

Road Forward for Anti-Concessions Fight

On March 1, local union presidents in the United Steelworkers (USW) voted to accept a concessions contract proposed by USW president Lloyd McBride.

At the same time, members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) are engaged in strikes all over the country — the most important are at Caterpillar and at Champion Spark Plug — against more demands for concessions.

In turn, the recent combination between General Motors and Toyota is aimed at re-opening the old Fremont, California, GM plant without recall rights for laid-off GM workers. That is, it is an attempt to bust the union.

New Leadership

All these developments and many others show that the attacks on workers, especially auto workers, which have gone by the name of "concessions," are not about to disappear. In fact, the real issues are becoming clearer.

Last summer, there was a wave of organized opposition in the UAW to the class-collaborationist policy of the Fraser leadership and its drive for concessions. At the very end of the year, the Canadian Chrysler strike took place, showing the workers' will to fight and the potential for success.

All these things were positive — but not positive enough. The recent events in steel and auto show that the concessions attacks are not just a trade union question, not just a question of this or that industry, but of a total social and political attack on everything the working class has gained in the last fifty years. There is no way to fight these attacks except socially and politically.

Twice before, the USW local presidents rejected McBride's sell-out. But McBride continued to be president of the USW, continued to be able to come back with the same proposal. And those who opposed concessions had no alternative leadership and no alternative policy. So, they eventually wound up in a minority.

In the UAW, likewise, the "administration caucus" continued to rule, nominating Owen Bieber as the crown (or

clown) prince to succeed Fraser.

And, above all, Reagan was able to continue his attacks on the workers, including his plots against Central America.

In other words, the reason why these attacks continue is that we have not rid ourselves of these pro-capitalist leaderships; we have not built a new leadership.

A Clear Fight

The Trotskyist Organization sees the upcoming Constitutional Convention of the UAW (scheduled for Dallas in May) as a golden opportunity to make this fight.

This is first of all a political, not just a trade union, fight. That is why we say a united slate for a labor party is necessary. The chief problem with McBride,

Fraser and Bieber is that they have tied the workers to the Democratic Party and, in this way, to the whole system of capitalist rule in this country — and that includes Reagan.

The other points we have proposed for the platform — against concessions, against the "administration caucus," against protectionism (Fremont!) and all the scams of "employee involvement" — flow from the fundamental question of the labor party.

So, our fight is for all those opposed to the attacks on the auto workers to form a united front against the Fraser leadership on a clear political basis, on the basis of posing an alternative leadership on a principled alternative platform.

We have succeeded already in winning workers at Chrysler's Jefferson

Avenue plant to this fight. That is a real beginning. But, even more, we want all the opposition groups in the UAW to join this fight. Because then we can see in action what kind of party the labor party has to be, what kind of leadership has to be built.

In this light, we have to regret that the Revolutionary Workers League, which is the chief political force behind the United Front Caucus at Ford River Rouge, has so far refused to work with us in forming a united workers slate and, at last report, had no plans of its own to run for convention delegate spots.

The times demand much more than that. They demand clear answers. Build the united slate for a labor party.

TRUTH

U.S. Out of Central America!

On February 28, a "senior White House official" told reporters that the administration wanted to increase the number of US "advisers" in El Salvador and to change their role — presumably to officially allow them to join in combat operations (which they have, in fact, already been doing).

At the same time, the administration formally requested an increase — an immediate one — of \$60 million in military "aid" to the dictatorship in that same country.

What It Means

These steps are a further illustration of the failure of the Reagan regime to defeat the revolution not only in El Salvador, but throughout Central America — especially in Nicaragua, where the present revolutionary upsurge began with the 1979 overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship.

These latest actions by Reagan also show the futility of trying to pressure the US government — the biggest bunch of imperialist criminals in the

world — into a "peaceful solution to the conflict." Instead, the imperialist ruling class responds to the advance of the revolutionary forces not with conciliation, but with even more counterrevolutionary violence.

Against Nicaragua, the attacks are also "escalating." From bases just across the border in Honduras, Somozaist forces continue and step up their incursions. The Nicaraguan response to these attacks is crippled by the fact that Honduras, at US instigation, provides a safe retreat for the Somozaists and other "contras" (counterrevolutionaries). In this way, the US hopes to be able to wage war on the Nicaraguan Revolution under the pretext of a "border conflict" between Honduras and Nicaragua.

