

TRUTH

A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST TROTSKYIST BULLETIN

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For more union jobs now! Support the miners' strike!

The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) has decided to expand its strike against the Bituminous Coal Operators Association. There are now almost 10,000 miners on strike in five different states, including Illinois, Indiana, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Miners are striking against the mine owners' policy of "double-breasting." Mine owners are closing down mines where miners are unionized. They then open up another mine down the road to mine the same vein of coal, but under a different name and they hire non-union miners. The UMWA contract says at least 3/5 of the miners at these new mines must be union miners, but mine owners are not even respecting this modest demand.

We urge all working people in the Detroit area to support the miners' strike.

The outcome of the miners' strike is espe-



cially important for working people in the Detroit area.

If the miners win, it will strengthen the fight for union jobs. If they lose, it will weaken it. And the United Auto Workers contract is coming up in September.

More than anything else, it has been the fight to unionize workers that has improved the working and living conditions of millions of working people in Detroit

and throughout the U.S. Now the owners of the giant monopolies in the U.S. are trying to shift operations and production out of unionized areas like Detroit, and into non-union areas in the South and in other countries, in an effort to undermine the power of the unions and create the conditions aimed at crushing the unions and driving the entirety of the working class back to pre-union conditions.

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Miners . . .

(Continued from front page)

The unions have the power to stop this trend. They can shut the entire country down if they chose to do so. They can build their own political party and run their own candidates for office. They can fight for *public ownership* of the banks, the insurance companies, the oil companies, the mines, the land, all the giant monopolies. Why should a tiny minority of people be allowed to *own natural wealth*, and use their ownership of that natural wealth to enrich themselves at the expense of millions of people who are suffering, at best from overwork, at worst from hunger, disease, violence, and death?

Can anyone honestly say that the owners of the banks, insurance companies, oil companies, mines, etc., have a right to their wealth because they worked for it?

Unfortunately, the top leadership of the unions has been preventing the unions from exercising their power. The United Mine Workers' strike is a step in the right direction. We urge all working people in the Detroit area to support it! ■

What you can do ...

— Send statements of support and financial contributions to the United Mine Workers of America, 916 Millis, Booneville, Indiana 47601;

— Join the picket lines; call the UMWA at 812-897-0126 for information on picket lines in the Midwest;

— Invite a miner to speak to your group;

— Help get the names of working class candidates for Detroit mayor and city council on the ballot, like Rose Ana Berbeo.

Working class candidates for mayor and city council are the only ones who are using their campaigns to build support for the miners' struggle and other working class struggles. We need candidates who will use their campaigns and their positions in public office to build support for the struggles of the working class, instead of using them to try to crush them, as Coleman Young is now doing. For further information on collecting signatures to get Rose Ana Berbeo's name on the ballot, contact the Socialist Workers Party in Detroit: 875-0100. ■

A victory for working people!

Michigan voters voted down Proposal A on Wednesday, June 2. This is an important victory for all working people.

Proposal A, by cutting property taxes and increasing sales taxes, would have cut taxes for the richest and increased taxes for the poor, working and middle classes. While partisans of the bill claimed that it would allow them to distribute public funds for schools more fairly, this promise was really dependent on future growth of public funds.

The richest owners of enterprises in Michigan and politicians combined to push the bill, and put thousands of dollars into propaganda for the bill on the TV, radio, and in the newspapers. According to *Crain's Business Week*, the AFL-CIO and the UAW were neutral. While some union officials did speak against the bill, union officials in general made little or no attempt to educate people about the bill and mobilize them to vote against it.

Nevertheless, working people throughout Michigan studied the propaganda, discussed it, decided that the bill was not in their interests, decided to vote against it and encouraged others to do the same.

As one worker said: "We talked about it at the plant [Ford Livonia transmission plant], and any time the politicians and businessmen hook up, something's wrong. When it comes to politicians and big business, we're getting smarter. Property taxes may have gone down, but in a year they'd have gone up again."

As others who wrote the *Detroit Free Press* said: "I am sick and tired of political pundits belittling opposition to Proposal A as being selfish, partisan, or the product of simpleminded political cynicism ... Many of us ... were compelled to oppose Proposal A because of the inequities it promised to exacerbate, rather than cure. Some of us read, and then told others, that business and industry interests stood to save \$1.2 billion by 1996 under the plan, while homeowners would save \$73 million ..."

"Congratulations to Michigan's voters. They wisely rejected Proposal A in spite of the incessant pro-tax support and propaganda emanating from the governor, the Detroit newspapers, and other big businesses that would have realized a huge windfall had the proposal passed."

"Like most of Gov. John Engler's program, Proposal A was designed so that the rich would get a tax break at the expense of the middle class and the poor. Businesses would also have gotten a tax break, which was supposed to trickle down to the rest of us ... Engler's tax scheme was defeated because it was phony, regressive, and poor tax policy."

The defeat of Proposal A, like the campaign to recall Engler, shows that working people are learning to read, study, think, and act, more and more independently of the Republicans, the Democrats, the top union leaders, and the media.

It shows that working people can ascertain their interests and fighting for them in a united way. Now is the time to develop and use that ability to the maximum.

It's not enough to reject Proposal A. It's also necessary to have an alternative.

Working people have been fighting for taxing the richest, not the poor, the workers, and the middle classes, for many years, and to use public funds to provide decent jobs, wages, health care, homes, schools, etc. Working people keep voting for politicians who claim that they will do these things. But, once in office, these politicians don't carry out their promises. They either openly join the ranks of the "tax the poor, not the rich" gang (right-wing Republicans and Democrats) or they refuse to use their positions to mobilize millions of people against them (left-wing Democrats).

This shows that working people need to build their own political party, and run their own candidates for office, candidates totally owned and controlled by working people, with salaries no higher than the average workers salaries, and immediately recallable. Without this, policies, legislation, laws, will always serve the interests of the richest, not the workers and oppressed.

Working people also need to fight for *public ownership* of the banks, insurance enterprises, oil enterprises, mines, land, and other giant monopolies. As long as these things are privately owned, the owners are going to be able to use their ownership and control of this fabulous wealth, to buy-off and extort elected representatives and sabotage the will of the majority, the working people. — M.G. ■

"A Political Action Plan for 1993-1994"

Now is the time to step up our grassroots organizing efforts and boldly put forth an agenda for working people in our country. It is not the time to adopt a wait-and-see attitude toward President Clinton's agenda. Nor is it the time to be timid about the needs of working people for fear of offending the Clinton camp.

The history of successful reform efforts teaches us that patience and good manners do not get the job done. From the New Deal of FDR to the Civil Rights reforms of JFK to the War on Poverty programs of LBJ, social and economic programs that met the real needs of working people were only passed in response to intense pressure from below—from the organized masses pressing their agenda in the town halls, in the legislatures and in the streets. If we are to be successful, we must do no less!

A Working People's Agenda

Successful action for reform also requires a plan. The OCAW's 1992 "Litmus Test for Congressional Candidates," which drew on resolutions passed at our last convention, is one such plan. It included the following objectives:

— **JOBS, JOBS, JOBS:** We must have a massive jobs program—mobilizing resources, capital and people—equivalent to a wartime mobilization effort. At the same time, we have to recognize that unrestrained growth, for the sake of growth only, will kill the planet we live on.

