

NEW LIFE

A SOCIALIST BULLETIN PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE LABOR PARTY MOVEMENT

NO. 31 • MARCH/APRIL, 1997 • 50¢ • BOX 11128, DETROIT, MI 48211 • PH: 313-735-4650

For the Detroit newspaper workers!

For the right to a job at a living wage by law!

Join the Labor Party!

All out for Detroit! June 20-22!

Inside:

Lessons of the Detroit newspaper workers' struggle

Support the Labor Party's campaign
for the right to a job at a living wage

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New Life is changing its name ...

The AFL-CIO is calling for a national labor action in solidarity with Detroit newspaper workers, for reinstating and recalling all newspaper workers, and for a decent union contract. The action, or actions, will take place in Detroit on June 20-22.

At this point, it is not yet clear what this action (or actions) is going to look like. Detroit newspaper workers have been fighting for a national labor march and rally. While the AFL-CIO has committed itself to building some kind of action on Saturday, June 21, it hasn't yet committed itself to building a single, united action.

We urge readers to support all union efforts aimed at building support for days of action in solidarity with Detroit newspaper workers in Detroit, June 20-22, against the owners of Gannett and Knight-Ridder.

Even if these actions are not the kinds of actions that newspaper workers have been fighting for — a national labor march, rally, mass picketing aimed at stopping production and distribution — a large turnout for these actions is important. The bigger the turnout, the more pressure there will be on the owners of Gannett and Knight-Ridder to reinstate and recall all newspaper workers, the more pressure there will be on union leaders to organize and mobilize until this task is accomplished.

At the same time, it is necessary to say that this action (or actions) is not going to be a total solution to the problems facing newspaper workers, or any other working people or young people in the U.S.

All labor unions in the U.S. need to unite and make a common fight for the right to a job at a living wage by law and to build the Labor Party in order to pass and enforce this law.

There are thousands of young people and working people in the U.S. who don't believe that the right to a job at a living wage is a fundamental right, just as important as the right to vote. They believe that workers must simply accept whatever happens to them and be happy that it is not worse. The

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Labor needs a new policy!

Over six weeks have passed since the top leaders of the Teamsters, the Communication Workers of America, and the Graphics and Communications International Union told the owners of Gannett and Knight-Ridder that striking newspaper workers would go back to work in any conditions, that is, without any guarantees on jobs, wages, benefits, and union rights. Top union leaders made this "unconditional offer" — or "unconditional surrender" as many strikers call it — without any discussion, vote, or authorization of any kind from rank-and-file newspaper strikers. In fact, every time that strikers discussed this idea in their local unions and voted on it, it was voted down in overwhelming numbers.

The top leaders of the AFL-CIO — Sweeney, Trumka and Chavez-Thompson — say that this is a "new phase ... an effort to take back the plant ..." It doesn't look much like this in Detroit.

The owners say that they will not fire the scabs and take back striking workers; they will only put strikers on a preferential hiring or recall list and bring them back as openings occur. After six weeks, only a handful of strikers have gone back, mostly printers with guaranteed lifetime jobs, a few cleaners, reporters, pressmen, and drivers. Not a single mailer, the most working class and militant group, has been called back.

Many strikers are extremely discouraged, especially some of the three hundred strikers fired for alleged picketline crimes. Union leaders are saying that they are hoping that the courts will force the owners to fire the scabs and recall strikers. But even if the courts do force the owners to do this — the "10-J injunction" —, this won't include the 300 strikers who have been fired. Their cases will go to court; some say it may take years until decisions are made.

Union leaders have cut funding for the *Detroit Sunday Journal*, the strikers' paper, whose circulation has now been cut from 300,000 to 50,000. While the readers' boycott of the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* continues, the boycott of advertisers has collapsed. Strikers thought that the AFL-CIO promised to organize a national labor march in Detroit in June. But when they read the fine print, they saw this was not the case. The AFL-CIO agreed to a

"... even in countries where there have been mass nationwide strikes, plant occupations and much higher levels of union democracy (France, Russia), workers have succeeded in slowing down the corporate agenda but they haven't succeeded in stopping it."

"national labor mobilization." So far, there are no signs that it's committed to making this as big and successful as possible. Instead, top union leaders seem to be continuing their policy of organizing very small isolated actions aimed at annoying figures connected with Gannett and Knight-Ridder. On St. Patrick's Day, strikers closest to the top union leaders sent a figure dressed in green to one of the headquarters of the scab papers who read a prayer to God and/or St. Patrick asking them to drive the scabs out of the building. This in an area where over 350,000 trade unionists live, where over 100,000 show up for Labor Day parades.

