

TRUTH

A REVOLUTIONARY TROTSKYIST BULLETIN IN DETROIT-FOUNDED 1974

Edited by the Trotskyist Committee of Detroit, Supporter of the International League (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International)

Are Young, Jackson and Barrow working for the Black people . . . or GM, Ford and Chrysler?



How you can vote for a labor party . . . back page

John Conyers, Jesse Jackson, and Coleman Young held a highly publicized meeting in Detroit on October 20.

Conyers and Jackson are supposed to be more radical, pro-working class and pro-

labor than Young. They publicly endorsed Young at this meeting.

The fact that Conyers, Jackson and Young decided that Conyers and Jackson would publicly endorse Young, and that they

would appear together in public, shows that they are *afraid*.

They are *afraid* that thousands of Black people in Detroit will *not* vote for Coleman Young on November 7.

They are trying to *bully* Black people into voting for Young.

Young's campaign workers and supporters are saying to Black people throughout the city that Barrow is a tool of white people trying to take over Detroit, and that those who support Barrow, or who fail to get out and vote for Young, are giving into this plot.

As the old saying goes: "It takes one to know one."

There is no plot by white people to take over Detroit. White people — that is, the *rich*, white people who own GM, Ford and Chrysler — already run Detroit. They *dictate* what happens in the city of Detroit. Conyers, Jackson, Young and Barrow work for these rich, white people and live very comfortably while the masses of Black people (and poor whites!) suffer.

The working class has the power to change this situation. It can achieve equality for the Black people and provide decent jobs, wages, homes, schools, and unions for all working people.

But in order to do this, it has to have its own political party. It can't rely on parties owned and controlled by the rich. And it can't rely on unions, which, at their best, are designed to defend the workers immediate economic interests, not to fight for political power.

A new, independent, working class political party is necessary!

Don't vote for the candidates of the rich on November 7, white or Black!

Vote for a working class party!
Truth

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If you're against low taxes for the rich . . .

Is it really true that some of the richest people in America don't pay any federal income taxes? Yes, it is really true.

A story in the October 22 issue of the *Detroit News* talked about this fact. Here is some of what the story said: "Of 529,460 couples and individuals who reported total income above \$200,000 on returns filed in 1987, 595 paid no tax, the Internal Revenue Service said in a new report. Those 595 had incomes averaging \$600,000.

"An additional 33,805 over \$200,000 earners paid tax at an effective rate of less than 15 percent, typically less than a middle-income family would pay. Almost 3,000 paid less than 10 percent.

"The rich were able to avoid taxes by reporting big losses on farm and partnership investments; racking up large capital gains . . ."

So, on the one hand, we have thousands of rich people paying hardly any income taxes, with 595 of them paying *no* income taxes.

On the other hand, we have many millions of workers earning the minimum wage, trying to support their families on that minimum wage, and *paying income taxes on that minimum wage*.

Why do poor workers have to pay income taxes while some of the richest people don't have to pay? Because poor workers don't control this country. Rich people, *capitalists* control this country. And they rule us with the help of the Democrats and Republicans.

But, we workers can change this. We can unite, and build a militant labor party based on the unions. With unity among our selves, and with our own political party, we can challenge the Democrats and Republicans.

We can organize nationwide strikes,

massive demonstrations, and form neighborhood defense committees to protect ourselves from the police and the armed forces who will try to stop us. They work for the rich people, of course.

We will take control of the economy and run it to satisfy our own basic human needs.

In fact, as long as there is a hungry

person on this earth, we are going to make it impossible for rich capitalists to exist. And with our own socialist workers government, united with workers in other countries, we will make it impossible for hungry people to exist.

Fellow workers, let's build that fighting labor party. We need it *now*. —

Steve Kovar

Who is to blame for drug abuse?

Who is to blame for drug abuse?

Lots of people are talking about drugs and pointing the finger at various individuals and forces. Some point at young people. Others point at parents. Still others point at the pushers, the police, the bankers, Bush, or the capitalist system itself.