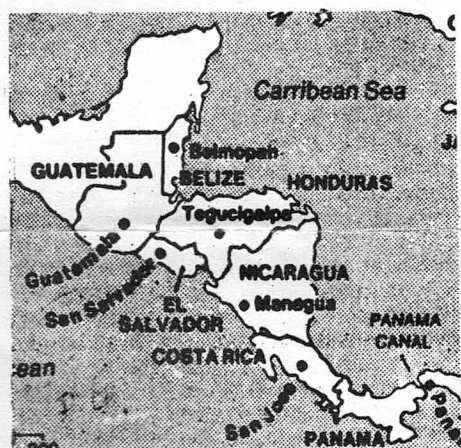
The liberal magazine, *The Nation* (February 19, 1983), states in an editorial that when Ariel Sharon took arms orders from Honduras last December, he went back to Israel with requests for warships and combat aircraft. And this "may mean that Honduras is planning an attack on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast similar to the amphibious operation that was the centerpiece of the recent US-Honduran maneuvers."

The working class, the youth, the oppressed in the United States — all those who feel the direct blows of Reagan's imperialist government in their own lives — have a great responsibility and a great opportunity to defend the peoples of El Salvador and Nicaragua by stopping US intervention in the region. A defeat for Reagan is a victory for us!

Our Fight

We have to mobilize — especially in the unions, which have the power to really accomplish something — to not just block the proposed increases in "aid" and "advisers," but to cut them off completely. Not a penny, not a man, not a gun against Nicaragua, El Salvador, etc.

In the same way, a real fight against the Reagan government would cripple its ability to aid the reactionaries. For example, with the approval of the US (officially, it's illegal), Somozaists, *gusanos* (anti-communist Cuban exiles) and other "contras" have established training camps in Florida, to prepare troops against the revolution. We have



to shut these camps down!

There is not only a massive opposition to the role of the US in Central America, there is also a great deal of support for the revolution. This could be organized, for example, to provide arms for the guerrillas in El Salvador.

But, despite this opposition to Reagan, despite this growing support for Central America, the public expression of these feelings becomes weaker and weaker.

That is because the organized "peace" and solidarity movements in the US are politically dominated by leaderships whose policy — matching that of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran leaderships — is conciliation with US imperialism. Not only, as we pointed out earlier, is this hopeless, it is politically disarming. The fruits of this policy are evident in the handful who protested "certification" of El Salvador's "progress in human rights," as well as in the few hundred people who turned out for a major international demonstration on the US-Mexico border.

The chief expression of this conciliationist policy is the campaign — supported especially by the Socialist Workers Party — to pressure Reagan to accept the proposal of the Salvadoran FDR-FMLN for negotiations. After the experience in Lebanon, everyone must be aware of what such negotiations will lead to. At the same time, to oppose the US presence in Central America while simultaneously recognizing that it has any right to negotiate (indeed, demanding that it do so) is, to say the least, self-defeating.

US imperialism out of Central America!
K.F.

New Methods

Since the capitalists abruptly closed the Detroit Chrysler Dodge Main plant, many workers have been reluctant to strike, afraid the boss will close the plant or hire scabs to replace them.

The current union leadership has used the situation to foster passivity and even open collaboration with the bosses ("concessions"). But the working class cannot accept this policy. Already sections of it have entered onto this road of confrontation. Later millions will. The problem is to find effective methods with which to struggle, to insure that the workers win. Workers cannot rely on worn-out methods, no longer adequate to the times.

We think this means that when workers go on strike, rather than simply walking out and forming a picket line as in the past, it is necessary to occupy the factories. Factory occupations enable striking workers to maintain their solidarity, to have the upper hand vis-a-vis scabs and cops, and to become an organizing center for spreading a strike and involving thousands of the unemployed

and oppressed.

But to workers today a factory occupation appears like a monumental task. But it need not be so. A factory occupation can begin with a simple job action. When the boss lays off workers, other workers can refuse to go home at quitting time, refuse to leave, until their comrades are reinstated.

They can even insist upon continuing to work to prohibit the boss from using the "they don't want to work" propaganda to turn unemployed workers against them. Even if the workers are not paid for this work, they will have accomplished something far more important — challenged the bosses' domination of the factory, begun to build solidarity between the employed and unemployed.

From such a job action a full scale factory occupation can grow — with coordinating committees, defense guards, community support, etc.

What is most important is to begin — even if in a small way.

M.G.

Support Socialist Workers Party Candidate!