In this situation, the most thoughtful and devoted strikers and supporters are trying to do a number of different things — they are focusing on building the June actions and on trying to make them as big as possible; they are speaking out for more working class and militant union policies, like mass picketing aimed at stopping production and distribution, a citywide strike, a one-day national strike, union democracy; they are trying to draw the lessons of the strike, like workers shouldn't walkout unless they are prepared to organize mass picketing to shut down operations and unless they have some control in their own unions and a union leadership they can trust to carry out their decisions. Some workers have withdrawn from the struggle; they are spending almost all of their time working or looking for work.

Workers can and will continue to fight for

reinstating and recalling all newspaper workers and for a decent union contract in a number of different ways. Some will fight for the AFL-CIO to provide adequate compensation or jobs in union shops for all strikers until they are reinstated. Workers are right to make these fights.

But it is also necessary to make a political fight inside the labor movement for labor to adopt a new policy across the board.

Dozens, even hundreds, of strikers and unionists have pointed out that the leaders of the labor movement have not even begun to do the kinds of things that could have been done to win this strike — continued mass picketing, a plant occupation, a citywide, countywide, statewide, or nationwide strike of one or more days. They are right.

But even in countries where there have been mass nationwide strikes, plant occupations and much higher levels of union democracy (France, Russia), workers have succeeded in slowing down the corporate agenda but they haven't succeeded in stopping it.

Corporations have become so large, stretching across whole nations and continents, that it has become extremely difficult for even relatively large and powerful labor movements in a single country to take on these giant national, multi-national and transnational corporations.

The old strategies, playing one corporation off against another, don't work.

In this situation, labor's only alternative is to fight for political power, for a labor government based on an independent mass mobilization, and for public ownership of the banks and basic industries. Labor movements in different countries are going to have to make a coordinated fight for political power, and work together to take over and run these giant corporations in the interests of working people of all ethnic groups and nationalities.

As long as labor is dispersed, as long as it has no political power that really represents labor, how can it even dream of taking on the giant corporations that own and control so many governments, including the federal and state governments?

In the course of the newspaper strike, every

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Detroit newspaper worker speaks out

NL: It's not a secret that many newspaper strikers and activists in the Detroit area did not think that the "unconditional offer" was the way to get the best settlement for newspaper strikers. Nevertheless, some union leaders have been saying that strikers and supporters should not say anything against this "unconditional offer" in public. One even said that a striker who said something against the "unconditional offer" in public was hurting the struggle as much as a scab who had crossed the picket line. How do you feel about this? Do you think that strikers and supporters have the right to speak against the "unconditional offer"? Do you think that they should exercise this right?

Not only do strikers have a right to speak out about the unconditional offer, they have a duty to tell their side of this story. If there is no dissent shown on matters of great importance to working people across this country, such as this unconditional surrender, then things will never change in organized labor. The rank-and-file have to take control of their unions, debate the issues and decide for themselves which course to take. Without open criticism, that is impossible.

NL: What are your views on the "unconditional offer"? Do you think that making this "offer" was the best way to get the best possible settlement? Is there anything else that you think could have been done that might have resulted in a better settlement?

I think the unconditional offer was a mistake. Maybe after all else was tried with no results, this surrender would be the way to go. These papers should have been shut down right away. The national leadership should have mobilized workers from all over the country and brought them to Detroit with the intention of stopping production of these papers. The only thing greedy, powerful companies like Gannett and Knight-Ridder understand is power. Unfortunately, this was never tried.

NL: What do you think needs to be done now? What are you fighting for? What role will the June 20-22 actions play in your struggle?

I think the truth about this strike has to be told. Working people have to learn from our mistakes here. Union leadership has to listen to it's rank and file and give them a voice in their own destiny. We need to take back

our unions. I think the June 20-22 march in Detroit, if it is big and powerful, will send a message to corporate America that they do not want to hear. Namely, that unions are waking from the dead and will not tolerate what's been going on in this country and around the world.

NL: What do you think is in store for the labor movement in the U.S. and other countries? What kinds of things do you think the labor movement needs to do to rise to the challenges before it?

Unless the labor movement becomes much more militant in this country and around the world, working people will lose the one means to change their lives for the better and the buffer that protects them from the greed

and power of huge U.S. and world-wide corporations. Unions need to merge, when possible, both nationally and internationally. One thing that hurt us in the strike was the fact that we are six separate unions. We all need to be one. We need to truly believe that "an injury to one is an injury to all." We need to educate our young people about unions. We should demand that labor history be taught in our schools. Our young need to realize unions are their only protection against living the life of a serf. Our children and grandchildren will have to fight the wars that were fought in the past all over again if they lose what their parents and grandparents gave them. — Armand Nevers, Detroit Typographical Union □

Don't mourn; organize!

