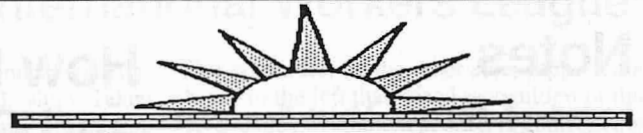


# NEW LIFE



A SOCIALIST BULLETIN SERVING THE LABOR PARTY MOVEMENT

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## Workers and students of all ethnic groups! Unite against union-busting!



Decatur police attack locked-out Staley workers and supporters, June 25, 1994.

## Rally in Decatur June 24-25!

Workers and union locals at Staley, Bridgestone-Firestone, and Caterpillar in Decatur, Illinois are once again calling for a mass action in solidarity with locked-out and striking workers in Decatur.

We urge all young people, working people, trade unionists, and everyone who loves dignity and freedom to support this struggle. Be there, and do everything possible to bring the largest number of people with you.

Why?

**The workers' cause is just.** These workers are fighting for decent jobs, wages, working conditions, and a decent union contract against bosses who want to force the workers to work 12-hour rotating shifts — from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. one week; from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. the next. Anyone who has ever worked knows that hours like these will make workers extremely uncomfortable all the time. Modern workers will be reduced to the status of slaves. It will be extremely difficult for them to read, study, *think for themselves*, much less enjoy themselves and their companions, friends, children, etc.

**The outcome of this struggle is essential to all young and working people.** If the workers and their unions in Decatur win the fight against the bosses, it's going to open up a whole new period of union organizing, union struggle, and labor party building throughout the U.S., that's going to improve and enrich the lives of young and working people. If they lose, it's going to be much more difficult to do this; it's going to be easier for the bosses to impose 12-hour rotating shifts and other things like it.

**This moment is a critical moment in the struggle.** Staley workers have been locked-out since June 27, 1993; lock-out pay and contributions from supporters are not enough. Workers have lost homes, cars, companions, and been forced to go without essential medical care. Many workers are saying that they can't hold out any longer without more support; a movement to go back to work under any terms is developing. Bridgestone-Firestone workers have been on strike since July 12, 1994; they are now receiving no strike pay; some say a back-to- (Continued on page 2, column 1)

## Notes

**Locked-out National Metal Processing workers in Detroit** are continuing their struggle. These workers have been locked-out since 1991; they are in the same union that the Staley workers are in: the United Paperworkers International Union. In the last weeks, these workers have gotten more support. *Labor Notes* included a note in solidarity. Dave Watts, head of the Staley workers' union, agreed to make a statement in solidarity. A reporter from *In These Times* interviewed one of the locked-out workers. Right now, National Metal workers and their supporters are working to raise \$200 to publish more copies of the brochure telling their story. Please send contributions to: National Metal Workers, Box 11128, Detroit, MI 48211.

**The Convenors' Committee of Labor Party Advocates** has decided to hold the convention to found the labor party in May or June of 1996 in Chicago, Illinois. *New Life* supports this decision against the partisans of the Republicans and Democrats inside the labor movement. Labor Party Advocates is the third-party movement that emphasizes building a *working class* party. It deserves the support of every worker, student, and socialist.

**Clinton's campaign against terrorism in general, and Michigan militias in particular, in the wake of the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma, is an anti-working class and undemocratic campaign that should be opposed by every worker, student, trade unionist, and socialist.** Since the bombing, government officials have pointed the finger everywhere. There isn't a reason to believe a word they say. An independent labor investigation into the bombing is necessary in order to determine who is responsible. The

(Continued on page 3)

## Decatur . . .

(Continued from page 1)

work movement is also developing here. Caterpillar workers are the only ones receiving enough strike-pay to survive.

In this situation, a massive turnout on June 24-25 is critical. With a massive turnout, progress, more money, Staley and Bridgestone workers may be able to continue the struggle. Without it, chances are slim.

Workers in the war zone need relief!  
All out for Decatur, June 24-25! ■

## How to win at Staley, Bridgestone, and Caterpillar ...

A massive turnout on June 24-25 is essential. But it is not enough. Staley, Bridgestone, and Cat workers need a way to *win*.

