



The Party: The Socialist Workers Party 1960-1988. VOLUME 2: INTERREGNUM, DECLINE AND COLLAPSE, 1973-1988

Barry Sheppard

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Between 1960 and 1988 Barry Sheppard worked at the heart of the Socialist Workers Party. The SWP played a crucial role in progressive struggles in the USA and the world socialist organization, the Fourth International. The first volume of this work covered the period 1960 to 1973, "The Sixties." That was a period of mass radicalization in the USA and much of the world. Walking picket lines for Black civil rights, helping to organize the anti-Vietnam War movement, interviewing Malcolm X, meeting with US soldiers in Vietnam, defending the Cuban Revolution, collaborating with socialists worldwide including in Australia, Belgium, Britain, France, India and Japan - Barry Sheppard was immersed in these turbulent times. This second volume of his political memoir covers 1973 to 1988. These years saw the retreat of the radicalization of "The Sixties." However, the SWP continued to grow and be involved in mass struggles in the US and internationally, and grew into a 3,000-strong movement in the mid-1970s. Sheppard was deeply involved in the SWP's work as a central leader in these years. He and his companion Caroline Lund also were part of the leadership of the Fourth International in Paris in the latter years of the 1970s. By 1980 the SWP, under the leadership of Jack Barnes, began to chart a course away from its historical program and practice. This new orientation marked a sharp break from the SWP as it developed in "The Sixties." In fact, it turned into the opposite of the SWP covered in his first volume. By 1988, when Sheppard and Caroline Lund resigned, the party had shriveled into a cult, and had withdrawn from both the Fourth International and involvement in the mass movement in the United States. Sheppard chronicles this tragic development. Together, the two volumes of his political memoir represent a unique and important contribution to the history of the socialist movement in the United States.

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