But very few people are pointing the finger at those who are *the most to blame* for drug abuse: the current leadership of the working class and the current leadership of the Black people.

The current leadership of the working class and the Black people has completely abandoned the struggle for equality for the Black people and other oppressed, and for the rights and interests of the working class, in exchange for a privileged position for themselves within this racist, capitalist society.

They have allowed plants to close, union membership to fall, schools to deteriorate, and racist policies to flourish, to the point that many cities are more segregated and poverty-stricken than they were 20 years ago when there was one popular uprising after another.

Thus many working class youth and their parents feel that the working class itself has no future. They feel that there will be no growth of unionism, no solidarity, no growth of the working class itself. They feel that they have no choice but to try to get into the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie

or the bourgeoisie — the class of individualistic, self-centered types that scratch and claw to try to enrich themselves at the expense of their neighbors. Or to fall into the ranks of the growing class of bottle collectors and garbage pickers.

Is it any wonder that so many young people or working people are turning to drugs, or that there is a growing number of pushers ready to enrich themselves at their expense?

There is a solution to this problem. And it's not more money for various anti-drug programs or general propaganda about the evils of capitalism.

It's an all out fight against the current leadership of the working class and the current leadership of the Black people. For a new, working class leadership that fights for equality for the Black people and all oppressed peoples; for more jobs, wages, homes and schools now, at the expense of the rich; for unions without rich bureaucrats. And, most of all, for socialism, and for an independent working class party to lead the fight for socialism.

Young socialist workers and revolutionary Trotskyists must be in the front ranks of this struggle. We are the only ones that can provide young working class people and their families not only with hope in the working class, socialist future, but also the concrete tools that they need to fight for and begin to build that working class, socialist future today. — M. Guttshall

Black Socialists in America . . .

A. Philip Randolph and *The Messenger*

Asa Philip Randolph was born in Baldwin, Florida, near Jacksonville, on April 15, 1889. His father was a self-educated African Methodist Episcopal Church preacher. His father, like millions of other children of slaves, fought very hard to stop the racial discrimination against Blacks in the South. Randolph remembers his father joining with other Black men in the neighborhood in armed defense to protect a Black man who was in jail awaiting trial. A mob had threatened to lynch him.

Also, like many Blacks in the South, his family followed the debate that developed among Black leaders at the end of the 19th century. This debate occurred between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.

Segregation and discrimination against Blacks by law developed over the 30 years after the Civil War. Washington thought that Blacks could win a place of equality under American capitalism. He wanted Blacks to better themselves in the framework of this segregation and discrimination.

Opposed to this was W.E.B. DuBois, who argued that Blacks should demand political equality, including the right to vote. In particular, Randolph read *The Souls of Black Folks* by DuBois and became convinced of the fight for social equality for Blacks.

So, at 22, with dreams of becoming an actor, and a desire to fight for rights of Black people, Randolph went to New York City.

Randolph joined thousands of skilled Blacks and young Blacks who were moving to the North to escape the Jim Crow legislation that became widespread by the end of the century. He took low-paying jobs to support himself, quitting them and finding new ones a few weeks later. For him, the

various debating and political discussion clubs at churches, in the neighborhoods, at the City College that he joined, were the center of his life.

In 1912, Randolph began taking courses at the City College of New York. It was here that he first learned about Marxism. He wrote that the "discovery" was so "exciting" that, in his spare time, he "began reading Marx as children read *Alice in Wonderland*." It was "like finally running into an idea which gives you your outlook on life."

During the next years he became a member of the Socialist Party and along with other Black Socialists, spoke out regularly in defense of socialism and trade unionism.

At that time, most Black people were loyal to the Republican Party. It had been founded as an anti-slavery party; the only Black candidates ever elected in the South were Republicans. The Democratic Party was the party of the slave-holders.