More workers are saying that the only way to progress is to *shutdown* these plants, make it absolutely impossible for anything to go in or out until the bosses agree to sign decent union contracts.

And the only way to do this is with a massive struggle inside the AFL-CIO for the mobilization of the physical forces necessary to shutdown these plants.

This struggle has already begun. Workers throughout the country have been fighting for their unions to make contributions to the Staley, Bridgestone, and Cat workers, to send delegations to their mass actions prepared to shutdown the plants, and for them to refuse to handle anything going in or out of these plants.

But not enough progress has been made. It has been very difficult to overcome the resistance of the privileged bureaucracy in the unions. In Detroit, Solidarity House, UAW headquarters, told UAW leaders who wanted to mobilize forces for a rally in Decatur, that they were "on the wrong track," and that they ought to be spending their time campaigning for the Democratic Party candidate for governor. In Bal Harbor, AFL-CIO leaders made promises, at least for money, but they haven't come across yet.

There have been mass demonstrations for other causes in other cities: 150,000 in L.A. for immigrant rights; 20,000 in Northwest Indiana against wage cuts for construction workers; 50,000 in Washington, D.C. for abortion rights. Yet there has never been more than 8,000 in Decatur. Is this because workers in other cities don't care about their fellow workers in Decatur? No. It's because the top leadership of the unions has systematically sabotaged the fight; stopped the spread of information about Decatur, stopped the mobilization of forces in solidarity with Decatur workers.

The only way to overcome the resistance is to continue the fight. Appeal to the growing number of workers and students involved in struggles everywhere.

Workers in union locals in the Midwest should push for their union leaderships to organize massive contingents to the June

24-25 actions, prepared to work with other union leaderships refuse, workers should see if they can win a majority in the local fight, and overturn the leadership decision. (Decisions about exactly what to do and how to do it must be left in the hands of the local union leaderships in Decatur; a union should come prepared to accept the decisions, whatever they may be.)

Striking Caterpillar workers have a special role to play in the struggle. While the Staley workers' and the Bridgestone worker unions are relatively small and their resources are limited, this isn't true of the striking Caterpillar workers. They are still getting \$300/week strike pay, and the UAW is a relatively large and powerful union. Striking Caterpillar workers can use their time and money to make an all-out fight with the UAW for the UAW to mobilize forces for June 24-25.

Labor Notes, Labor Party Advocates, and socialist organizations, like the Socialist Workers Party, also have an important role to play. They can use their connections with unions throughout the country to do the same.

Workers and unionists in Decatur and throughout the U.S. also need to think about running independent labor candidates to fight for the interests of Staley, Bridgestone and Cat workers, and all working people, in the 1996 elections. Staley, Bridgestone, and Cat workers could run their own candidates and use their campaigns to build support for their struggles, to fight for a national work stoppage in solidarity with their struggles and for laws against anti-worker and anti-union policies, like 12-hour rotating shift work. Public elections in the U.S. are like public forums. Workers need to learn to put forward their own spokespeople in the forums, and take advantage of these forums to win the public to their side.

Obviously, there are no guarantees, but this is the only way forward.

For an AFL-CIO mobilization to shutdown Staley, Bridgestone-Firestone, Caterpillar and all union-busting firms!

All out for Decatur, June 24-25!  
— M. Guttshall ■



# Open letter to the leadership of the International Workers League

*We are reprinting a letter from the International Liaison Committee of the International League and the International Revolutionary Current, the predecessor of International Workers Unity, to the International Workers League, in favor of unifying the most consistent Trotskyist and Fourth Internationalist tendencies. We urge readers to support this struggle. Trotskyists need to make a common fight for their principles in the workers' movement*

Barcelona, March 21, 1995

To the leadership of the International Workers League

Dear Comrades:

We received your letter of December 16, which we think is very important. In the current situation, we Trotskyists who have struggled against revisionism have the obligation to open channels of political discussion that allow us the greatest rapprochement.

Your letter touches on a series of aspects, some very important. Unfortunately, they avoid a response to the proposal that we made for "a frank and open discussion on the conditions in which we could take on calling for an Open International Conference in the framework of principled Trotskyism, that would allow taking steps toward the reconstruction of the Fourth International."