— **A SUPERFUND FOR WORKERS:** We need a Workers' Bill of Rights modeled after the G.I. Bill—a Superfund to educate workers and make them fully whole during the difficult transition to a permanent peacetime and environmentally friendly economy.

— **CANADIAN-STYLE, SINGLE-PAYER NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE:** The only real answer to our health care crisis is to adopt a single payer, cost effective, national government program that guarantees universal coverage, comprehensive care, and freedom of

choice.

— **FAIR TRADE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH:** We must turn back the corporate attempt to use trade laws to sell out our economic security and quality of life by driving down our standards (on wages, social benefits, the environment, etc.) to the levels of Third World countries. Rather, we must work to elevate the standards in those countries to the standards that exist in the more advanced countries, so that the whole world can enjoy a higher standard of living. As an important first step, we must stop the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

— **ANTI-SCAB LEGISLATION:** We absolutely must restore the right of workers to strike. When people can be summarily fired for striking, then the right to strike does not exist.

— **THE RIGHT TO ACT & THE RIGHT TO REFUSE:** Workers must be empowered to inspect, monitor, and, if necessary, halt the operation of any process that presents an imminent threat to life and health. They must also have the right to refuse unsafe work without threat of intimidation or retaliation by employers.

— **ELECTORAL REFORM:** The current electoral setup will perpetuate forever the situation that those who possess the wealth in this country are also the ones who hold the power. Reforms to restore democracy to the electoral process and empower working people must be enacted.

— **A COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY POLICY:** A child care and national paid leave policy for family, child, and medical emergencies is an absolute must. The United States is far behind other industrialized countries, which passed comprehensive laws of that type nearly 50 years ago.

These eight objectives represent a Working People's Agenda. To achieve them in practice will require lots of agitation, education, and grassroots organizing—in other words, lots of plain hard work. Who's going to do that hard work?

Building LPA

The American people's discontent and dissatisfaction with both political parties is evident. In the 1990 Congressional election, only 35 percent of the electorate (the

voting age population) bothered to go to the polls. In the 1992 election, a little more than half (about 53% percent) showed up—and a Texas billionaire proved the country wants an alternative. For these reasons, the 1991 International convention also instructed the OCAW administration to provide continued support to Labor Party Advocates as a means to secure passage of a Working People's Agenda. The work of building Labor Party Advocates outside the OCAW continues. We now propose to build Labor Party Advocates inside the union.

Everyone is needed. Everyone, including rank-and-file members, officers and staff is welcome. You can help agitate, educate, and organize around the Working People's Agenda—and most of all you can become a part of the cutting edge of our union!—From the *LPA Newsletter*, April, 1993 ■

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Rose Ana Berbeo for Detroit mayor!



We are reprinting another statement by Rose Ana Berbeo, a working class candidate for Detroit mayor.

Once again, readers will see that she is quite different from other candidates (and possible candidates) for Detroit mayor, like Archer, McPhail, and Young, who want to make conditions in Detroit more favorable for the rich (by cutting taxes on corporations) and less favorable for the workers (but cutting workers wages)!

So we urge workers to support her and other working class candidates.

Since Rose Ana initiated her campaign, another working class organization, the "Fighting Workers," also announced a slate of candidates for Detroit mayor and city council. In our opinion, this is sectarian, and not in the best interests of the workers in the city. Why aren't the "Fighting Workers" giving any support to Rose Ana Berbeo and her campaign? Why are they running an entire slate of candidates against her and comrades?

Nevertheless, we also urge workers to support these candidates against the candidates of the rich in these elections. The most important thing is to vote for working class candidates, not which working class candidate you vote for. The larger the vote for working class candidates, the more it will strengthen the confidence of the working class in its future.

Statement

The Socialist Workers Party is running Rose Ana Berbeo, a 24-year old auto worker, for Mayor of Detroit. Joining her are socialist city council candidates James Harris, Arlene Rubinstein, John Sarge, and Candace Wagner.

The capitalist system has entered the beginning stages of a deep economic crisis — similar to the one that gripped the

world during the depression of the 1930's. Democratic and Republican party politicians are cynically calling for "shared sacrifice" to confront this crisis as though the interests of working people and the capitalist families who rule this country are identical — instead of diametrically opposed.

The billionaire industrialists, bankers, and landowners are making working people bear the brunt of the crisis. Their solution is more unemployment and for those of us with jobs to make us work harder and longer for a lower standard of living. They want cutbacks in our social services and health care and they are demanding that we be prepared to fight and die in their wars.

Working people need an alternative to the policies of the people who enrich themselves through our labor. We have no interest in going to war against fellow workers in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Somalia or any place the capitalist bosses feel the need to spread their influence and control. We must struggle to better our standard of living in

Clinton's record . . .

Now that Clinton has been in office, let's take a look at his record:

- he lifted the federal rule that prevented doctors at public health clinics from mentioning abortion; lifted the ban on fetal tissue research;
- pushed for and got passed the family and medical leave acts;
- he pushed for and got passed the motor-voter bill;
- he supported the bio-diversity treaty of the Rio conference.

All these things took place in the first three months of his administration. Since then he has:

- continually compromised on his jobs bill and tax the rich plans, which were very modest to begin with;
- postponed pushing for an increase in the minimum wage;
- taken positions more and more in support of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA);
- backed off preventing big mining and lumber companies from using federal lands, practically free, for their businesses;
- dropped the nomination of Lani Guinier

the face of this world depression.

The socialist candidates put forward a program that is to unify working people in the struggles that are taking place now and the ones that lie ahead of us. We ask all those who oppose the twin parties of war and economic depression to join our campaign.

— No. to U.S. intervention in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Somalia.

— Jail the cops who killed Malice Green—stop police brutality.

— Jobs for all — shorten the work week with no reduction in pay.

— Cancel the Third World debt.

— Launch a massive public works program to building housing, schools, hospitals.

— Defend women's right to abortion.

— Enforce affirmative action.

For further information: 875-0100. —
From an SWP flyer ■

for head civil rights attorney because of her statements in support of taking measures to ensure African-Americans equal representation in the federal government.

The trend of the last three months will continue in the near future with the proposals on health care, and further compromises on his already weak jobs bill and tax the rich plans.

From the very beginning, the foreign policy of the Clinton administration has been similar to that of Bush.

- Bush started bombing Iraq at the very end of his term and Clinton continued it in the first few days of his term.
- Clinton attacked Bush for not allowing Haitian refugees into the U.S. and then proceeded to stop them himself. He has sent U.S. Coast Guard boats onto the high seas and ordered them to take refugees off boats and return them to Haiti.
- He has failed to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia so that the Bosnians can fight for themselves, and supports using U.S. air power to protect UN forces but not Bosnians. — J.M. ■

Punish police who murdered Malice Green!

Three white ex-Detroit police officers are now on trial for the murder of Malice Green, an African-American. All working people should support the conviction and punishment of these police officers.

The evidence is overwhelming. Green died from several blows to the head, according to the coroner's office. Witnesses and the police themselves say that he was beaten by at least three officers. He had no weapon and weighed less than any officer individually. He was not a big strong man, but a slight man of about 145 pounds.