The Republican Party played a similar role for Blacks in the 1900s as the Democratic Party does today. Important Black leaders were all Republicans and were given various federal appointments in the Black community. But the Republicans never seriously addressed the lynchings, racial discrimination, or the absence of the right to vote. Just like the Democratic Party today.

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In January, 1917, William White, the president of the Headwaiters and Sidewaiters Society of Greater New York (an all-Black society), asked Randolph and Owen to be editors for a monthly magazine for the waiters. They had already achieved a reputation as street-corner speakers in favor of socialism and trade unions in Harlem.

He told them they would have complete freedom to write what they wanted. They started a magazine called the *Hotel Messenger*. In August, a group of angry sidewaiters, the lower class waiters, went to see White. They wanted him to do something about the headwaiters who were selling uniforms to sidewaiters at excessive prices and pocketing kickbacks from the uniform dealers. Where did they learn of this scam? In the *Hotel Messenger*, of course. Since White's support came from the headwaiters, he fired the two editors, called them ingrates, and threw them out of their

(Continued on page 4)

Solidarity with Soviet workers against the privileged bureaucrats!

There have been many struggles by workers in China, Eastern Europe and the USSR against the privileged bureaucracies that dominate these countries in the last few months, and there are going to be many more. Miners in the Soviet Union just initiated another strike against the privileged bureaucracy in this country. Miners say that the bureaucracy has not carried out its promises.

The Trotskyist Committee urges workers in Detroit and throughout the United States to support the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples against the privileged bureaucracies in these countries. The working class is the only class that can advance the struggle against the capitalists' exploitation of the working class, for workers democracy, for socialism, and for equality and democratic rights for oppressed peoples.

It is not possible to rely on the privileged bureaucracies in China, Eastern Europe, or the USSR to defend the gains of the workers in these countries.

This privileged bureaucracy is collaborating with the most vicious capitalists in opening these countries to imperialist and capitalist exploitation and in promoting the development of classes in these countries that aim at the private accumulation of wealth at the expense of the suffering, misery, and poverty of the population as a whole.

At the same time, it is necessary to fight for a *clear, working class and socialist alternative* to these privileged bureaucracies.

Western capitalists, with George Bush in the forefront, are obviously trying to take advantage of the workers and op-

pressed peoples' justified hatred of these privileged bureaucracies to regain a stronger foothold in these countries for the capitalists, just as the bosses try to exploit the workers hostility to the union bureaucracy to try to get rid of the union altogether.

The fight for a clear, working class and socialist alternative to these privileged bureaucracies means a fight for:

— Independence for oppressed nations. For the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, including *the right to separation*. No to the autonomy schemes. Independence means nothing if it does not mean the right to *separate*. It's not accidental that this is one "reform" that neither George Bush nor Mikhail Gorbachev is for.

— Workers democracy. Abolish all restrictions on the right to strike, form working class organizations, and political parties. For the revitalization of the democracy of the councils of workers, rank-and-file collective farmers, peasants, and Red Army men. Keep the privileged bureaucrats and the nouveau rich out of the councils.

— Socialism without rich bureaucrats. No to the privileges of the bureaucracy. Greater equality of wages for all forms of labor. No to private ownership of the basic resources of the society. No to private trade with Western capitalists aimed at the private accumulation of wealth. For a complete revision of the planned economy in the interests of the producers and consumers.

In order to fight for this alternative, it is necessary to rebuild the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution. — M. Guttschall

The Messenger . . .

(Continued from page 3)

office!

Randolph and Owen decided to continue the publication. They called it simply *The Messenger*.

The Messenger had published its first issue the same month that Lenin and the working-class socialist party of Russia, the Bolsheviks, overthrew the capitalist government and installed a workers government.