Our proposal was based on the conviction that we were discussing between revolutionary Trotskyist organizations, enemies of revisionism. We know that the differences between us are very important, and that we must face them in a responsible way; but we begin with the idea that they are not principled differences, still less class differences.

Instead of responding to this proposal, you mix up political arguments with accusations concerning morals that are very serious.

You insist, throughout the entire letter, that we proposed a conference in April, in order to unify ourselves immediately. With this, you change the meaning of our proposal, which was not to ignore the differences that separate us, but to give ourselves a policy in order to overcome them. We did not propose to you an event with a fixed date, but calling together (discussing the date, place, agenda, etc.) an Open International Conference in order to take steps toward the reconstruction of the Fourth International. These steps could begin, for example, organizing common intervention in the class struggle and discussion on our differences. This is what the International League and the International Revolutionary Current have done for two years.

The letter also raises very serious criticisms of our policy. Supposedly, we are not fulfilling

the obligation of every revolutionary to struggle against the treacherous leaderships. Taken in this way, there couldn't be any discussion. We agree completely that there can't be any revolutionary policy for any country that does not include as one of its tasks the fight to the death against the treacherous leaderships, that can lead the masses to defeat. The problem is that you all are sliding toward sectarianism, making the entirety of the revolutionary policy turn around the denunciation of these leaderships and not around the big confrontations in the class struggle.

The obligation to confront the treacherous leaderships can never be done in a way that is divorced from the battles of the class. Doing it in this way implies turning one's back on the fundamental need of the masses to win in these confrontations. It means that we avoid putting ourselves forward as their leadership; supposed radicalism against the treacherous leaderships becomes useless and dangerous, we end up playing the game of the leaderships we want to fight or, still worse, we play the game of the government and the regime.

Let's take a look at this discussion:

**Mexico.** We want to begin with this country because it has become one of the most advanced points of the revolutionary mobilization throughout the world. It is very important for you and for us, since we have very important forces rooted in Latin America, and this opens a very big challenge and opportunity to us.

You affirm that our comrades in Mexico are not fulfilling the obligation to denounce Cardenas. We could show hundreds of numbers of Unios's periodical denouncing Cardenas as a bourgeois candidate who doesn't confront the PRI, opposed to the insurrection in Chiapas, who support's Zedillo's economic plan, etc. What our comrades don't do, as you do, is confuse the content of a revolutionary policy with a vote, which is an absolutely tactical question. We can offer various examples: Lenin when he called for a vote for the candidates of the bourgeois opposition on the second round; Palabra Obrera when it called for a vote for Frondizi, etc. Neither Lenin nor Palabra Obrera stopped denouncing these bourgeois politicians, but they called for voting for them as a tactic that takes into consideration the masses' level of consciousness in order to better fight them.

You insist on this sectarian position, as the latest events show. The Convencion Nacional Democratica (CND) just split around a concrete question: defend Avendano's electoral victory in Chiapas, against the PRI's fraud, or propose new elections, as the government wished. Cardenas's party is for new elections.

Our comrades, on the other side, supported a break to the left that raised recognition of the Avendano government in order to confront the regime; beginning from this we are developing our revolutionary alternative. In the midst of this confrontation, which divided the entirety of Mexico, you comrades abstained and didn't take a position. Instead, you use the general correct slogan of a workers' government in order to abstain from the concrete struggle, to wash your hands before a real conflict that concerns the working masses.

**Bosnia.** We completely agree that it is a revolutionary obligation to confront Izetbegovic, the ruler of Bosnia. But we do not at all agree that criticism of Izetbegovic "differentiates" revolutionaries from opportunists who capitulate to the apparatuses. Imperialism and the main apparatuses in the world, far from applauding Izetbegovic, blame the war on the Bosnians (and Izetbegovic) as much as on the Serbs. The opportunists are those who play this game. The clash with Izetbegovic can't lead us to allow ourselves to be confused with imperialism nor with the apparatuses that support Serbia; nor can it allow ourselves to be confused with opportunists, like Lambert, who criticize all the nationalists and cover up capitulation to imperialism with Trotskyist phrases. We could cite a thousand examples of this way of acting, including Trotsky's in 1938, when the Fourth International expelled the sectarians who exaggerated criticisms of Lazaro Cardenas, the bourgeois president of Mexico who timidly confronted English imperialism.