The officers claim he was "resisting arrest." But the use of force by police officers is not allowed legally under all circumstances. Officers must use force only when threatened or to carry out their "duty." And, they can only kill someone when their lives are being threatened. The officers do not have a leg to stand on and deserve the full punishment of the law.

But, even more, we need to ask, what is behind the killing of Malice Green?

Police officers execute the plans of the rich more than protecting people from criminals, controlling traffic etc. That is why Malice Green is dead. Inside the Detroit police force there remains a solid very large minority (nearly 50%) of white officers whose job it is to maintain the rule of the rich whites in Detroit through racist attacks on African-Americans. Permitting this racist core to continue to exist is what led to the murder of Malice Green.

This is also why it is in the interests of all working people to support the conviction and punishment of the police. These same police have been used against striking workers at Wayne State University, the Detroit city workers and so on. These same police have, but not to the same degree, harassed and intimidated working class whites and youth of all races. These police serve the rich. Period.

You must ask yourself: how do criminals that deal in drugs, fencing stolen goods, various other forms of larceny, etc., remain in contact with the rich people who provide them with funds and who collect the profits? There is only one group in the society that has regular contact with both groups in the normal course of doing business — the police. If you want to get rid of crime, you have to get rid of the police.

Even more, the police as a professional, elite force with special powers, are un-



Malice Green's mother holds his picture.

democratic, are a holdover from the past. The police have their origins in the times of kings as the repressive force against the poor. Today, a special elite force that serves the rich is no longer needed. A trained, enlightened and armed people are the best defense against crime and criminals of all types.

Already, the people of Detroit have, on a number of occasions, rid their neighborhoods of criminals by their own inde-

pendent actions. Indeed, going all the way back to Dr. Sweet in the 1920s, an African-American who gathered his friends together and defended his house against racist whites, the people of Detroit, like many Americans, have a tradition of self-defense.

To all the proposals for more funding for police, for more police, we say: abolish the police, train and arm the people. — J. Marlowe ■

Solidarity with immigrant workers!



Immigrant meat-packing workers arrested during INS raid in Minnesota.

In the last weeks there have been a number of raids on immigrant workers organized by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS):

— 52 workers arrested at the Allen Co. chicken-processing plant in Maryland on March 31;

— 55 workers arrested in packinghouse plants and various neighborhoods in Minnesota in April;

— 60 workers arrested at the Heartland Foods turkey-processing plant and nearby homes in Marshall, Minnesota on May 6.

The last raid provoked a work stoppage that lasted all day, when the company refused to give the checks of the workers who had been arrested to their family members.

All working people need to support the struggles of immigrant workers for citizenship and equal rights. Attacks on immigrant workers are not going to result in more jobs for native-born workers. They are going to make the situation worse because they are going to undermine the solidarity and the strength of the working class which is the only way to make progress. ■

Solidarity with oppressed peoples!

U.S. /U.N. "humanitarian aid" in Somalia means death!

Last year, Bush, with Clinton's support, invaded Somalia to allegedly provide "humanitarian aid" to starving Somalians. At the time, lots of journalists, including many African-American journalists, said that Bush wanted to do something "good" before he left, or even that this showed that the U.S. government was changing, that it's not so racist anymore. Working class revolutionaries said that this was a lie, that the so-called "humanitarian aid" was a cover, that the U.S. aimed to expand its imperialist domination of the Middle East and Africa. Since then, many have learned that the U.S. can use its position in Somalia to guard the routes along which oil is transported, that there may be oil in Somalia, that the U.S.'s intervention was conducted from the headquarters of one of the giant oil corporations. Now, after many U.S. troops have been withdrawn, U.S. and U.N. troops are attacking an alleged Somali "warlord," Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who happens to be at the head of forces who control Southern Somalia. The U.S. and U.N. forces have attacked his supply center and his radio station. So far, there are no reports on how many have been killed. The people of Somalia have a right to decide who will and will not rule their territory. The U.S. does not. Working people in the U.S. need to demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Somalia and all foreign territories.

U.S. citizens organize aid for Bosnia!

Jon Maxey, a crane operator at the General Motors Corporation Cadillac Stamping plant in Grand Rapids, and Jim Flickinger, a lawyer in Grand Rapids, have begun to collect funds and materials to send to the people of Bosnia. According to Maxey, "What got to us most was the unspeakable things that are happening to kids over there. Kids are getting raped in front of their parents, seeing their parents killed." Those who want to contribute to this effort can make checks payable to "International Aid," and send them to: Flickinger & Associates, 124 E. Fulton, Grand Rapids 49503. Workers also need to demand that the U.S. government stop the embargo

against Bosnia, so that the people of Bosnia can get funds and defend themselves.

The struggle in Bosnia is not over. The U.S., the U.N. and the partisans of a so-called "Greater Serbia," are trying to push the Bosnia people off their own lands and into so-called "safe havens." These so-called "safe havens" are nothing but refugee camps for Bosnians. The U.S., the U.N., and the Serbian bureaucracy are trying to do the same thing to the Bosnians that was done to the Palestinians. More and more people within Serbia are beginning to rebel against the privileged bureaucracy and its war on the Bosnians. A common fight against the privileged Serbian bureaucracy, for freedom for Bosnia and all oppressed peoples, is needed.

Solidarity with Cuba!

The Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization is now organizing a caravan to take material aid to the Cuban people who are now suffering from the combined effects of the U.S.'s decades long embargo against the Cuban people; the failure of the privileged bureaucracy in the old USSR to pay financial debts, live up to trade agreements, and continue various forms of needed aid; and a hurricane that caused a great deal of destruction. The caravan will begin on July 16 in 12 different cities across the U.S., stop at various cities, travel to Laredo, Texas, cross the U.S.-Mexican border, and finally unload its cargo at a port in Tampico, Mexico. From there, the material will be shipped to Cuba, and participants in the caravan will travel to Cuba and distribute the aid through various churches. Readers can send contributions to the caravan to: IFCO, 402 W. 145 St., New York, NY 10031. Working people also need to demand that the U.S. government lift the embargo against Cuba and withdraw all U.S. troops from Cuba, which are still stationed in Guantanamo! Once again, the Cuban people have a right to decide what is and is not going to happen on Cuban territory. The U.S. does not. What can be said of a rich and powerful nation like the U.S., that tries to crush a tiny nation like Cuba, simply because the people want to be independent? The U.S. will never win the support and solidarity of the majority of the people throughout the world with such a policy.

Down with the racist apartheid regime! All power to the ANC now!

DeKlerk, the head of the racist National Party, recently agreed to hold one person, one vote elections for a Constituent Assembly in April of next year. However, he does not want the Constituent Assembly to be a sovereign assembly with the right to decide on the Constitution of the country. He wants the Constitution to be decided before hand, and he wants the country to have *two* parliamentary bodies, a representative body, like the House of Representatives in the U.S., and another body, like the Senate, that would give the white minority in South Africa a virtual veto power over the Black majority. At the same time, DeKlerk's armed forces are arresting and killing members of the Pan African Congress, a militant Black nationalist group with the slogan: "One settler, one bullet," and other irreconcilable opponents of the racist apartheid regime.