Many newspaper workers are disgusted. They are disgusted with the policies of the local and national leaderships, the failure to organize mass action to stop production/distribution of the scab papers, the failure to allow strikers to have a say and vote on union policy, especially the "unconditional offer" that so many strikers opposed. Some are especially disappointed with Ron Carey and his supporters; Carey supporters said he was against an "unconditional offer" and would never force it on strikers. Many strikers feel they can't keep putting so much time into the struggle; they have to work and/or look for work. All of this is understandable; it's totally

legitimate. But whatever newspaper workers decide to do, it's essential to set aside a certain amount of time to keep fighting for the kinds of policies that you think the labor movement has to have in order to be successful. Don't let the rich owners of Gannett and Knight-Ridder and inept and even cowardly union leaders drive you out of the labor movement! The labor movement needs workers and activists who know how to experience victories, setbacks, and defeats and keep on fighting, keep on trying to learn everything they can so that the next time around the workers can do better. As the old labor organizer, Joe Hill, used to say, in the days when it wasn't unusual for labor organizers to be shot and killed: "Don't mourn, organize!" □

Labor needs a new policy

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time the strikers did something that actually hurt the corporation or one of its friends, it just went to court, got a decision against them, and, bingo, dozens if not hundreds of police showed up to enforce the decision.

Labor needs its own political party, its own government, and its own armed forces, to pass and carry out its laws.

The foundation of the Labor Party and the campaign for the constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage are important steps in this direction.

By building the campaign and the Labor Party, we can begin to unite millions against the rich owners, their laws and their parties. We can lay the foundation for a fight for political power.

Does this mean workers shouldn't continue to fight for reinstating all newspaper strikers, for a decent union contract, for more working class and militant union tactics, for more union democracy, etc. No. But it does mean that everybody involved in these struggles needs to devote a certain percentage of their time to the fight for the right to a job at a living wage and for the Labor Party.

We need to take the offensive against the rich owners, find a way to unite all struggles into a single struggle. The more we do this, the more we will progress.

Detroit newspaper strikers, with their brief but courageous, inspiring mass picketing, showed the power that workers have. Let's not waste that power; let's use it; let's bring it together.— M.G. □

Support the Labor Party's campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage!

The Labor Party has decided to launch a campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage. It plans to circulate petitions in workplaces, unions, and working class neighborhoods to build support for the campaign.

The petition says: "We, the undersigned, call upon the Congress of the United States to pass for ratification the following Amendment to the Constitution of the United States ... 'Every person shall have the right to a job and to receive a living wage for their work.'"

Once the Labor Party builds enough working class and popular support for the amendment, it plans to demand that elected representatives use their positions to build support for and pass the amendment.

Why the campaign is positive

There are a number of very positive things about this campaign:

1. It says that the right to a job at a living wage is a basic right that ought to be part of the basic laws that dictate the nature of our economy and our society, like the Constitution;
2. It calls for talking to thousands of workers, persuading them of this, and beginning to organize them to fight for it;
3. It calls for building the Labor Party;
4. It is the only campaign backed by major unions that calls for unions to make a united fight for the right to a job at a living wage by law;
5. It is the kind of campaign that workers can easily get involved in; in the process of this campaign they can learn how to become consistent fighters for the Labor Party's platform and the Labor Party; they can learn how to become leaders of the Labor Party itself.

There are also a number of possible problems with the campaign.

— Calling for the right to a job at a living wage is general. Campaigners need to be prepared to spell out how that can be realized; for example, with a shorter work week without cutting pay so that more can work; with a program of public works to provide jobs for the unemployed; with wage increases in accord with price increases by

law.

— By putting so much emphasis on amending the Constitution, the Labor Party might give workers the impression that it thinks that the problems of unemployment and low wages can be resolved through legal, parliamentary means: that is, first we force the Republicans and Democrats to amend the Constitution; then we force them to pass laws in accord with the Constitution; then we force them to enforce the laws. Workers' experience in the U.S. shows that there is a double standard. Rights in the Constitution for workers — the right to free speech, to freedom of the press, to freedom of assembly — are not enforced. Rights for the bosses — like the right to keep workers off their "private property" — are enforced.

There may be leaders of the Labor Party that want to take the campaign in this direction. But there is nothing inherent in the campaign that says that it has to go that way.