**Cuba.** You accuse us of renouncing the revolutionary policy in Cuba, presenting us as capitulators to Castro. In order to achieve this, you put us in an amalgam with the Stalinists who consider Cuba to be the "last bastion of socialism," and hide our position in favor of the political revolution in Cuba, expressed in the systematic denunciation of the Cuban government's economic plan, which aims at the capitalist restoration, and our permanent call for fighting the single party regime.

The true problem is that, once again, you adopt a sectarian position that gives more weight to the struggle against Castro than to the struggle against imperialism. You forget that the U.S.'s blockade or embargo against Cuba is an imperialist aggression against a small country, which, in addition, is the first workers' state in Latin America. It is impossible to develop the political revolution in Cuba ignoring this, forgetting that the political revolution has important anti-imperialist tasks to accomplish, one of which, the most important, is to confront the blockade. For this reason, we start with the struggle against imperialism in order to mobilize the masses against the Castro regime. You,

desperate to differentiate yourselves from Castro, minimize the blockade, doing imperialism a very big favor.

**Brazil.** You say that our entry into the Workers Party is not helping the sectors of the vanguard that are breaking toward the left, saying that the only correct policy is to build a new party from the outside.

We believe that the PSTU project is a tactic that is in accord with principles. We want to remind you that our comrades asked to join the PSTU but their leadership never answered. This does not necessarily mean that it is the best tactic at this time. On the contrary. The crisis in the Workers Party is not yet taking the form of an organic rupture but of minority sectors of the vanguard. The elections show that the best of the mass movement, including the sector that criticizes its leadership, still sees the Workers Party as its party, as the weapon for confronting Cardoso and the Plan Real, and doesn't want to abandon it. This makes it absolutely necessary to make the fight within the Workers Party, in order to offer a solution to thousands of Workers Party workers and students who want the Workers Party to return to the working class road and struggle that its leadership abandoned.

In considering it opportunist to struggle within the Workers Party, you fall again into sectarianism, which far from serving for a dialogue with the vanguard, leads to a clash with it. And this, far from weakening the leadership of the Workers Party, gives it more weapons with which to fight Trotskyism.

We insist that we consider political discussion between our organizations very important. Unfortunately you, far from giving it plenty of space, say that political discussion isn't so important; you say several times that at best you are mistaken, but that it isn't very important because there is a more serious problem: methods and morals. According to you, even if the political differences between us were not so big, we couldn't go very far together because we, the International League and the International Revolutionary Current, have methods that are foreign to the working class. Then why did you dedicate so much space to all the previous arguments? What is outrageous is that, in order to support this affirmation, you use the same methods that you supposedly reject, making slanders in an absolutely light-minded way, without taking the trouble to present a single proof.

You accuse the Mexican party of being accomplices in the expulsion of your comrades from the CND. But Unios's attitude was the opposite. In the CND, they say that the line that divides the trenches in Mexico is between those who are with the PRI and with imperialism, on the one hand, and those who are with the workers and the mass movement and with the insurrection in Chiapas, on the other,

and that electoral tactics shouldn't divide the masses' trenches. It was a position that was different from yours, which said that electoral tactics differentiate opportunists from revolutionaries in Mexico.

You make another accusation, still more serious, that Unios was part of a campaign to associate you with guerrillaist groups. It is a lie. What you are saying is that we are collaborating with agent provocateurs. You must prove this accusation or withdraw it; otherwise these will remain irresponsible lies.

You accuse the POR of stealing funds from the campaign in solidarity with Bosnia. This is absolutely false. You speak of abundant documentation that could prove these charges, but you don't attach a single piece of paper. And you couldn't because the truth is the following: the Spanish PST refused to accept the presence of a single member of the POR in the Workers Aid to Bosnia Convoy, in spite of the important contribution of the members of this party to the united campaign, particularly in collecting money. A member of the POR had to join another convoy (concretely the English WRP's) in order to take the contributions raised by Workers Aid committees promoted by members of the POR to Tuzla. This is what you call "stealing": the divisions provoked in a united campaign by the PST's sectarian attitude.