DeKlerk is stalling, trying to gain time, trying to split the Black South African liberation movement, and wear down the most working class and revolutionary wing of the movement.

U.S. and European colonialists are going to be driven out of Africa sooner or later, just as British colonialists were driven out of the U.S. The colonialists have absolutely nothing to offer the people of Africa. No amount of fire power is enough to maintain power indefinitely against the will of the majority.

The question is, how much is it going to cost the Black people of Africa?

Workers in the U.S., Europe and throughout the world should demand that DeKlerk stop the stalling, resign, disband the racist apartheid forces, and turn over all power to the African National Congress. When it is clear to the Black people of South Africa, that the workers in the U.S. and Europe are with them, it will be much easier for them to take all the steps necessary to crush the resistance of racist apartheid in South Africa and bring together a sovereign Constituent Assembly that will decide their future. ■

The new workers parties

The following has been translated from *La Cuarta Internacional*, No. 175, January 1993.

Through a series of circumstances of the class struggle, the attention of all partisans of a socialist revolution falls more and more on the question of the parties called "workers parties," "revolutionary" workers parties, "independent" parties, etc. The names and the forms of these parties or projects for a party — most of the time they do not go beyond projects — vary according to the countries and the ideas of those who start them; but the political phenomenon is defined in this way: a party supported by the working masses that is separate at a given moment from capitalist political parties, and more — this is essential — is independent of the apparatus of the Socialist International (an apparatus implicated completely in the interests and governments of imperialist capital) and also of the Stalinist bureaucracy in bankruptcy. That's why they do not call themselves "socialist" or "communist" but, for example, of the workers.

And yet they will have another characteristic: it will be a question of a party of unity, not that it will lay the foundation, in itself, with a finished program of objectives, but in the cooperation of different ideological and political currents, different factions and sections of the working class.

Such a party, and the model of an untold number of projects, was, for a long time, the *Workers Party of Brazil*. For a large part of the eighties it succeeded in grouping together the majority of Brazilian workers. Intending to arrive at a similar place is the movement of *Labor Party Advocates*, or the much more embryonic *Workers Party of Russia*.

Even in France, a tendency of Trotskyism, headed by Pierre Lambert, has almost let go of its Trotskyist party in order to create, with its cadre, a "Workers Party" inspired by such examples.

And, to see the question in its most general way, one needs to consider also that, in other countries, where the class struggle intensifies sharply, parties and movements of different origin, form and name appear that, at least for a certain period of time, happen to respond with certain characteristics: militant organizations of the working masses, more or less united or open,

more or less independent, not only of the capitalist parties but also of the social democratic and Stalinist apparatuses.

Workers party and Marxism

The appearance of these new parties is not accidental, nor is the proliferation of attempts and similar projects. Both things prove that they are responding to circumstances of the present stage of the class struggle. That is why they more and more attract the attention of revolutionary Marxists, the Trotskyists. Many experiences and discussions will be needed to resolve satisfactorily the question. For example, this is why we, the Trotskyists, define and apply a political approach that depends on each case.

We Marxists identify the construction of the party of revolutionary socialism with the political organization of the workers themselves into a class party. We are convinced, with Marx, that "the emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves." Other conceptions of the party to us seem only petty bourgeois deviations of socialism.

And, nevertheless, we are Marxists also because the historical experience of the workers' struggle helped us in making much more precise why there ought to be this party of workers in its more fundamental aspects. It must be well endowed with the most advanced and proven revolutionary theory of its epoch, with the most scientific theory of socialism which human thought has produced. Its program should not be sketched from dreams or sentiments, however noble these might be, but based on the objective tendencies of historical progress of contemporary society. It ought to educate numerous cadre so that they place the power in the hands of the workers; it ought to have a united leadership very devoted to the working class, and capable of elevating this oppressed class to the height of its revolutionary historical task, which consists in shaking up the foundations of the society, until the liberation of the worker from his/her dependency on capital.

Even with all these characteristics, the triumph of a workers party will require a big and difficult struggle; but, without such characteristics, the biggest party of the workers will result in playing into the powerful and expert hands of the capitalist

exploiters, that have been leading society for centuries. Any working class fighter is able to speak for hours or days on how the capitalists destroy, disorient, win over, corrupt or seduce an ill-prepared workers movement.

In an article of this size, these characteristics necessary for a party remain in four or five attractive and ambitious phrases. What is important is that they have been taken up in detail by different generations of revolutionaries and based on their incontestable experiences, from which these methods, the documents, the orientations, etc., exist to construct a party. And, therefore, in spite of the difficulties and persecutions, and many times with the support only of the most advanced workers, there are, all over the world, tens of thousands of Trotskyists dedicated to apply all their knowledge to the workers' movement of their countries and the rest of the world.

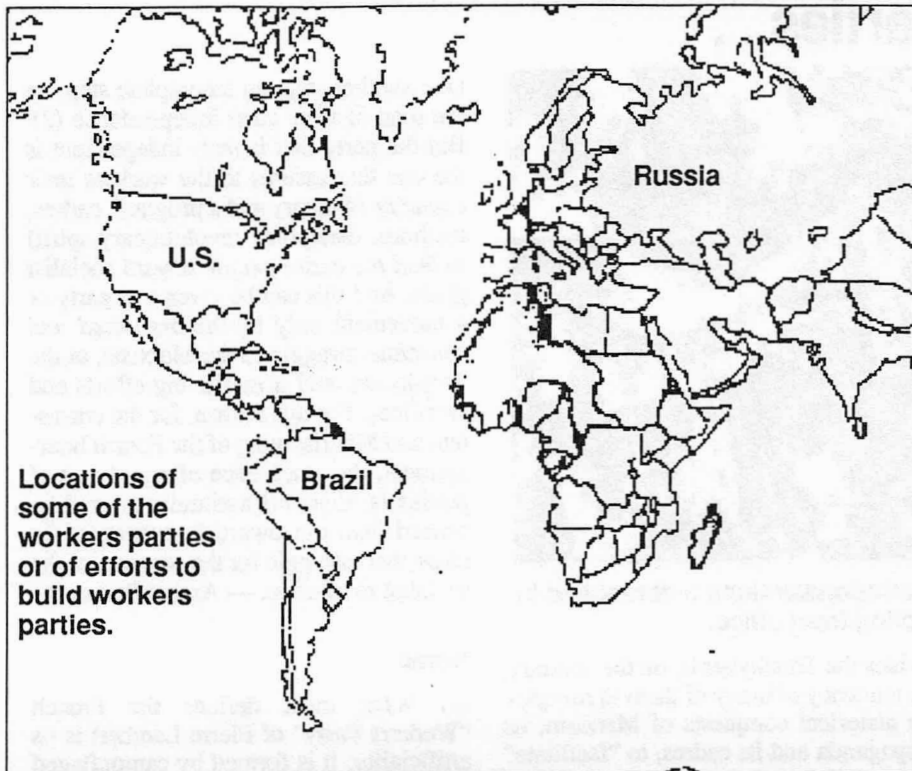
Groups and parties

What is occurring is that the present revolutionary Marxist parties are not able to go beyond being revolutionary propaganda groups. They strive to win advanced workers to their ideas, to educate them in their ranks and thus to get the means for more profound work among the working people. But still they are not true workers parties. They are not parties by the adherence of workers; nor by the breadth of their experiences with the masses, nor by the social fringe where they recruit and select their cadres.