In its January 1918 issue *The Messenger* said:

"The Bolsheviks . . . represent the extreme radicals — not in the sense of being unreasonably extreme in their demands, but in the sense of being unwilling to take a half loaf when they were entitled to the whole loaf . . . They demand that the land which the workers till and mine with their toil shall be owned and operated by the workers for the welfare of the workers . . . Lenin and Trotsky, however, are sagacious, statesmanlike and courageous leaders. They have a thorough understanding of the international situation . . . They are calling, nevertheless, upon the people of every country to follow the lead of Russia, to throw off their exploiting rulers, to administer public utilities for public welfare, to disgorge the exploiters and the profiteers."

Morris Hillquit was the Socialist candidate for mayor of New York in the November 1917 elections. Randolph and Owen founded the first openly Socialist club in Harlem — the 21st A.D. Club — in the summer of 1917 to, among other things, support the Hillquit campaign.

Hillquit lost but he got 145,332 votes, the largest ever for a Socialist in New York City. Because of this pressure, the Republicans, for the first time, actually ran a Black candidate for Representative to the New York State house

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A forum on the Black Panther Party

The Pan African Student Union at Wayne State University held "A Tribute to Dr. Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party" on October 19. There were about 50 people. October 19 marked the 23rd anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party.

At its peak, the Black Panther Party had the sympathy of the majority of Black people in America and it had 10,000 members in all the major cities. It ceased to exist by the mid 1970s.

On August 22, 1989, Huey Newton was killed in Oakland, California. The major newspapers claimed that he was killed because of drugs. All the speakers said that this was a lie. In fact, they said, Newton was beginning to get active in political life again and the authorities felt threatened by this possibility. Recently released U.S. government records show that there was a systematic campaign against Newton and the Black Panther Party from its birth. The speakers felt that the U.S. government along with the local Oakland police are the most likely suspects in his death.

The three main speakers were Ron Scott, a founding member of the Black Panther Party in Detroit, and Walter Stewart and N.A. Abayomi of the Pan-African Student Union.

Ron Scott stated that the Panthers stood on their 10 Point Program. The two main points of the program were: armed self-defense and self-determination.

The Black Panther Party felt that armed self-defense was necessary to stop racist attacks on Black people, especially by the police. The Panthers never started any violent activity with police or anyone else. This is a false image that the media and the U.S. government created. Scott said, "the only thing that was violent about the Black Panthers was that they were violently committed to justice for the

"The main legacy of the Black Panther Party is that we can transform the world if we want to. . ."

— Ron Scott, founding member, the Black Panther Party in Detroit

Black people."

Self-determination for the Black Panthers meant, as Scott stated, "the Black Panthers felt that they had a right to choose between being U.S. citizens, a choice they had never been given. . ." and citizens of their own country. The main legacy of the Black Panther Party, Scott felt, was that "we can transform the world if we want to."

The next speaker was Walter Stewart. He spoke about the different forces that were against the Panthers. The first was the U.S. government. He told a story about a protest that brought the Panthers into the national spotlight.

Ronald Reagan was governor of California when the Black Panthers were formed in Oakland, California. The Black Panthers went to the state capitol in early 1967 with their weapons to protest the attacks on Black people in California and the attempt to pass gun control. When they walked into the state legislature with their guns, Reagan was so scared he ducked his head and ran right out of the room! It was bold actions like this that won support among young people for the Panthers, Stewart said.

Stewart pointed out that the Panthers were opposed by the Black bourgeoisie. An owner of several stores in Oakland tried to give the Panthers money to be quiet and go away. They refused the money and organized a boycott of his stores. The boycott put enough pressure on the owner that he changed his mind and became a sup-

porter of the Panthers.

He concluded with a message from a former Panther who now lives in Detroit. She could not speak publicly because she is still wanted for crimes that she did not commit. She knew Newton personally and said that, "he dared to challenge America to live up to her end of the bargain. . ."

The final speaker, N.A. Abayomi, spoke on the systematic and planned spying and underground operations on all Black newspapers, organizations, etc., in America since the early 1900s by the FBI and the U.S. government. He quoted from several recent books that have explored this topic with files available from the Freedom of Information Act.