Finally, you repeat the accusation that the International Revolutionary Current used violence when the split took place in the International Workers League. The crisis in the International Workers League also began with accusations concerning morals against old leaders, like Eduardo of the Argentine party, that were never proven. These methods, and the differences that arose, created an intolerable situation that led the Morenoist tendency in the Argentine party to propose a well-known method, separate experiences. They were told that this was against principles and the mechanism of a Parity Commission was imposed, which you then broke. The Morenoist tendency presented a long document putting forward these events; the IEC resolved to answer it but hasn't. After the split in the Argentine party, all the militants of the Morenoist tendency were expelled in a dozen countries. These militants never had the opportunity to defend themselves. The International Revolutionary Current called for the Fifth World Congress, in accord with the statutes, and there wasn't even a response to its demand. How can you talk about working class methods when you don't even give militants the right to defend themselves?

In our opinion, all these accusations concerning morals have a single objective. They serve to avoid a response to our proposal to call together an event to advance toward the reconstruction of the Fourth International. First, you disfigure our call, then you answer

that it isn't possible because of political differences that separate us, then, finally, you add that if these arguments aren't enough, it's not important, because it's not possible to do anything with gangsters and thieves. And you don't even take the trouble to demonstrate that we are.

The question is this: if, from the point of view of principles, there is nothing in the way of us struggling together to rebuild the Fourth International, there shouldn't be anything in the way of us resolving these disputes between our sections in a positive manner.

We give much importance to the question of how we should resolve our differences. For you, this question will be raised if we succeed in unifying ourselves. For us, it is *already important* because we are revolutionary organizations that find ourselves in the class struggle with policies that are very different every day. And we answer in a categorical way: these differences must be resolved with democratic discussion and with the test of the class struggle, not by amalgamating them with accusations concerning morals, with insinuations and insults, nor promoting all sorts of wretched quarrels, that make comradely relations between our organizations impossible, and a serene discussion still more impossible.

We call on you for us to work with a different method. Let's continue this correspondence which has finally been initiated, but putting at the center the political discussion, without false accusations that are not proven. Let's advance in the discussion of Bosnia, Mexico, the political revolution, and all the other battles in the class struggle that are stirring the vanguard. For this, we propose that we study the possibility of some common campaigns, which would give the discussion an axis of practical action. One possibility is Bosnia, in which we agree we are on the side of the Bosnians against the Serbian aggression. Another possibility is a campaign in support of the Workers Party of Byelorussia, whose promoters are going to participate in the next elections in May.

If we begin a process like this, if we advance in the clarification of our differences and in the resolution of some of them, it will be possible to take steps toward the reconstruction of the Fourth International on a principled basis, coming to agreement on the type of agreement possible, the date, the agenda, etc.

Finally, we want to invite you to the Open Conference that we are going to realize in April and in which our two currents are going to unite. There you will have the opportunity to explain your positions to all the delegates.

With Trotskyist greetings,

The Permanent International Liaison Committee of the International League and the International Revolutionary Current

# International Workers Unity (Fourth International) founded

In Barcelona, Spain, on April 15, 1995, two tendencies of the Fourth International — the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International and the Corriente Internacional Revolucionario — unified their forces in a new organization, International Workers Unity (Fourth International). Nearly 1,000 Trotskyists from 17 countries, many of them workers' leaders, joined forces. International Workers Unity sees itself as a transitory organization, a step along the road of rebuilding the Fourth International, world party of the socialist revolution.

## The conference

On the first day militants reported on their work in the class struggle. Representatives from all 17 countries spoke including Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Byelorussia, Poland and Russia.

From Byelorussia we heard about the 1991 general strike that brought down the government; we heard about the well-fed, Madison Avenue AFL-CIO hucksters shuffling about in limousines, pushing the glories of capitalism and conniving with the Stalinist factory managers against the workers.