It is logical, it is the logical beginning of all political movement of the masses; the ideological conquest of the most advanced representatives of a social class, in this case, the working class.

But if the Trotskyist groups are not of themselves *workers parties*, still less are the big parties — including those called "socialist" or "communist" — for the majority of countries. These are totally in the hands of a petty bourgeois layer, composed of intellectuals, bureaucrats and the labor aristocracy, that sees its interest in relative harmony with capitalist society and through this betrays, each day and each hour, the working and popular majority.

Precisely because authentic Marxism remains only with groups of self-denying propagandists, while the working class



masses go influenced or "led" by their most upwardly oriented elements, least prepared, least faithful to them, the Transitional Program of the Trotskyist Fourth International defines the situation of the workers movement as a *crisis of proletarian leadership*.

Phenomena like the cynical social-imperialism of the "socialist" parties, like the massive desertion of the Stalinist "communists" and the "repentant" conversion to capitalism of the Kremlin bureaucracy, are implied in this crisis of leadership of the working class; they are not its cause, but its recent manifestations.

Different cases

So the phenomenon of the "workers" parties has its roots in that crisis of proletarian leadership. They are due to very important circumstances.

There are countries (some imperialist, like the U.S., others dependent like Brazil) where the working class has been "organized" or dragged down for many years by capitalist parties. Where the most influential elements of the working class have been constantly assimilated, adapted to the leading national class, "bourgeoisified."

But in these countries the crisis of the imperialist order hinders what the situation prolongs itself with: many former partisans or servants of the bourgeoisie

(unionists, democrats) confront the large financial groups, their colonialist policy, the totalitarian tendencies of imperialist democracy; from the ranks of the working class people arises parallel to these tendencies a tide of democratic aspirations that shakes the cliques, the circles and the apparatuses of political life; and, above all, the workers are forced to formulate their demands and fight for them with less "consideration" for the established capitalist order.

Such tendencies cause the conditions for "workers parties" more democratic than socialist, in countries where before no proletarian parties had taken root. The labor aristocracy until now so satisfied, or the nationalists of an oppressed people, or radical democrats, are taking *steps* to distance themselves from imperialist capital and end up declaring themselves disposed to march against the power together with the most exploited sectors of the working class, even with the most conscious, even with the revolutionaries. At least for a time. During a stretch of the road this alliance is possible and is the objective reason why the Workers Party of Brazil grows and grows or why attempts arise like LPA in the U.S.

It can be said that in these countries the cause of a bigger Workers Party is historic: the workers movement has not covered the same road that, in Europe, ended in a extreme political differentia-

tion of the society and of the working class itself, into parties inside capitalist democracy. Historical reasons have stopped this road.

But in other countries there are *political* causes that favor from another side this type of democratic party of the workers.

It is a question of countries where the class struggle causes a large renovation or political change. In the USSR and in Eastern Europe the "workers" party of the bureaucracy was in fact the only one and it monopolized the power. There was a bureaucratized party, hierarchical to the maximum, oriented to the promotion of the leading privileged caste and the police vigilance over the people. In place of "organizing" the workers to take power, they *atomized* them confronting the power of the bureaucracy.

The desire for a free debate among proletarians in breaking with the caste of privileged functionaries, for workers democracy and class solidarity supplies a base in Russia and in other republics of Eastern Europe and the former USSR for such democratic parties of the workers rising up or trying to rise up.

And it is doubtful that Marxists would be able to progress in these countries without participating in one way or another (the proper way can only be found by the Marxists of that country) in such attempts at regrouping the forces of a class party.

If these projects appear it is because the political crisis has appeared *before* the Trotskyists have gained authority among the advanced workers and even before they have formed at least a significant number of cadre to organize the workers in struggle. To participate in parties that are not Trotskyist, or cooperate very closely with them, and realize, therefore, a part of the road toward the party of the socialist revolution in alliance with tendencies that are insecure or petty bourgeois, but rooted in the working class, is very *obligatory* for the revolutionary minority as is its activity of clearly independent Marxist propaganda. In fact, the tasks are complementary.

It is much more difficult when these "parties of workers" arise in countries where years of democratic activity of the working class have given certain weight to all the programs and all the tendencies of the workers movement, a certain organized political expression to all the sectors of the working people. Here the workers choose programs, put them to the test, and unify

The new workers parties . . .



The Workers Party of Brazil joins demonstrations/actions that resulted in the removal of the Brazilian president, Collor, from office.

their ranks in political alliances or unions. These countries are the majority in western Europe. The conditions are coming together in order that the Trotskyists, in the crisis that is advancing, can struggle openly to regroup workers under the banner of the socialist revolution. But it is not excluded in these countries an episode of a party of alliance between working class sections, a short-term compromise between the most consistent Marxists and other less firm tendencies of working people for a common political organization.

If revolutionaries are attentive to all possibilities of cooperation with the best fighters of the people, they will know the conditions in which a party of alliance will be possible and will result in a fruitful episode; equally, they will know to unmask compromises without principles, artificial attempts, sleight-of-hand, etc. (1)

Opportunism

Precisely the biggest problem for the partisans of the Fourth International, for the Trotskyists, does not consist in the incomprehension of the necessity to *intervene* in new parties of this type. Only some sectarian groups of little significance reject the possibility in all cases. The parties or movements of the workers that *really* play an active role — even if it might be for a period — in the independence of the workers against capital, like the PT and even the LPA movement, quickly can count on the unanimous support of the Trotskyists.

On the other hand, what holds back and

divides the Trotskyists is, on the contrary, the tendency of many of them to *sacrifice* the historical conquests of Marxism, its propaganda and its cadres, to “facilitate” the road of these democratic parties. What separates easily the petty bourgeois elements from the Marxist elements, including among the Trotskyists, is that they try first to create “united” parties artificially, less working class than the least working class of the Trotskyist propaganda groups; they denigrate the program and exalt skepticism; they call revolutionary objectives utopian; they declare reconciliation between revolutionary Marxism and reformism, they hide from the workers the ties that unite the reformist labor aristocracy with finance capital and the state; they are silent about the bourgeoisification of a part of the workers’ movement, etc.

What is key is that they do not see these parties as an episodic alliance that the circumstances of one country or one political moment make *possible* and positive between backward or bourgeoisified factions of the working class with the Marxist vanguard, in order to *better separate* the large masses of workers from the capitalist parties or too much dependence on capitalism. No. They see them as “a superior formation” to a Marxist party, in reality, tossing by the wayside the legacy of difficult struggle and of very serious studies of revolutionaries of the working class.