The recent victory of Congressman Harold Washington in the Democratic Party mayoral primary in Chicago poses, in the sharpest and most urgent way, the necessity of building a labor party.

Political Situation

Some organizations that claim to be working class and socialist, especially the Communist Party USA, worked for Washington and are uncritically hailing his victory. This black Democrat, they say, is a "progressive" and "anti-racist" candidate. Others are belaboring the obvious: precisely because Washington is a black Democrat — like Detroit mayor Coleman Young and many others — he can only attack blacks and workers and betray their hopes.

The problem is that, in the present situation, this second, "revolutionary," position is completely inadequate.

Make no mistake about it — we are categorically against Washington. We call on every worker and militant in Chicago to vote for the candidate of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Ed Warren. Similarly, we call on all working class forces that oppose Washington to form a common front to wage this fight.

But this cannot be simply some routine gesture. It must be a point of departure to organize the fight for the labor party in the critical situation that exists today in Chicago.

Washington has stated that his election will mean that a "message is going to go out to everyone that our people in this country have declared war on racism, war on Reaganism." Indeed, that is the desire of the oppressed and workers in his "coalition."

All the more vicious, then, is the reaction of those who represent the old order.

Workers vs. The Machine

On the Saturday before the primary, a meeting of precinct captains of the Chicago Democratic Party "Machine" took place. At this meeting, Alderman Edward Vrdolyak, head of the Machine, laid it on the line: "We're fighting to keep the city the way it is . . . It's a racial thing. Don't kid yourself. I'm calling on you to save your city, save your precinct and keep your friends in office."

On Friday after the primary, Chicago police chief Richard Brzeczek stated that the police force "will be a circus" if Washington is elected. "Law enforcement," he raved, "will suffer. The general level of competence will go down. Safety is tied to those things."

In the light of such statements, it is obvious that platitudes about the Machine's "support" for Washington, about how a Republican can't win, etc., do not even begin to deal with the reality.

The Machine is not just another political organization. It is, in the nation's "second city," the way in which the ruling class rules. The Machine is cop attacks on the unemployed, it is vicious racism (including virtual Jim Crow in adjoining Cicero), it is the murder of Black Panthers Mark Clark and Fred Hampton — with the aid of the FBI.

The election of Jane Byrne four years ago and her defeat today by Washington are signs not of the peaceful fading away of the Machine, but of the break (even if not fully conscious) with the Democratic Party by the workers and oppressed in Chicago. A drive toward class confrontation is coming to a head.

But Washington cannot possibly stand up to this. Like the sorcerer's apprentice in the story, he has set in motion forces that he cannot control and cannot call back. Win or lose, his coalition cannot survive. The pro-capitalist elements will capitulate, and the working class ele-

ments will be forced into further conflict with the Machine.

The existence of sizeable fascist groups in the city, the open racism that has already been used, the whole history of the Chicago Police Department — foreshadow the rulers' response.

Fight for a Labor Party

The SWP no doubt finds itself unprepared to face this situation, all the more so because its campaign is the only working class alternative in an election that is becoming a major class battle. This only emphasizes even more the necessity to support this campaign, to make it the point of departure for the working class political response that

must be made.

We are not proposing a mere paper endorsement of the SWP, we are proposing a fighting unity to take the labor party off the level of verbal affirmations. We have the possibility of demonstrating in this fight what kind of party the labor party has to be.

In the midst of racist attacks, the labor party will appear as the party of working class unity, as the party that really defends black people and provides a way out that will not prove to be a trap or a dead end.

When workers, in particular, union steelworkers, face massive layoffs and concessions, the labor party is the way to free the unions from the stranglehold

of the Democratic Party — especially in Chicago, where the Machine is so intertwined with the trade union bureaucrats.

To all the oppressed and exploited, above all, to the youth, the labor party — while beginning with the question of the elections — will clearly be a party not of cynical capitalist "politics as usual," but a party of struggle for the political power of the working class.

There is no limit in advance on how far this fight can go. But we must begin now. Support the SWP campaign, join us in a fight for the labor party in the Chicago elections.

TRUTH

Rebuild the Trotskyist Party

On February 19-20, the Trotskyist Organization held its Eighth National Conference. Readers of *Truth* and supporters of the Trotskyist Organization will surely note the results of this Conference in the coming weeks and months by the development of our fight for a Trotskyist Congress to rebuild the US section of the Fourth International.