From Poland we heard that many Polish families eat only 1 hot meal a week; that with over 260 parties in Poland, none represent the workers; that there have been many powerful strikes and that a general strike could occur at any moment.

From Mexico we learned of the developing revolution — the resistance of the workers to the privatization of the state-owned electric and oil works; the growing panic in government circles as the nearly 20 million workers in and around Mexico City show increasing support for the uprising in Chiapas and organize more and more strikes; the political tendencies inside the National Democratic Convention and the discussions for a general strike in mid-May.

The organizations decided to unite on the basis of the Political Foundations of International Workers Unity and the Resolution on the Political Revolution.

## Importance for workers and young people in the U.S.

International Workers Unity says: "The world situation is characterized by a rise in the struggle of the workers that is in more and more countries and that is more and

more determined and energetic." We are entering a period of a rise in the class struggle, a period that began with the single most important event since World War II, the fall of the Stalinist dictatorships in the ex-USSR and Eastern Europe, the opening guns of the political revolution.

It is this fundamental understanding of the developing world socialist revolution that makes International Workers Unity so special and important for workers, young people and Trotskyists.

The struggle of workers and oppressed peoples in other countries affects the U.S. more than in any other country, and more than in any other time in U.S. history. Our fate and that of the rest of the world are inextricably bound together by the chains of U.S. imperialism that have bound the rest of the world. The peoples and workers of the world are breaking those chains, sending shock waves through the U.S. economy and the U.S. government. They are shaking it as it has never been shaken before.

## The future

Besides efforts to involve other Trotskyist tendencies in the new organization, the political focus of International Workers Unity is the development of the revolutions in the old USSR and Mexico.

In the U.S., we will be collaborating on the journal of our Mexican comrades, *Al Socialismo*, with articles on the class struggle in the U.S. We will also be building support for the struggle of SMOT to form a Workers Party in Byelorussia.

The unification of these two tendencies on a principled basis is yet another sign of vitality of Trotskyism, of the powerful illumination of the road forward that Trotskyism, the Fourth International, and revolutionary Marxism offer the fighting workers of the world. Join International Workers Unity and raise the banner of the world socialist revolution. — Fred Russo ■

Political Foundations  
of  
International Workers Unity  
Available now  
from *New Life*

kely suspects are government officials, as they are the elements in society with the longest history of mass murder of innocent people: the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Korea, Vietnam, most recently, Waco, Texas. In the meantime, workers should demand that the government stop the witch-hunt against alleged terrorists and that all charges against alleged terrorists be dropped.

**sands of workers and oppressed in** co demonstrated on May Day in **ence of the official union leadership.** Leaders will meet in mid-May to discuss the possibility of a general strike against government austerity measures.

**ere was a general strike in Bolivia in** **il.** Government officials are blaming the Trotskyists for the revolt, and police are searching for Guillermo Lora, long-time leader of the Bolivian Trotskyists.

**ette Laguiller, a working class and** **alist candidate for President in** **nce, and a member of Lutte Ouvriere,** **trotskyist organization, received 5.4%** **he votes in the recent elections.** This is the largest percentage of votes received by Trotskyists in quite some time. In some working class districts, she received more votes than the Communist Party, which received 8.6% in the general election.

**ay 19 is Malcolm X's birthday.** *New Life* and all revolutionary Trotskyist tendencies have a tremendous amount of respect for Malcolm X. He waged an honest and uncompromising struggle for the liberation of the Black people. The fates of the working class, the Black people, and the Trotskyists, in the United States, are closely tied together. ■

## 300 honor Cesar Chavez

On Sunday, April 30, 300 marched on Detroit's west side from St. Ann's Church to Clark Park in memory of Cesar Chavez.

This march was not just to honor Chavez. It informed people of the work that the United Farm Workers, Chavez's organization, is doing and to get support from community groups, churches and organized labor.

Speakers talked about the problems facing Mexican Industries workers trying to organize themselves at locations throughout Detroit, the conditions farm workers are facing in California, and the deteriorating working conditions across the U.S.

The march was sponsored by many unions and other organizations, including *New Life*.