The opportunists forget that these “independent” parties only are independent in a relative way, that is to say, because they help a greater number of the masses to

take another step, an incomplete step, on the road of their class independence (2). But the party that is *truly* independent is the one that assures to the workers their *capacity* (a theory and a program, cadres, methods, discipline, revolutionary spirit) to lead the entire people toward socialist goals. And this can be given to a party or a movement only by the *organized and conscious* struggle of the Marxists, of the Trotskyists, and it merits big efforts and sacrifices. For this reason, for the consistent and Marxist wing of the Fourth International, the emergence of new types of parties, is, *above all*, a stimulus to amplify, toward them and toward the entirety of the class, their struggle for the program of the socialist revolution. — Anibal Ramos ■

Notes:

(1) What most defines the French “Workers Party” of Pierre Lambert is its artificiality: it is formed by camouflaged Trotskyists, it is open to opportunists and to the most isolated figures, on the other hand, it is closed to the most consistent revolutionaries.

(2) Nothing is worse than to consider that the new “independent” parties are so in a strict way, that is, that they are truly independent. They are alliances between forces that are very working class and elements of the workers’ movement that are quite tied to capitalist society. The Workers Party of Brazil does not have socialist leaders, but democrats of bourgeois or Christian “socialism.” Their ties with the bourgeois state are closer and closer. On the international terrain — within the so-called forum of Sao Paulo — it is very much united with the Castroist bureaucracy, as a result of which, in the recent meeting in Managua, it seems it refused to condemn the electoral fraud in Mexico, and the coup and crimes of Fujimori in Peru. As for Labor Party Advocates in the United States, it is initiated by union leaders that maintain ties with the imperialist politicians of the Democratic Party, and that represent more the social imperialist labor aristocracy than the oppressed working people. The Workers Party of Russia has, among its initiators, former Stalinist bureaucrats, and depends much on the old apparatus of the unions that has scarcely been cleansed. Reality gives the lie to the illusions with which opportunism tries to embellish these parties. ■

Socialism, communism and the old USSR ...

Conditions have gotten so bad in the United States, that young people and working people are once again listening to what socialists and communists have to say.

The number obviously is not as high as it was in the 1930s and early 40s, or the 60s and early 70s. But it's not as low as it was in the days of the worst reaction either, in the 50s and the 80s. More, given the working class and popular struggles developing throughout the world — the popular uprising in Los Angeles, the mass strikes and the workers party in Brazil, the struggle in South Africa, Iraq's defiance of U.S. imperialism, the Palestinian intifada, Bosnia's struggle for self-determination against the privileged Serbian and Russian bureaucracies, the struggles of many other oppressed peoples and nationalities of the old USSR for self-determination against the privileged Russian bureaucracy, the struggle of the Russian workers themselves against this privileged bureaucracy — there is every reason to believe that this number is going to increase, not decrease.

Of course there are young people and workers who like the idea of a socialist or communist society, a classless, non-hierarchical society, in which everyone collectively owns the land, the tools, the necessities of life, and works together to produce what people need, in which everyone has what he or she needs, and plenty of free time and opportunity to do whatever he or she wants to do with his/her life. As Marx said: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

When people first hear about socialism or communism, they often think that it is utopian, that it will never happen, never last, never "work." Most people have not had the opportunity to really study the society that we live in today. They haven't had the opportunity to see that the class society that we live in today is actually laying the basis for socialism and communism. Capitalist class society, by giving rise to the working class, a class selected and trained to work together, collectively, to produce, and by creating giant enterprises that organize the production and distribution of goods on an international scale, is laying the foundations of socialism and communism; it's giving rise to socialism and communism.

In other words, a certain amount of socialism and communism are already here. They are already in the process of developing. Those of us who consider ourselves socialists and communists today, and who work together to promote

"We have reached the point in the struggle for socialism and communism in Russia and the old USSR, where the state has got to begin to whither away, as Lenin described and called for in his famous book, 'The State and Revolution.'"

socialism and communism, are simply the conscious expression of an unconscious process that is already taking place.

What about Russia and the old USSR? Aren't they proof that socialism and communism won't work?

The Russian land and the lands that made up the USSR is the place where the struggle for socialism and communism, in a certain sense, has gone the farthest.

The Russian workers and peasants, and workers and peasants of other nationalities, rose up; they overthrew the landed aristocracy and the capitalist class; they took all the power into their own hands; they took the land, and all the man-made things necessary for the production and distribution of goods into their own hands, and began to try to build a socialist society.

Unfortunately, workers in Europe and the U.S. did not succeed in spreading the revolution. The revolution was isolated. The country was very poor, the people had little experience with democracy, a privileged bureaucracy arose and imbedded itself in the workers' state.

We have reached the point in the struggle for socialism and communism in Russia and the old USSR, where the state, as an organism separate and apart from the people, over and above the people, has got to begin to whither away, as Lenin described and called for in his famous book, "The State and Revolution."

The workers state has to be made up of the workers and oppressed population in arms. Workers' representatives have to be paid what the average worker is paid and live like the average worker lives. They have to be immediately recallable. There is no more room for a privileged elite that consumes the lion's share of the social product, dictates to and oppresses others, and is self-perpetuating.

Getting rid of the privileged bureaucracy, cleansing the workers state of the privileged bureaucracy, so that it is indeed made up of the workers and oppressed in arms, so that it ceases to be a state as we have known it, and so it can begin to whither away, requires a new revolution. And it requires a new party, based on the most advanced revolutionary, working class theory and practice, just as the first revolution in Russia required a party based on the most advanced revolutionary theory and practice of its day.

This is what the majority of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution founded by Leon Trotsky and his comrades, is fighting for. The Fourth International is open to all revolutionary workers, socialists and communists who are prepared to accept and fight for its program. It's not just open to those who consider themselves Trotskyists.

We think that the struggle for a new workers political revolution in Russia and the oppressed republics, and for a party to lead this struggle, is very important for the struggle for socialism and communism in the United States.

Without this struggle, socialists and communists can easily be confused with *Stalinists* who have done their best to discredit socialism and communism by lying to the people about Russia and the old USSR and by presenting socialism and communism as new forms of oppression and privilege.

Without this struggle, it is impossible to differentiate sincere socialists and communists from careerists who simply want to use the socialist and communist movement to create a place for themselves within capitalist society.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of confusion about these questions today, among young

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Ford Myth and Old Left

It is a bench mark of Labor Studies that the United States has one of the bloodiest histories of Capital-Labor relations in the modern world. Such a history, though often distorted, forgotten and obscured continues to weigh upon our nebulous American identities in the present.

Robert Cruden's "The End of the Ford Myth" is a noteworthy expression of the acrimonious and conciliatory aspects that characterized radicalism in Labor-Capital disputes and conflicts after world war 1. Written in 1932, three years into the depression and a year before the ominous Bank Holiday of 1933, this thirteen-page pamphlet is a fairly engaging account of the circumstances that lead up to the Ford Hunger March in Detroit on March 7, 1932. In this brief review I would like to show how Cruden's narrative not only describes events, but aims to confront Fordism as an ideology of high wages, good work conditions and humanitarianism. Cruden's rhetorical confrontation with Fordism takes the form of a charged expose of the suffering and violence that preceded the tragedy of the protest march. Similar to Upton Sinclair, Cruden's muckraking was calculated to encourage and provoke moral outrage, solidarity, and insurrection among various engaged audiences. These audiences were comprised of sympathetic Ford workers, confused non-Ford workers, and other fair and conscientious audiences that, Cruden assumed, make up the world.