Specifically, in a memo from J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI dated August 25, 1967, the government expanded its Cointelpro (Counter Intelligence Program) to "target Black nationalist hate groups." The FBI was ordered to prevent coalitions among Black groups, to destroy their reputations by branding them as violent criminals, drug dealers, rapists, etc., and to prevent them in every way from winning support from the majority of Black people.

In the discussion period, this writer asked the speakers to comment on the fact that the Democratic Party is today the main obstacle to the struggle of Black people, because it is the main party of the U.S. capitalist class for controlling Black and working people; and, that there was a call by Tony Mazzocchi of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union for a labor party. Walter Stewart responded by saying that this was a very important question and that he thought that some kind of people's party or revolutionary party was necessary for Black people to really advance in the next decade. — F. Michaels

A tendency against U.S. imperialism in Nicaragua

The U.S. government is actively campaigning for Violeta Chamorro, for president of Nicaragua. Chamorro is a representative of the richest Nicaraguan families. The U.S. government, and these rich families, obviously want to regain complete control over Nicaragua for themselves.

Unfortunately, the Sandinistas, a radical or revolutionary petty bourgeois nationalist tendency that makes up the current government, have made one capitulation after another to the demands of U.S. imperialism and the Chomorros. Most recently, they agreed to cease armed struggle against U.S. mercenaries and to allow the political representatives of these mercenaries to operate freely in Nicaragua.

A number of tendencies have emerged in Nicaragua in opposition to this. At least one of them, the Movement for Revolutionary Unity (MUR), is running a candidate for president against the U.S. candidate (Chamorro) and against the Sandinista candidate (Ortega). Excerpts from their statement of purpose and their political program were printed by Socialist Action in its publication in October. Here are excerpts from their statement of purpose. In the next issue of Truth, we will reprint the excerpts from their political program.
— M.G.

Statement of Purpose

The Movement for Revolutionary Unity (MUR) was formed by ex-members of various left parties in Nicaragua to offer a revolutionary alternative to the working class and all progressive sectors of society. It raises the banner of the independence of the working class and its organizations in the struggle for their economic, social, and political demands.

The MUR seeks to forge the unity of all workers and revolutionists who support the revolution, be they organized into a political party or not, with the goal of defending the interests of the workers and their allies and establishing a socialist society.

The MUR advocates the deepening of the democratic conquests of the revolution. The working class and its allies should control the factories and farms of Nicaragua. They should make all the fundamental decisions on economic, social, and political matters facing the nation through their own institutions.

The MUR is anti-imperialist. It condemns the penetration of imperialist capital throughout the world. This represents only a new form of colonialism and domination of all the oppressed peoples. It is imperialism which is responsible for the misery, exploitation, racism, and all other blights that scourge the working class and all the oppressed. The MUR solidarizes with all the people of the world who are struggling to free themselves from the imperialist yoke.

The MUR advocates the defense and deepening of the gains made by the workers and peasants beginning with the triumph of July 19, 1979 [the day Somoza fell]. It defends and supports the trade unions and cooperatives, the land distribution, the nationalization of sectors of the economy, etc. But at the same time the MUR calls for the deepening of the revolution in all areas of society. Hence the MUR actively supports all struggles waged by workers and peasants in defense of their interests.

The MUR is a political party that fights to establish a socialist society — that is, a society where all forms of exploitation will be eradicated, where the workers are masters of the means of production, where all forms of sex and race discrimination are done away with, where the well-being of the majority is the priority of the society, and not the profits of the few.

Socialism opens the road to the full cooperation among all the peoples of the world. Hence, the MUR solidarizes with the worldwide struggles waged against imperialist and capitalist exploitation.

(From *Unidad Revolucionaria*, June, 1989; translated and printed by *Socialist Action*, October, 1989.)

The Messenger . . .