Present at the Conference were ten delegates of the TO, one observer, and a representative of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. The Conference discussed and voted on a report of the outgoing leadership, a political and organizational resolution, and a new leadership of the Trotskyist Organization.

The Political Resolution, voted unanimously, was the focus of discussion. The final draft represented a real effort on the part of the Conference, the highest and most authoritative body of a national section of the Fourth International, to grapple with the problems of rebuilding the Trotskyist party in the United States.

We emphasize here the main points of political development around the Political Resolution for readers of *Truth*.

The Eighth Conference of the Trotskyist Organization decides to consolidate the party's turn toward its implantation and toward the training of the vanguard . . . This turn is concentrated in the preparation of the Trotskyist Congress to rebuild the US section of the Fourth International. This Congress must be an open congress to which the TO will call all the most determined activists in the unions that fight for a Labor Party, and the workers, militants, and tendencies that look for a road to build the Fourth International.

The Eighth Conference fixed the Trotskyist Congress as its central objective on the basis of a thoughtful and thorough appraisal of the objective situation, especially in terms of the response of the working class to an unprecedented economic crisis of imperialism.

The contradiction between the illusions and the policy of the official leaderships (unionism, parliamentarism, pacifism) and the necessity to confront the advance of imperialism toward war, unemployment and misery, already opens up a process of reorganization of the workers forces, particularly inside the unions.

Thus the Trotskyist Organization feels that a Trotskyist Congress is justified not only in the sense of the need for a revolutionary leadership, after the abandonment of Trotskyism and the Fourth International by the Socialist Workers Party, but even more, to prepare the working class, already on a road of struggle, for the revolution.

From this point of view the Eighth National Conference took a position that the tendencies which have opposed themselves to the attack of the Barnes leadership of the SWP on Trotskyism must be judged as positive.



The (SWP's) crisis reflects the resistance of militants and sympathizers of the SWP to the attacks of the Barnes leadership aimed at destroying all the references to Trotskyism and Trotskyist traditions which remain within the SWP due to its Trotskyist past, in order to carry the organization into a closer rapprochement with the Kremlin through the intermediary of Castro.

(It) . . . expresses not only the development of the revolution in the objective sense, but also a search of young proletarians and militants for a revolutionary alternative to Stalinism, and the liquidators of Trotskyism. It is at such a moment and not by accident, that Barnes has launched his ferocious attack on Trotskyism and all the traditions of the struggle for the proletarian party. Thus the future leadership of the workers party must be developed by a differentiation in the present mobilization of the working class against liquidationist centrism.

The rebuilding of the US section of the Fourth International is based on the Trotskyist formation of new cadres for the building of a proletarian party.

The Eighth National Conference decided that the struggle for a proletarian party is going to be what characterizes serious tendencies in the working class from those on the sidelines of the class struggle. It elaborated a national campaign for the construction of a Labor Party. In doing so, it drew heavily from the experiences of the fight of the Trotskyist Organization in the UAW.

Now, all the tendencies, from the trade union opposition which could not be found during the elections, to the centrist parties isolated by the first wave of concessions, can be found everywhere following in the wake

of the powerful mobilization that has only begun to develop in the trade unions. The most isolated tendencies, in particular in the UAW . . . try to hide that what is at stake is the class independence of the proletariat with large doses of shop floor unionism. But an advanced layer of workers, even if a minority, has already left the Fraser bureaucracy and looks for a new road and a new leadership. This is how one can interpret the vote against a strike at Chrysler, which nevertheless showed a solid minority that wanted to fight no matter what.

This whole situation . . . supports a struggle for the unity of all forces of the working class for a Labor Party. A unity even of tendencies which are opposed to each other on the nature and the program of the workers party. Such a campaign is already a lever of differentiation between the most serious tendencies in the working class, and those which are lost deep "in the marsh."

As Marxists we cannot predict in advance the course of development that the Labor Party will take. We cannot say whether it will be a revolutionary party from the start, or what stages of development it will pass through, but we can do everything in our power to determine that there is a revolutionary leadership at the head of the working class party. That fight begins today, and it is the fight that the Eighth National Conference directly addressed.

And that is what we believe distinguishes the Fourth International and Trotskyism above all other tendencies. It bases itself on the objective situation, and on what the working class needs to prepare it to meet that situation. Today we are in a minority, but tomorrow a proletarian minority trained as Trotskyists, will be indispensable for the victory of socialism.

We call on workers and youth everywhere to join us in fighting for a Trotskyist Congress, to join the revolutionary future.

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