In his rhetoric, the "Ford Myth" is a trope for Fordism. It is employed to contravene the latter's high wages, good work conditions, and humanitarianism with charges of wage cuts, speed ups, and social repression. Cruden believes that Fordism is a product of the company's publicity department and a supportive press. Both of which have succeeded in making it as compelling as common sense. Drawing on his experience and the testimony of workers, Cruden's strategy is to reveal the discrepancies of Fordism as practiced and to endorse an organized response from workers to it.

Ford's high wages were legendary for their time bringing the unemployed from all parts of the country. However, like any

legend it is important to account for its status as such in the circumstances of its historical development. Ford's reputation for high wages was promulgated, among several considerations, to address the problem of labor shortages and to socialize workers to the conditions of production during a period of expansion and regulation brought on by world war and economic depression. Cruden suggests that wages were seen as a means to security and comfort by workers, but also understood as a management tool by the bosses. The security and comfort afforded workers, he argues, was always subject to such managerial practices as: the layoff and rehire of workers at lower wages, wage increases alongside decreases in work hours, contracting low wage labor, and the transfer of workers to different departments at lower wages.

Touting its good work conditions, the Ford company hoped to appeal to workers who had become sensitive to the dangers in their work environments. Yet, for the sake of higher production yields and efficient costs, safe work conditions were sacrificed constantly due to speed ups and poor machinery. With the introduction of the conveyor system in the factory, many workers were laid off and those remaining had to maintain a rate of production at, and often times, above that under which a full work crew would perform. The practice of speed up had become a common feature of the factory and with it, numerous harmful accidents and fatalities.

The humanitarianism of the Ford company represented an effort to convey to workers and the general public their willingness to help the less fortunate and disadvantaged. Their trade school for delinquent boys, benevolence toward black workers, and efforts to support the destitute in Inkster, represented to many a basic commitment to social responsibility. In spite of its many concrete acts of service for the poor, Cruden maintains that the Ford company brazenly exploits workers and ruthlessly represses criticism and protest. The repression would often issue from the partnership that existed between the Ford company, the administration of Mayor Frank Murphy and the

heads of organized crime. As Cruden illustrates, this partnership gave the Ford company access to an in-factory policing force of "thugs and pugs" as well as the cooperation of local and state police agencies.

As social conditions worsened in the Detroit of the 1930s, criticism and protests from poor and unemployed workers intensified inside and outside of the factory. A protest march against evaporating relief was launched, and in a confrontation with police outside of the factory, four workers were killed. In the aftermath of the tragedy, Cruden believes that changes are on the horizon for workers in Detroit. He speculates that worker solidarity, the equivocal role of Mayor Murphy and the example of the October Revolution in Russia will empower Ford workers and the working class to live beyond the Ford Myth.

In many respects Robert Cruden's pamphlet expresses the tenets of American Old Left Radicalism: its critique of economic exploitation, its appeal to conventional morality and its endorsement of revolution chastened to reform.

The critique of exploitation rested on Marx's explanation of capitalist society as a web of social relations constituted by the class of workers who are subjugated by a system of commodity-production, wealth distribution and property ownership authored by the class of owners. The Old Left, which I would classify as socialist and communist orthodoxies that span the late 19th century to the outbreak of Fascism and world war 2, responded to economic exploitation in ways that range from parliamentary efforts in the arena of bourgeois politics to trade unionist struggles inside the factory. However, they often failed to give appropriate weight to the fact that the formation of the U.S. working class has occurred in one of the most ethnically diverse societies in the modern world. This failure often lead the Old Left to see exploitation as a condition suffered in equal measure by all workers rather than consider how it impacts workers differentially along race, ethnic

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and gender lines as well as within race, ethnic and gender groupings.

The appeal to conventional morality flowed from a humanist commitment to liberal society as the appropriate model for community and society; locally and globally. This humanism has its origin in the legitimizing claims of the emergent bourgeoisies of the 18th and 19th centuries. Secular conceptions of rationality laid the basis for new moral standards that would justify the bourgeoisie's new activities of scientific self-mastery, aesthetic self-perfection and ethical self-interest. The Old Left shares this humanist commitment in the sense that it believes capitalist society is more progressive than Feudal society. Yet this commitment often belies the mission of the working class to liberate itself from bourgeois social rule and articulate new human values. Is the Old Left's commitment to Liberal humanism credible today?

And lastly the endorsement of revolution chastened to reform is guided by the political expectation that if capitalist society is no longer capable of reforms that reflect the needs and aspirations of the working class then a workers state should be established through the seizure of the means of production and by using the state to subdue the bourgeoisie. The Old Left understood revolution in these terms and it often believed that the demand for reforms inevitably lead workers along the road to socialism, under the condition that the capitalist regime was unable to reform itself. However reforms often became a priority that make it an end in itself. Moreover the character of political and economic reforms under u.s. capitalism today is that of a zero-sum game that serves not to win direct concessions from the ruling class but to play workers against each other in the pursuit of their common interests here and abroad. Reform-oriented strategies and activities should be guided, not by the success of short-term gains on bourgeois terms, but by the imperative of revolutionary worker self-organization as the social base of an emergent workers state.

In sum, Cruden and his peers have left us social perspectives of their times that broaden our understanding of the past and stimulate renewed commitment to workers self-organization and community in the struggle for Socialism. — Lincoln Hayes ■

Trotskyists in the class struggle

The Socialist Workers Party is building support for the miners' strike and continuing to run working class and socialist candidates for public offices. However, it is not supporting larger movements that represent steps toward political independence — like the demonstrations against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the Detroit area, the popular opposition to Proposal A, and Labor Party Advocates.

The *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, the publication around which the largest number of militants who call themselves Trotskyists in the U.S. are now gathered, recently published a number of articles on the *Labor Notes* conference in Detroit. *Labor Notes* is a publication initiated by militants who claim to be socialists. However, *Labor Notes* basically promotes the reform of the trade unions and never talks about socialism. The authors of the articles that appear in the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* praise *Labor Notes* and the *Labor Notes* conference to the skies. And there is no question that revolutionaries should support *Labor Notes* and its conferences against the most right-wing pro-Democratic Party forces within the unions. However, it is also necessary to say that *Labor Notes* does not allow revolutionaries to set up tables and freely distribute literature in favor of socialism and communism at these conferences. Revolutionaries have been excluded from these conferences for allegedly attempting to do so. This is a policy and a tradition that is both foreign to and hostile to the Fourth International. While revolutionaries are sometimes forced to accept terms and conditions that are less than correct — for example, in order to work within the unions — we don't endorse them, cover for them, or embellish them.

Socialist Action recently held an educational conference in San Francisco with presentations and discussion on "Russia Today: Capitalist Restoration or Socialist Revolution," "Black Nationalism and Socialism: From the United States to South Africa," "The International Fight for Women's Equality and Socialism," and a number of other questions. It also adopted a short statement on "who we are," which says:

"Socialist Action stands for workers democracy and socialism, for human needs not profits — for the full liberation of the workers and oppressed peoples everywhere. We are a multiracial political party of workers, students, youth, feminists, and human rights activists committed to the interests of the working class.

— We work for women's equality and the unconditional right to safe, legal, accessible abortion, for a strategy of mass action — massive marches and street demonstrations. We are champions of abortion clinic defense.