(Continued from page 4)

from Harlem in 1917. *The Messenger* said:

“. . . the election of Negro candidates is not enough. So long as the Negro votes for Republican or Democratic Party candidates, he will have only the right and privilege to elect but not to select his representative. No white man is good enough to rule black men without their consent. And it is pretty well ascertained that it is unsafe for one class to leave its fortunes, political and economic, to another class The intellectually decrepit Negro leaders have seemed to have had a vague religious reliance upon the “goodness” of all white Republicans and they have not been able to appreciate the fact that they have been mere pawns upon the political chessboards for conniving, wirepulling, unscrupulous Republican tricksters The Socialist Party is supported financially by the working men and women and since its platform is a demand for the abolition of the class struggle between employer and worker . . . the Negro should select a positive good — Socialism.”

In 1920, Randolph and Owen ran with 3 other Blacks from Harlem for office on the Socialist Party ticket. Randolph was the candidate for state comptroller. In the best showing of any of the Black candidates, Randolph polled 202,361 votes, only 1,000 fewer than Eugene Debs, the candidate of the Socialist Party for president.

The Messenger, and the group of young radicals around it, thought that W.E.B. DuBois had become part of the old guard. In the next issue, we will look at the socialism of the three main Black socialist groupings — W.E.B. DuBois, the Messenger group, and the African Blood Brotherhood, which was the main group of Black socialists that joined the Communist Party at its founding in 1918. — F. Michaels

What is the Trotskyist Committee?

The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit, Supporter of the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, is a revolutionary workers group in Detroit.

The Trotskyist Committee calls itself "Trotskyist" because of Leon Trotsky and his comrades. They continued the struggle for the socialist revolution after Stalin betrayed it, founded the Fourth International to lead this struggle, and devoted their lives to this cause.

The Trotskyist Committee is open to young workers, women workers, and all workers and militants who are for:

- equality and the right to self-determination for the Black people and all oppressed peoples;
- the workers against the bosses and their agents in the unions;
- the socialist revolution;
- the Fourth International;
- the struggle of the International League for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The International League is for rebuilding the Fourth International. This means rooting Trotskyism in the working class, winning fresh working class forces to the revolutionary workers cause, and uniting truly working class, revolutionary Trotskyist forces on a principled basis.

The Trotskyist Committee welcomes all who share these goals, are prepared to accept its decisions, contribute financially to its work, and take part in its work on a regular basis.

The Trotskyist Committee concentrates its work on developing and spreading revolutionary propaganda, educating workers as revolutionaries, and on recruiting workers, and militants from other social classes truly devoted to the working class, to the revolutionary workers cause.

As Leon Trotsky said: "... in the final analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided upon American soil."

And, "I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International, go forward!"

Thus we urge young workers, women workers, and all workers and militants in the Detroit area, to seriously consider joining the Trotskyist Committee and devoting yourselves to this struggle. There is a place for each and every one of you, in this struggle.

Building the Trotskyist Committee

We sold 35 copies of this issue of *Truth* to workers and militants at the Ford Rouge plant, Wayne County Community College, a forum on the Black Panther Party, and a Socialist Workers Party forum on the Detroit elections. This is the highest number of *Truth* that have been sold in such a short time since we resumed publishing *Truth*.

We found that workers at the Ford Rouge plant are especially concerned about Ford's decision to sell Rouge Steel. They feel that this is going to mean fewer jobs, lower wages, and worse working conditions throughout the Rouge complex. A number of workers thought that selling the Rouge Steel plant was a first step in breaking up, and closing down, the Rouge complex as a whole. Workers were not optimistic about the possibilities of defeating this decision. Some blamed the union leadership; others said workers at the Rouge simply would not stick together.

We also found that some regular readers of *Truth* are becoming more and more supportive of the struggle for socialism. They are seeing more and more clearly that Young, Barrow and even Jesse Jackson are nothing but agents for the capitalist class.