On the contrary, by organizing workers to fight for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage and for the Labor Party, Labor Party members can get across the idea that we need a profound change in the basic laws that govern our economy and our society and that building a Labor Party is the only way to achieve this.

There are some tendencies in the Labor Party that see the weaknesses, or potential weaknesses, of this campaign as reasons not to support and participate in it, as reasons to concentrate their efforts on criticizing the Labor Party and this campaign, rather than on building it. This is a serious mistake.

United fight against the bosses

Whatever problems the Labor Party and this campaign may have, the fact remains, this is the only Labor Party, this is the only such campaign. Whatever problems there are can best be resolved by getting more workers involved in this campaign and in the Labor Party.

As socialists, we obviously don't think that a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage and the Labor Party represent total solutions to the problems of unemployment and low wages. We are for dividing all work that is available among all available to work, for a program of public

works to provide jobs for the unemployed, and automatic wage increases in accord with price increases. We are also for a labor government based on an independent mass mobilization, public ownership of the banks and basic industries, a planned economy, totally owned and controlled by the workers, and the crushing of the resistance of the rich to these necessary measures.

Change the way workers think

In order to promote the development of a working class and socialist revolution like this, it is necessary to promote changes in the way that workers think and are organized.

By working to persuade thousands of workers that the right to a job at a living wage is a basic right that ought to be part of the basic laws of the U.S. and that they need their own political party to make this happen, Labor Party members are making a contribution to some of the changes in thinking and organization that are necessary.

All Labor Party members, whatever their political views may be, should join the campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage — the 28th Amendment Campaign — and work to make it as big and successful as possible.—M.G. □

LABOR PARTY
Amend the U.S. Constitution to
Guarantee a Right to a Job

We, the undersigned, call upon the Congress of the United States to pass for ratification the following Amendment to the Constitution of the United States:
The undersigned shall have the right to a job and to receive a living wage for their work.

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Number of copies of this petition _____

LABOR PARTY, 410 West 117th Street, New York, N.Y. 10027. For more copies, contact the National Office, 100 West 117th Street, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Solidarity with workers' revolution in Albania

They got fed up and decided to act. The workers and peasants of Albania got tired of suffering in silence, the misery of their families, the robbery of the people organized by the authorities, the corruption of their rulers. They ran out of patience when the new speculators — men who brought the new capitalism, men who came out of the old government — tricked hundreds of thousands of workers and stole their modest savings, by means of "pyramid schemes."

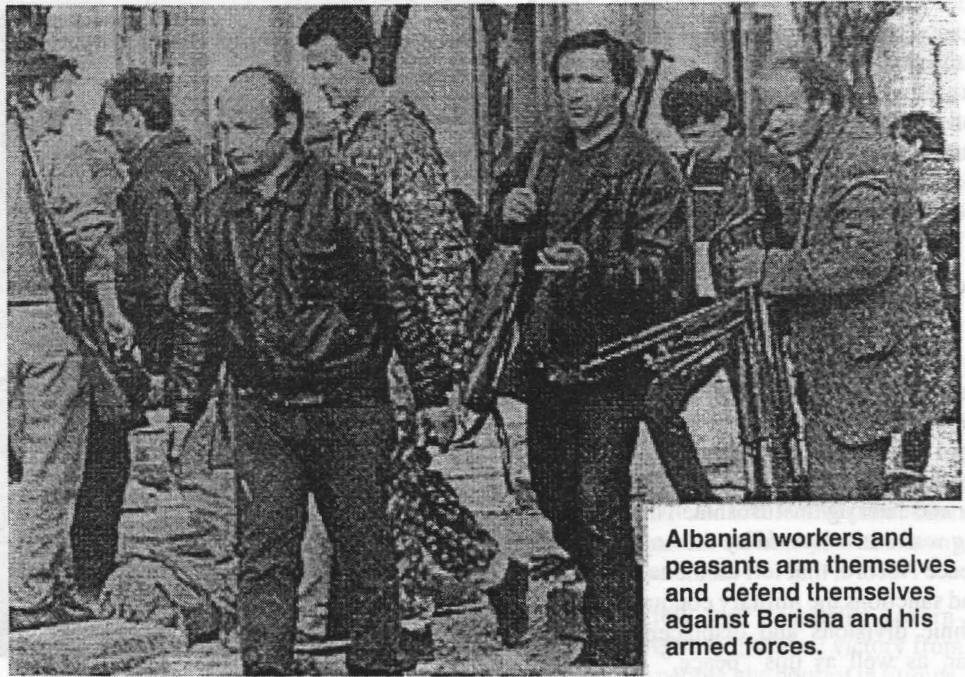
The revolution triumphed in the South of the country. The people disarmed the police. They began to arm themselves and make themselves respected. The authorities turned to the army. But it was an army that was badly paid, manipulated by the hated political police, demoralized and hungry like the people themselves. The army broke down before the workers' firmness. And then the "firmness" of Berisha, the thief Berisha, became a grotesque and pathetic gesture.