— We fight for jobs for all! 30 hours work for 40 hours pay. We advocate a labor party based on the unions.

— We fight racism and support Black liberation and self-determination from Los Angeles to South Africa.

— We oppose the Democrats and Republicans, all capitalist governments, and their political representatives everywhere in the world.

— We have always been uncompromising opponents

of Stalinist and neo-Stalinist regimes from the ex-Soviet Union to China. We fight for a socialist world — democratically controlled by workers through their own institutions."

Spark will hold its annual Summer Festival on August 15 in Detroit.

Truth sold 13 copies of the May issue at factories and schools in the Detroit area. We also distributed several hundred copies of a leaflet against Proposal A, and we are helping to collect signatures to put the SWP candidates on the ballot in the Detroit elections. This issue of *Truth* is a combined June and July issue. The next issue of *Truth* will appear in August. ■

... and the old USSR ...

(Continued from page 11)

people, workers, and in the Fourth International itself.

Some say that Russia has been capitalist for a long time. Others say that it became capitalist, or is about to become capitalist, because Yeltsin's faction, and the so-called hardliners' faction of the old ruling "Communist" party, want it to become capitalist, and that the workers are going to support them, or, at least, not fight them. Still others continue to support the privileged bureaucracy against the people, or take a neutral position. Others say little or nothing is happening, and that there is little or nothing that revolutionaries can do.

The only way to resolve this problem is to continue to read, study, discuss, debate. Fight to learn the truth and spread the Truth.

The Trotskyists should be in the front ranks of this struggle. All the different Trotskyist tendencies capable of fighting for the Fourth International's program of socialist revolution in the capitalist countries and political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states, should join forces and provide a clear alternative to imperialism and Stalinism. — M. Guttschall ■

Truth is published by the Trotskyist Committee of Detroit. The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit is named after Leon Trotsky, a leader of the first successful workers socialist revolution and a founder of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution. The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit is associated with one of the international tendencies of the Fourth International, the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. Editor: M. Guttschall

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The rich are a dying class, the workers are the future!

In discussions with a worker over the article on a classless communist society in the last issue of *Truth*, one worker said, "it seems like the rich are getting richer, stronger, not dying at all."

Yes and no.

Yes, the rich are getting richer, compared to the workers. More of the total wealth of the present society is going to the top few.

They are not richer than they were in the 1920s. They are not stronger. That is why they are destroying the U.S. economic machine, instead of taking it forward.

Between the 1890s and the 1920s, the rich people in the U.S. made a contribution to the development of wealth. Their wealth was invested in building and expanding production. They built the huge industries of the U.S., the automotive and steel industries, the rubber and electrical industries, the great shipyards, and so on. And, on the basis of this expansion, there was a rise in culture, jazz was born, American novels/poetry reached new heights, the great American cities of Chicago, New York, Detroit, San Francisco, Philadelphia were built.

They are not richer than they were in the 1920s. They are poorer. Much of their wealth is in loans to countries that will never be able to pay them back or from the government. The rich control the government and make sure that it gives our tax money to the rich in every possible way, from interest payments on the debt, to lucrative contracts, to outright gifts.

They are destroying the U.S. economic machine. They have burdened the future with a huge national debt. They are shutting down factories, while we need the things that could be built. They are laying people off when people need jobs. They are refusing to fix everything from broken tools to broken bridges and factories.

They appear strong compared to the workers and poor. But this is only an illusory snapshot of the moment, not a motion picture of the change that has taken place and is taking place.

The U.S. rich are dying in a way similar to which the Southern slave-holding class died and disappeared about 130 years ago.

Just before the slave-holders disappeared, they appeared to be very powerful. Their influence in Congress grew. They developed more and more control over the government until they had it made law that slavery could be expanded to every state in the country! They got their man

electd president in 1856. They controlled many state legislatures, even where there were only a few slaves. They appeared so powerful to themselves that they tried to set up their own separate nation.

The slave-holding class was a small group of white slave-owners that were parasites on the slave economy. They played no useful role in production, but simply took the money made from the slaves' labor for their own personal use. They destroyed the ability of all of the eastern states to produce anything. At the time of the civil war, Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, had become slave exporting states to the states to the west of them, Arkansas, Texas. The slave-holders had to constantly expand slavery because the system itself destroyed the land.

The slave-holding class was defeated in a powerful struggle by African-Americans and others opposed to slavery (the abolitionists). But the African-Americans and abolitionists won because it was time for slavery to end.

The development of wage labor and industry in the North, and the rest of the industrial world, signaled the end of slavery. Wage labor was a better way for society to meet its needs. It was more efficient, it made more goods more cheaply for more people, and, it was based on more freedom for all the people in it.

The abolitionists were strong in the Northeast and the Midwest states. It was in the Midwest that a new political party was formed in the late 1850s to fight the slave-holding class. It was the Republican Party.

And, what was happening in the U.S. at that time was not unique. All around the world, wage labor was developing and forcing the end to slavery. Slavery was banned in British colonies. The serfs in Russia were freed in 1861.

A great civil war was fought over slavery. Not because the majority of whites cared about the slaves (a few did). They fought because the issue was: was the U.S. going to be a society run by slaveholders, a plantation society like many Caribbean islands, or, was it going to be an industrial nation with some freedom?

The complete defeat of the Southern slave-holders and the system of slave labor freed the U.S. to develop as an industrial nation, freed the owners of industry to develop, and freed the working people to develop. The defeat of the slave-holding class was part of a tide of change moving around the world.

Now we are at the same kind of cross roads 130 years later. There is a small group of rich whites (that part has not changed!) who are parasites on the society. Their wealth is made completely from their ownership of things that really don't belong to them, natural wealth, the wealth created by workers, past and present. The factories, banks and so on were made by workers in the past. The present workers create wealth every day.

These rich whites are destroying society. Instead of spreading wealth and the ability to create wealth, as they once did, they simply plunder and pillage. Look what they have done to Detroit!

And now they are doing the same thing to the working class suburbs of Detroit. Next is Mexico. They have nothing to offer today but death and destruction.

And, there is an alternative to this society, just like there was an alternative to the slave society. The alternative is building up right inside the old society, it is a classless, communist society.

The U.S. rich did, in the past, create a powerful economic machine. This powerful economic machine is monopoly capitalism. It is the control of the economy by a few huge banks and a few huge corporations in each area: Ford, GM, Chrysler for cars; five or six steel companies; five or six meat packing companies. And even among these, there is little competition, and lots of cooperation in dividing the markets for selling their goods.

And the U.S. rich did create the U.S. working class, one of the most powerful working classes in the world. The U.S. working class is the group that best fits and is best able to run this huge economic machine. U.S. workers make this machine run every day to produce food for hundreds of millions of people, to produce cars, CDs, computers and get them to where they are supposed to be. The rich do not play a positive role in producing or transporting things. Only a negative role. Only the role of taking the wealth out of the system for their own personal use.

To take this wealth out of the hands of the rich is the first step toward creating a classless, communist society. It is the first step towards a society where there are no rich, no poor, where there is no racism, no sexism. Where there is no government but the free cooperation of all producers. Where the only rule is: from each according to their ability, to each according to their need. — J. Marlowe ■