution.

The crisis which led to the expulsions of Lovell and his comrades had its origins several decades earlier, however, in the sharp rightward shift of the SWP beginning in the late 1950s. The party embraced the political conceptions of Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel, from whom it had broken in 1953, after they

had elaborated their theories on the "self-reform" of Stalinism and abandoned the fight to build an independent revolutionary party in struggle against opportunism and centrism. Lovell went along with this reunification with the Pabloites. The Socialist Equality Party traces its own origins to the early 1960s, among those members of the SWP who continued the political fight when Lovell became discouraged and gave it up.

After his own expulsion from the SWP, Lovell remained a supporter of the international tendency led by the late Ernest Mandel. In the US, this took the form of uncritical support for the trade union bureaucracy, and active participation in the bogus Labor Party which has been launched by a small section of the AFL-CIO officialdom as a means of heading off a genuinely independent movement of the working class.



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