The people rose up in arms. It is no longer just a revolt, it is the revolution! They are not just protesting, they are demanding — oust Berisha! They are not just asking; they are taking and dividing what they need so that they can eat. They are no longer obeying; they are commanding. It is the revolution; it is the moment when the worker is proud to be a worker, master of his own destiny, member of a social class that can finish with parasites, oppression and the exploitation of so many by a small minority of potentates.

Workers and peasants

The capitalist press says that the events in Albania "bear the stamps of the Spanish civil war." That is, a workers and peasants revolution. These are not the citizens and students of Belgrade. Nor even the demonstrators in the capitol of Bulgaria. It is more than this. It is something that all the capitalists, who live off the sweat of others, and all the intellectuals who eat out of their hands, see with terror. "They have the faces of peasants, of people who have worked very hard ... this is the beginning of a general insurrection ... it won't stop with Berisha" (*El Pais*, March 10, 1997).

This explosion of the proletarian class in Albania has its logic. The president Berisha is, like all the "new" potentates, a member of the old Stalinist bureaucracy. But, con-



Albanian workers and peasants arm themselves and defend themselves against Berisha and his armed forces.

cretely, one of those ex-communists that, during the crisis in 1989-1990, passed body and soul over to capitalism, anxious to enrich himself at the expense of the people. In victory, and among banners with stars and stripes — what a dream! — he welcomed the American capitalists and then his neighbors, the Italian businessmen and Mafia men. Albania is a small country. With a handful of dollars, it was possible to buy all, or almost all, of the ex-communist elite and destroy all or almost all of the conquests of socialism that protected the life of the people, and to pitch them into the worst misery.

In Serbia, the workers hesitated about whether to intervene or not in the struggle against Milosevic. And, if we finish with Milosevic, they asked themselves, will we help, without wanting to, the more capitalist opposition, will we accelerate, without wanting to, the sale, at bargain basement prices, of national properties? But, in Albania, the people had nothing to lose by smashing the man of the nouveau riche, of the Western capitalists, the man who did the most to ruin Albania, the thief Berisha.

The revolution in Albania is already very far from the 1989 movements against the dictatorship of the bureaucracy that poisoned and discredited communism. It is one of the first steps of the workers' and peasants' revolt against the march of capitalism. The steps that follow will be louder. Those in Russia

will make world capitalism tremble.

Chaos? Soviets!

The bourgeois press tries to find words to discredit the Albanian revolution: "Chaos in Albania!" To the bourgeoisie and its servants, the revolution looks like chaos. To them, "order" is: electoral fraud, the control of the country by secret political police, the plundering of the country by the Mafia, the destruction of all the national property by the capitalists, so much poverty that the workers' homes are full of hunger. The people are tired of this order, so they are taking guns to their homes, they are taking what they need and sharing it with their neighbors, and they are joining the struggle to finish with this government and establish another that is forced to listen to them!

Behind the seeming chaos, the revolution is organizing its order. The South of the country is in the hands of popular assemblies, and some of them are coming together around committees of national salvation. Bourgeois journalists speak very little about this revolutionary order; they are trying to defeat it and replace it with the old corrupt order.

Today we associate the word "Soviets" with hundreds of "Soviet" bureaucrat-osaurs dressed in ties, applauding their Secretary General rhythmically, ignorant of their imminent extinction. This is what the degener-

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The Albanian revolution and the Balkans

The war in Bosnia, the revolt in Serbia against electoral fraud, the political crisis in Bulgaria, political strikes in Croatia, military tensions between Greece and Turkey, and now revolution in Albania. The Balkan peninsula is again a powder keg. We will be forced more and more to contemplate the totality of the Balkans.

In effect, all these events are joined together more by circumstances than by vicinity.

Milosevic was surviving the torment that shook Eastern Europe in the late 80's (it was only in 1989 that the 2000 strikes in Serbia were officially recognized) because he managed to divert social upheaval by making a deadly war of annexation first against Croatia and later against Bosnia. That devastating war was followed by the unjust Dayton Peace Accord, that left all the wounds open and sanctions the military conquests and the ethnic divisions and displacements. That war, as well as this "peace," left Bosnia devastated, hanging on imperialist "charity"; it also sank Serbia itself into misery. That is the reason Belgrade took to the streets.

