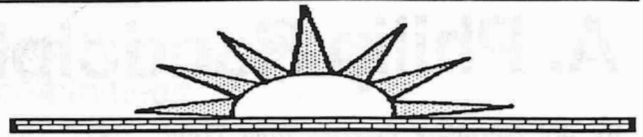


NEW LIFE



A SOCIALIST TENDENCY IN THE LABOR PARTY MOVEMENT IN DETROIT

NO. 12 • FEBRUARY 18, 1995 • 15¢ • BOX 441283, DETROIT, MI 48244-1283 • PHONE/FAX: 313-584-6556

Support Detroit workers!

- **Marathon strikers**
- **Locked-out National Metal workers**
- **Thorn Apple Valley workers**
- **Union organizing drives at RDL and Mexican Industries**

Over 200 workers at Marathon Oil on Fort and Schaefer have been on strike for 3 months. They are members of Teamsters Local 283. They are on strike because of unsafe working conditions, excessive overtime and union-busting demands. They need your support.

Don't buy gas at Marathon, Gastown, Speedway, Starvin Marvin and Bonded. Join the picket line at Fort and Schaefer. Come to the spaghetti dinner for them sponsored at UAW Local 600. Call 842-5350 for the date and time.

Workers at National Metal on Mack Avenue have been locked out for 4 years! These workers refused to accept a union-busting contract. They have won their case three times before the National Labor Relations Board! To force the courts to act, they need your support. You can send a letter of protest to National Metal, 6440 Mack, Detroit 48207. They are organizing an informational picket at National Metal in early April.

Production workers at Thorn Apple Valley Packing Plant have a new contract coming up and they want more money, better benefits and working conditions.

Workers at RDL on the southwest side and Mexican Industries are fighting to get a union at their workplaces.

All unions in Detroit need to act and work together. Solidarity dinners and messages are good, but they are not enough. The unions of Detroit need more unity and solidarity:

Union workers need to stop handling products made by union-busting companies like Marathon and National Metal that supply Ford, General Motors and Chrysler;

Striking workers need the full and complete support of all unions — no trucks, no trains, get through; no products get unloaded or moved;

The unions need to support the labor party movement and join Labor Party Advocates.
New Life ■

A. Philip Randolph, Black socialist

We are reprinting excerpts from *Truth*, November, 1989, about one of the most famous Black socialists, A. Philip Randolph.

As a young man, Randolph fought for socialism in the labor movement. As readers will see, he argues for Black people to support the socialist revolution that started in Russia, and for Black working people to support working class candidates against the candidates of the Democratic and Republican Parties. — F.R. ■

Asa Philip Randolph was born in Florida, near Jacksonville, on April 15, 1889. At 22, Randolph went to New York City and began taking courses at City College. It was here that he learned about Marxism. He wrote that the discovery was "so exciting" that he "began to read Marx as children read Alice in Wonderland." It was, "like finally running into an idea which gives you your outlook on life."

He soon became a member of the Socialist Party and along with other Black Socialists spoke out regularly in defense of socialism and trade unionism in Harlem, the Black neighborhood of New York City.

Randolph launched *The Messenger* in 1917.

The Messenger 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, statesman-like 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 support the Hillquit campaign.

The Republicans, for the first time, actually ran a Black candidate for Representative to the New York State house 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

Martin Luther King, Jr. on economics and unions

In his last year, Martin Luther King, Jr. shifted his focus toward the economic basis of racial inequality in America. The day he was killed he marched with striking sanitation workers. He and large numbers of activists were preparing a series of marches and demonstrations aimed at protesting against some aspects of the class system oppressing Black people. He noted that these changes would also improve the lives of white working class and poor people, and that an alliance among Black and white working class and poor people would have the power necessary to force real change in America. The following quotations are from his last book, Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?, 1968. — K.M. ■

"Depressed living standards for Negroes are not simply the consequence of neglect. They are a structural part of the economic system in the United States. Certain industries and enterprises are based upon a supply of low-paid, underskilled and immobile nonwhite labor."

"From issues of personal dignity [Negroes] are now advancing to programs that impinge upon the basic system of social and economic control. . . . In the pursuit of these goals, the white poor become involved, and the potentiality emerges for a powerful new alliance."

"For the evils of racism, poverty and militarism to die, a new set of values must be born. Our economy must become more person-centered than property- and profit-

centered. And it is pretty well ascertainable 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 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 position good — Socialism." ■

centered. Our government must depend more on its moral power than on its military power."

"Within the ranks of organized labor there are nearly two million Negroes. Not only are they found in large numbers as workers, but they are concentrated in key industries . . . which are the backbone of the nation's economic life. . . . This potential strength is magnified further by the fact of their unity with millions of white workers in these occupations. As co-workers there is a basic community of interest that transcends many of the ugly divisive elements of traditional prejudice."