Tim James ■



# Labor struggles come together at the Labor Notes Conference

Many of the most militant labor leaders met in Detroit the weekend of April 28, 1995, at the *Labor Notes* Conference. Officers and members from unions locals which are at the forefront of the class struggle were there: locked-out Staley workers, along with Caterpillar and Bridgestone/Firestone strikers from Decatur, IL. They discussed strategies for the fight in Decatur, which is a focal point of the bosses' attempts to crush unions. All agreed that what happens in Decatur will affect labor struggles all over the country.

Dave Yettaw, president of UAW 599, spoke about his Flint local which won more jobs and less overtime from GM in 1994. From UAW 2244 at the NUMMI plant in California, Caroline Lund spoke about their strike last August which fought off GM's "lean production" work rules in *two hours*.

Workshops were held throughout the weekend where working class militants shared experiences and strategies. Many different fronts were represented: the fight for a shorter work week in Germany and in the U.S.; building cross-racial solidarity; fighting the "Contract On America"; solidarity with immigrant workers and against Proposition 187; women fighting low wage work; lesbian and gay rights, particularly the fight for domestic partner benefits; and cooperation with Mexican and Central American workers in fighting the bosses and NAFTA. One theme that ran through many workshops was that if we continue to fight by the bosses' rules, (e.g. honoring injunctions) we will always lose.

Another theme of the conference was the need for a labor party as an alternative to the Republicans and Democrats. Many people joined Labor Party Advocates (LPA) and picked up literature at the LPA table. The LPA workshop was well-attended and workers from all over the country discussed the importance of a working class party versus community coalitions, how best to support the Decatur struggles, and the need to represent both union and non-union workers in the founding convention next Spring. OCAW President Bob Wages said that when we focus on a broad, class-based agenda — like jobs, education and health care — other issues become clear.

Jedd Dodd, President of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (railroad

workers) gave the final speech of the conference. He discussed the declining real wages and working conditions of all workers. He noted in particular that 2/3 of the national railroad jobs (40,000) had been eliminated since deregulation and that 96 workers had been killed by trains in the last nine years. These things occurred during both Republican and Democrat administrations, and when Democrats controlled congress. He said the difference between the Republicans and Democrats is like the difference between dying of a heart attack and dying of cancer — the result is the same.

Jedd Dodd spoke strongly for Labor Party Advocates. He received a standing ovation, and many began to chant: "LPA, LPA!" —K. Morgan ■

## Our position:

The *Labor Notes* Conference represented real progress for the working class because of:

1. The links built between working class struggles nationally and internationally.
2. The acknowledgment that labor's strategy must include illegal methods, such as defying injunctions, where the law makes winning impossible.
3. The recognition of the need for both strikes and political action — that both economic and political fronts must be fought.
4. The emphasis that a working class party is necessary to defend workers' interests — *not* to support the Democrats who have betrayed us over and over — and that Labor Party Advocates is the best avenue to build a truly working class party. ■

## Support for Independent Labor in Byelorussia

Workers in Byelorussia, the most industrialized region of the ex-USSR, are organizing unions and election campaigns independent of the Communist Party and the ruling bureaucracy. They are highly educated and skilled, but they live in very poor conditions — with whole families sharing two room apartments and often only the potatoes from their gardens to eat.

Unfortunately, the efforts of these militant workers have been frustrated by representatives of the U.S.-based union federation, the AFL-CIO. These representatives try to convince Byelorussians that they will become rich if they allow multi-national corporations to buy up their factories.

Workers represented by Anatoly Matvienko of the SMOT (an independent workers' union in Byelorussia), have appealed to U.S. workers to stop this interference by the AFL-CIO. They have asked that we publicize this interference and demand that the AFL-CIO bring home their officials.

SMOT representatives also suggested that we can help them the most by concentrating on fighting the bosses in the U.S. This message was relayed to many labor leaders at the recent *Labor Notes* Conference through personal letters along with copies of the SMOT appeal, pictures of SMOT representatives and an interview with Matvienko describing the struggles in Byelorussia.

Most of those leaders supported the SMOT appeal and agreed to pass on the message. — K.M. ■

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

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