Albania and Bosnia

In Bulgaria they were saying: "The Serbs struggle against Milosevic; we, the Bulgarians, against hunger." But the hunger in Bulgaria, as in Romania and Albania, is tied by a thousand economic strings to the war in Bosnia. The imperialist "blockade" was a hypocritical policy of the United Nations for washing the dirty face of the "democratic" European capitalist governments, for pacifying the Balkans and making all their people 100 times more dependent on Western businessmen and "protectors." As one expert has written, "the international blockade of the republics of ex-Yugoslavia severely affected the economies of the bordering states: Romania, Bulgaria, and of course, Albania." (F. Velga, author of *The Balkan Trap*.) In the press, this same historian denounced North American capitalism. When it understood that the war in Bosnia was a black hole that would engulf Europe before the governments of Paris, London and Bonn were able to reach an agreement on their dark interests in the zone, and when Washington therefore became involved in the conflict, it decided to take Albania as its "beachhead." It decided to support the thieving Berisha and to invest dollars in



Albanian workers seize a police tank and use it against the police.

order to make Albania a military base.

Those "North American citizens" who now flee from Albania in helicopters, under the protection of the marines, are the military advisors, the spies, the businessmen and the traffickers who were reigning in Tirana.

It's well-known that Washington, even when it would not want its soldiers to tread on Bosnian soil, accepted the security missions in Macedonia and Kosovo. In this way helping Milosevic to keep a third of the Albanian people oppressed and without rights under the dictatorship of Belgrade.

The imperialist interest in Albania is strategic. From Albania, Washington can guard North Africa (Libya) and Turkey, and furthermore, the south of Russia and the Middle East, that piece of the world cake that the United States doesn't want to share with any partner, from which flows the blood that gives life to industrial capitalism: oil.

The Albania of Berisha

The American capitalists helped Berisha for the aforementioned reasons, and they repeated this help even in the 1996 elections with a scandalous fraud. The thief Berisha was "their man in Albania."

How has this small country of three million inhabitants survived? During the last five years, it has scraped by on smuggling to

Serbia under the blockade, on some help from the West (American and Italian), enough to buy the leading group (the old "Marxist, Leninist, communist" elite, headed by the dictator Enver Hoxa). But, above all, from the accelerated looting — first of the state's wealth and afterward of the citizen's modest savings. Until the explosion. The "looting" of warehouses by the starving people is an insignificant fraction of the massive looting of the "socialist" property by the elite leaders and their Western partners.

So, in a poor country, where only the socialist conquests of the state defend the people from misery, a society arose divided between a majority of workers and peasants at the edge of despair (who now arm themselves) and a minority of cunning, corrupt functionaries, speculators and nouveau riche (who are now running to hide themselves).

The "Balkanization"

In the last centuries, while the bourgeoisie was creating large nation-states in Europe, the Balkans continued to be shared among many people who, pressured by their more powerful neighbors, did not succeed in joining together in economic and politically viable units that would defend them from these greedy neighbors in the West, North

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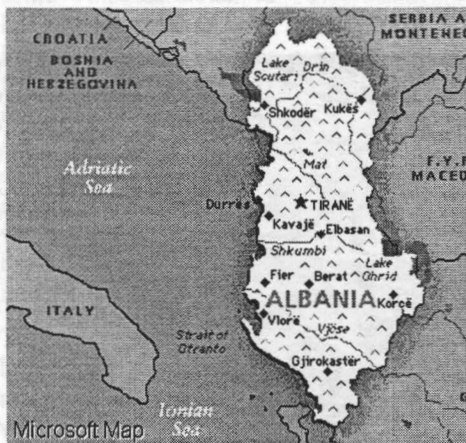
Solidarity with workers' revolution ...

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ate Stalinist soviets were like. But the Soviets in the Russian revolutions in 1905 and 1917, those that took power and took the landholders' and the capitalists' property, were, quite simply, the direct representatives of the revolutionary people. It seems that these committees of national salvation and popular assemblies in Albania are embryos of Soviets, of a new order and a new politically vital power, joined with the revolutionary workers and peasants.

They want to steal their victory

The capitalists have been ruling for centuries. They know how to find the weak points in a revolution and strike there. The revolutionary Russian Soviets had a vanguard that was very well organized, very conscious and capable, with ideas that were very clear about how to combat the capitalists; in short, a party that was Marxist, Bolshevik, communist, with the meaning that this word had before it was used by types like Stalin. But after years of the degeneration of the communist regimes and parties, a period of time is going to be necessary — and much effort on our part — before it will be possible to attract the workers' vanguard to the only



road that allows for the liberation of the working class from its chains — communism.