"The coalition of an energized section of labor, Negroes, unemployed and welfare recipients may be the source of power that reshapes economic relationships and ushers in a breakthrough to a new level of social reform. The total elimination of poverty is now a practical possibility, the reality of equality in race relations and other profound structural changes in society may well be here."

"To play our role fully as Negroes, we must have to strive for enhanced representation and influence in the labor movement. Our young people . . . could do worse than emulate A. Philip Randolph, who rose to the executive council of the AFL-CIO, and became a symbol of the courage, compassion and integrity of an enlightened labor leader." ■



Socialism and the Labor Party

Socialists need to join the labor party movement and help build the labor party. Why?

First, the labor party changes the terms of the struggle for socialism.

In the past, the struggle for socialism has been limited to discussion of ideas among small groups of dedicated militants and some support from workers who buy socialist newspapers. This struggle has sustained us through this difficult period and it has been very important.

But now there is a chance for socialism and all it means to become a part of the living struggle of millions of workers.

The labor party contributes to sharpening the class struggle, to blowing away the fog of confusion that political domination by the rich brings.

As the class struggle intensifies, the socialists show in the struggles that develop — and socialists active in the movement have already begun to do this — that the problems of the movements do not stem from the weakness of the working class, but from an incorrect program, the absence of a socialist program. The socialists will be able to show that the workers will not end their oppression and exploitation until they remove the rich from power, take ownership of all the means of production, and run society for the good of all.

Second, the labor party is a party where socialists can be themselves, can find strength and support among the workers, can shake off the dusty old methods and habits of the past period and find renewal with the most progressive workers. Socialists need an atmosphere which nurtures socialism and Marxism.

Labor Party Advocates named its fund drive after the most famous American socialist, Eugene Debs. The literature speaks favorably of the role of communists in building the first industrial unions in the U.S.

There are lots of problems with the labor party movement. Workers, as well as socialists, will not make progress without a struggle. But the conditions of struggle are much better than they were before.

To fight for socialism outside of the labor party movement only is to condemn oneself to irrelevance and to hurt the cause of socialism. All socialists should join the labor party movement and develop the fight for socialism. — F.R. ■

Labor Party Advocates Meeting in Detroit starts recruitment committees

The Detroit Chapter of Labor Party Advocates held a meeting on February 11 to discuss the interim executive committee meeting held in St. Louis in January and to talk about upcoming events.

The meeting announced that there will be a founding convention of the Labor Party in 1996.

The major topic of discussion at the meeting was to increase membership in LPA. The idea of recruitment committees was put forward and discussed. The result was setting up several committees such as a Solidarity committee, retirees committee, women's committee and young workers and students committee.

The setting up of these committees is an

Notes



Rutgers University protest

Students at Rutgers University organized actions beginning February 8 demanding the resignation of the school president after he said that African-Americans were genetically inferior. Students said: "Take your bigotry back to the bayou, Fran, we don't need it here." This struggle deserves the support of every working person.

Zapatista rebels

The president of Mexico ordered an attack on the Zapatistas. For many in Mexico, it seemed to come out of nowhere. The government and the Zapatista rebels had been holding talks. Why did the Zedillo

Adolph Reed . . . continued

(Continued from back page)

progressives to face facts. Jackson has no interest in building a movement. His personality-centered politics is the exact opposite of a movement; he wants to be a Great Man, the Maximal Leader who brokers the . . . interests of a constituency that has no capacity for action apart from him. Nor is he really capable of mobilizing black Americans simply by his presence, as he and his publicists claim; he has traded on the

important step forward for LPA. The working class needs its own party, one that represents its broad character. The best way to do this is to have a membership that reflects the diversity of the class as a whole.

If a labor party is to be formed it needs to be based on the unions. But not open only to organized workers. It needs to include all working people.

By setting up these committees LPA will be able to reach working people who might not otherwise be reached.

The labor party needs to represent all working people. The recruitment committees are a positive step toward this goal. Join the labor party movement. — T.A. ■

government do this?

The New York financial community ordered it. In unmistakable language quoted by Alexander Cockburn in his *Detroit Free Press* column, the New York banks want the Zapatistas eliminated. As the struggle of nations oppressed by the U.S. grows, the true nature of the U.S. financial leaders comes out — bloodthirsty, parasitical, truly useless members of society. Stop the attack on the Zapatistas! There should be demonstrations everywhere in their defense.