We think this is a very positive development. It shows that a consistent fight for equality for the Black people and all oppressed peoples, for socialism, and for an independent working class party, against the Republicans and Democrats, can *change* what young workers think and do.

We ask all readers who support this struggle to help build *Truth* and the Trotskyist Committee. You can do this by making suggestions and criticisms for the next issue of *Truth*, by writing for *Truth*, by making contributions to help pay for *Truth*, or by joining the editorial committee for *Truth* and the Trotskyist Committee. — M.G.

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How you can vote for a labor party

Unfortunately, there are no working class candidates for mayor, city clerk, or city council on the ballot in Detroit.

The AFL-CIO, the UAW, and the Teamsters leadership are all supporting Young, just as they work with the bosses on the shop floor or in contract negotiations.

Barrow claims to be an alternative to Young who is closer to the people. In fact, he has made his living as an accountant, who keeps and studies the capitalists' books, and makes recommendations to them on how they can increase their profits (by cutting supplies, jobs, etc.). There is no reason to believe that he will do anything different, if he becomes mayor.

The working class candidates that ran for mayor and city council in the primary elections — John Powers, Shanta Driver, and others — did not get enough votes to be on this ballot.

But this does not mean that you have to stay home November 7. You can express your opposition to the candidates and parties of the rich, and your support for a working class party, by filling out Tony Mazzocchi's questionnaire.

Mazzocchi is Secretary-Treasurer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union. His questionnaire for workers asks workers if they think the unions should continue to support the Republicans and Democrats and if they think the unions should form a labor party.

By saying yes to a labor party on this questionnaire, asking your fellow workers to do the same, and returning it to *Truth*, (or to your union or directly to Mazzocchi), you can help build support for an independent working class party and push Mazzocchi to take all the steps necessary to form that party now.

Then the workers will be in a position to have their *own* candidates on the ballot in the next election. — Truth

TRUTH

P.O. BOX 441283, DETROIT, MI 48244-1283; (313) 831-0593

Workers have the power to stop the layoffs

In the last few weeks, various auto company managements have announced a number of decisions that many workers oppose. GM announced that it plans to layoff several thousand workers. Ford announced that it plans to sell Rouge Steel; the new owners can obviously ask steelworkers to make more concessions, higher seniority steelworkers may decide to "bump out" of the steelplant, younger workers may be laid off. Chrysler just announced that it is laying off 1,700 workers at the Jefferson Plant and that it is going to close the plant.

So far, the current leadership of the UAW has *complained* about these decisions, but it has not *done* anything to stop them. This is not surprising since the current leadership of the UAW lives more like auto executives than like workers. It identifies with the auto executives and thinks that whatever is good for the auto executives is good for them.

But just because the top leadership of the UAW is rich and soft does not mean that there is nothing that workers can do to fight these decisions, or that they have to wait until they replace this leadership to do so.

Workers can fight for local leaderships to call meetings against these decisions, in which every worker has a

right to speak, and in which the workers as a whole have an opportunity to discuss these questions, collectively decide what they want to do, and *elect* representatives to carry out their decisions on these questions. Workers must have the right to immediately recall any representative that does not carry out their decisions. This is how workers in the USSR are organizing their struggles.

And if the local leaderships refuse to call such meetings, then opposition groups like *New Directions* and *Workers Against Concessions* should do so.

Workers have the power to stop these decisions. They can organize meetings, demonstrations, slowdowns, plant occupations. They can run their own candidates to get support from other workers and oppressed people for their struggles. They can organize defense guards to defend their actions. Obviously, there is no guarantee that in any given situation that the workers will win. But if they don't organize the largest struggle possible, then there is a guarantee that they will lose. — M. Guttshall.

**Say yes to a labor party on the union questionnaire!
Ask your fellow workers to do the same!**

(Ask a *Truth* distributor for copies of this questionnaire and return it to *Truth*, your union, or to Tony Mazzocchi, Secretary-Treasurer OCAW, PO Box 2812, Denver, CO 80201.