For this reason the Albanian revolution is developing with less organization: it does not have at its head a revolutionary Marxist political party, and it is going to take a while to get one.

The “socialists,” the ex-communists, at least those that belong to the bureaucratic hierarchy from the old regime, are doing everything possible to steal the victory of the revolution and to save president Berisha and

his men, to stop the popular leaders of the workers and peasants from taking power.

Imperialism! Hands off!

Isolated, impotent, frightened of the people in arms, the party of the nouveau riche (Berisha) and of the Stalinists who are ashamed of being so (Fino) are asking for imperialist intervention to “reestablish order,” that is, to stop the workers and peasants from establishing their order against this handful of criminals responsible for mass hunger. They are asking for intervention from the European Union, the United Nations, and NATO, whose banner is private property and whose arms imposed the interests of the capitalists throughout the world. We can't let it happen — they say to themselves — we cannot allow Albania to once again be a place in which there is collective production and people share in solidarity, without any parasitic bureaucrats!

We cannot allow “our” capitalist governments to intervene and to steal victory from these working people, the poorest in Europe, but those who today hold their heads the highest. No to the capitalists! Hands off the workers' and peasants' revolution in Albania! □

Albanian revolution and the Balkans ...

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and East. The British, Austrian, Russian and Ottoman empires, one after another, planted their boots in the Balkans and, for centuries, blocked the peoples' road to progress. The word “Balkanization” entered into the classic political vocabulary as an imperialist tactic that consists of fomenting the division of an historic region into small states, promoting conflicts among them, keeping their wounds always open, stirring up their resentments and thus reducing the region to impotence and servitude. And offering “protection” as the gangster offers “protection” to his victim.

The 1945 Yugoslavian revolution was one notable attempt to escape from this situation by means of a partisan, Balkan Federation under the power of workers and peasants, arising from the *partisans'* resistance to Nazism. This attempt, the Yugoslavian Federation, was as far as it was possible to go in 1945 Europe, given the Yalta pact between Stalin and Anglo-American imperialism. The English bourgeoisie crushed a communist revolution in Greece, and Stalin, for his

part, threatened revolutionary Yugoslavia and opposed their unification with Bulgaria and Albania.

Solidarity

Today the failure of the Yugoslavian Federation cannot be understood as a failure of Balkan federalism, the only means of uniting these small peoples in strong, viable entities which transcend national boundaries and are capable of tearing down their age-old dependence. Still less can it be understood as a failure of the socialist path. It is necessary to understand it (the same as the USSR or China) as the failure of the privileged and totalitarian bureaucracy that socialism inherited from the time of Stalin, and that because of their privileges and their methods, could not go further in the construction of an egalitarian society, without classes, an authentic and proletarian socialism, on the path of fusion between free and equal peoples, without national privilege or oppression.

The war in old Yugoslavia and the wave of misery and hunger in the Balkans shows the relapse of these peoples into their old past of

divisions and manipulation by the great powers (as Lenin used to say, “great” for the large scale of their theft).

But the other facet of the situation — with feats such as the heroic resistance of Bosnia, the struggle against Milosevic's electoral fraud, the massive protests in Bulgaria and, now, the Albanian revolution — opens another historical opportunity for these people to go forward, to rise to their feet, and for the international workers' movement to help them.

This historic crossroad is one that intensely illuminates a modest initiative, such as the conference of the old Yugoslavian unions or the initiative of the Bosnian teachers' unions which are going to meet in Budapest, Hungary. It must be the working class, by means of its unions, parties and spokesmen, that takes the steps, that will not be easy, toward a form of revolutionary, democratic, socialist unity of the Balkan people — people so badly treated throughout the history of capitalist and Stalinist Europe. — Anibal Ramos (Translated from the Spanish.) □

Solidarity with socialist Cuba!

Cuba's critical situation demands from the workers and solidarity movements the broadest and most energetic action to support the struggle *against the blockade* imposed by imperialism. Cuba has withstood more than 30 years of blockade and aggression, although the present crisis and the increased imperialist pressure through the Helms-Burton law have placed the country in a difficult situation. *International material and political solidarity* with the conquests of the revolution is one of the principal methods through which you can help and save it.