Ypsilanti principal resigns

Principal William Snyder called a young Chinese-American middle school student a "Chinese coolie" last December. Her classmates and members of the African-American community demanded that the principal resign. They organized demonstrations at school board meetings and spoke out to the media. They forced him to resign February 13. This was a victory for all working people. It shows that if you fight, you can win. ■

white paternalism and gullibility that presume that black people all think with one mind and need to have someone who sort of looks like them tell them what to do. . . ."

"There is no substitute for building a movement from the ground up and concentrating our efforts where we have resources. . . ."

"We need to attack social and economic injustice in all forms if we are to have any chance of success worthy of the name." ■



More African-Americans join the labor party movement

African-Americans are becoming more active in the labor party movement and Labor Party Advocates because more are fighting to improve their lives.

Black people are involved in struggles for higher wages and more jobs; to stop the cut-off of public funds to working and poor people; they are fighting for respect and dignity on the job and in the society.

African-Americans are more and more politically aware. Black voter turnout has increased 20% in 4 years and the Black share of the total vote has doubled. Yet, Black people are getting less and less from the Democratic Party and Republican Party for all their votes.

Black people were major participants in the campaign to recall Governor Engler in Michigan in 1991 and to recall Police Chief Gates in Los Angeles after the beating of Rodney King. Many Black people realize the need for independent political action.

Surveys of African-Americans show that more and more want a new party.

A 1994 survey of African-Americans found that 50% supported the idea of a Black-dominated third party. This is double the amount of support 5 years ago!

"Disenchantment with the Democratic Party is being translated into . . . interest in third party alternatives," said Michael Dawson, University of Chicago political scientist and author of the survey.

Some of the most progressive thinking

New Life is a socialist tendency in the labor party movement. *New Life* is a supporter of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution, founded by Leon Trotsky and his comrades. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *New Life*. These are expressed in editorials. Editorial Board: Tim Allen, Margaret Guttshall, Kim Morgan, Fred Russo.

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African-Americans are supporting the labor party movement. For example, below we reprint excerpts from an article by Adolph Reed, Jr., an African-American professor at Northwestern University and co-chair of the Chicago-based Coalition for New Priorities.

Black workers have a decisive place in the labor party movement. When Black workers fight and win, all working people win.

The labor party movement can strengthen the struggles of all Black people and especially of Black workers. The majority of people in the U.S. are white. The labor party movement represents the people most independent from the rich and the Republicans. As the labor party movement grows among white workers, Black people will have more allies in their struggles. The labor party movement gives new strength to the unity of workers of all ethnic groups.

African-Americans and African-American workers should make the labor party movement their own movement. Join Labor Party Advocates. — Fred Russo ■

We are reprinting excerpts from Adolph Reed Jr.'s article in the February issue of The Progressive. We agree with many of his criticisms of Clinton, but he fails to say the most important thing — Clinton is an pawn of the rich.

We definitely do not agree with him on his call to Paul Wellstone, Ron Dellums and other Democratic Party leaders to make a fight against Clinton in the Democratic Party. We think the Democratic and Republican Parties are controlled by the rich and cannot be reformed. We think that the workers need to build a labor party based on the unions that does not support either of the two parties or their candidates.

We do think that his support for LPA and his criticism of the Jackson campaigns are correct.

We think that there needs to be an independent labor candidate for president, and we think that the labor party could make a struggle for such a candidate by running its own candidate.

We think that there will be more debate and discussion among African-Americans and in the labor party movement about what to do in 1996. — F.R. ■

Lessons of November

" . . . Clinton disclosed the Democratic Leadership Council's [the grouping of conservative Democrats that lead the Democratic Party — editor] racial strategy even during the 1992 campaign . . . His response to the Los Angeles uprising was indistinguishable from Bush's. . . ."

"Consider what the Clinton Administration has dug its heels in to fight for — NAFTA, GATT, the horribly racist and draconian crime bill, and its equally racist and draconian welfare-reform package."

"There are a couple of lessons to take from November. . . . We can mobilize the unemployed and appeal aggressively to those constituencies who are inclined to support social justice and economic democracy."

"It is time, therefore, to issue a call to Paul Wellstone, David Bonior, Bobby Scott, Ron Dellums . . . and whatever other liberals and progressives remain in visible and powerful positions in the party to initiate planning for an insurgency against Clinton and the DLC line in 1996. . . ."

"This enterprise could meld with efforts currently going toward creating a Labor Party for which there has long been a need. Now more than ever, the Democratic Party is an inadequate substitute. Organized labor, for all its problems, remains the most solid and independent source of institutional support for progressive political agendas. . . ."

"And the possibility of creating a coherent political force rooted in but extending beyond the labor movement is exciting. . . . Those interested in learning more about joining in this effort should contact Labor Party Advocates. . . ."

"After being sold out for Jackson's personal ambitions three times now, it's time for

(Continued on page 3)