The Spanish Prime Minister's policy towards Cuba unmasks once again the character of this government. It is not only 100% capitalist, it is also a puppet of American imperialist interests and of the *gusanos* of the Cuban counterrevolution. This scorched earth policy even goes against the sectors of Spanish capitalists that have invested in the island. Some have declared that "the results of Aznar's policy profits only the most recalcitrant sections of Cuban exiles, not Spanish interests." There are no few sources that explain this policy by the debt contracted with the *gusanos* that financially supported the PP (Aznar's party) to win the last elections. The link of the PP with the head of the *gusanos*, Mas Canosa, the diplomatic and logistical support received by the government, support this logic. While the Helms-Burton law is being rejected by the majority of governments of the world, while the United Nations voted, with a large majority, in favor of a resolution against the blockade, the plan presented by Aznar to the European Union is practically a copy of the imperialist plan.

The Helms-Burton law represents another turn of the screw to finish with the conquests of the Cuban revolution. They try to impede third countries from trading freely with Cuba; they try to reclaim former properties expropriated by the revolution and to impede, by methods contrary to all international law, businesses of other countries establishing commercial relations with the island. The struggle to *lift the blockade* and against the Helms-Burton law is the principal base of solidarity with Cuba. But, it is also the point of departure to defend the conquests of the revolution. The freedom to trade with capitalist countries is not nearly the danger for the revolution as is the misery and lack of basic materials in order to de-



The front of the Cuban Electric Works in 1960 after it was seized by the workers in their revolution. "This building is the property of and is occupied by the workers, who are prepared to give their lives for national sovereignty. We support nationalization."

velop the economy and to decently feed the population. The most important danger comes from the imperialist blockade. *Those who place criticism or errors of the Cuban leadership before the struggle against the blockade are mistaken.* Against imperialism, we are with Cuba without conditions, even with its errors.

A *relation* exists between this blockade and the policy of sections of the Cuban leadership favorable to a greater rapprochement with capitalism. The exceptional character of the blockade means that to establish certain economic relations it is necessary to pay a political price. What the imperialists want is to finish with Castroism or impose political conditions favorable to them; in exchange they will accept economic relations in the normal framework of the world market. Or, if the Cubans will accept liquidating the conquests of the revolution, perhaps they will be disposed to lift the blockade. In this framework, the blockade reinforces inside the Cuban bureaucracy the partisans of bigger and more serious concessions to the capitalists. On the contrary, the struggle to lift the blockade weakens such positions and if it is successful in lifting it by an international solidarity mobilization, it will mean a defeat for imperialism and reinforcement of the most consistent, most partisan tendencies of advancing towards socialism.

From 1960, when the Cuban revolution took radical methods against American and bourgeois Cuban properties, the United States decreed the economic blockade. In these

conditions, the struggle for *socialism* has demonstrated its superiority against the capitalist aggressor. Cuba went from being the whorehouse and playground of the American rich to winning its *independence*, to achieving an increase in the standard of living and education for the masses as has occurred in no other country on the continent. And all this a few miles from the center of power of the heads of the world. The victory of the Cuban revolution was a direct threat against the power of the imperialists. Ché expressed their fear in this way:

"They attack us for what we are, but they attack us more because we show the road forward. What worries imperialism is not so much the nickel mines or the sugar mills that they have just lost in Cuba, but the fate of Venezuelan oil, Mexican cotton, Chilean copper, Argentinean cattle, Brazilian coffee, which are the fountain of the wealth of American monopolies."

That is the force of the revolution.

The Cuban workers and peasants *never* arrived at taking possession of, and exercising directly, state power. A bureaucratic caste, formed of party and government functionaries, took possession of state power and confronted the imperialist blockade by throwing themselves into the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow. The self-denial that the Cuban leaders showed in revolutionary times converted itself into conformism under the protection of Moscow. Cuba was used by the ex-USSR and its peaceful coexistence policy with imperialism; it was used as a coin that could be exchanged in one way or another in function of strategic necessities. It could have chosen another road, that of supporting the victory of other revolutions on the American continent, Nicaragua and El Salvador are the most recent, in order to reinforce its role and its economy while it was weakening imperialism. This would have been a more effective guarantee for its development.

The crisis and the fall of the bureaucracy governing in Moscow and its accelerated reconversion toward capitalism meant another hard turn. From 1990 to 1994 the GNP fell 43%. Sugar production fell from 8 million tons in 1990 to 4 in 1994. The production of tobacco fell more than 50%, nickel some 35%, and it was similar in all branches. The necessity to import oil to sustain the most basic activities bled the Cuban econ-

omy to the maximum. The political and economic dependency on Moscow has been paid for cruelly. The Cuban bureaucracy has its special responsibility.

But is there a bureaucracy in Cuba? Those that visit Havana confirm that neighborhoods like *Nuevo Vedado* or *Siboney* are very different from the general abandonment in which the cities find themselves. Here the houses are well cared for, the streets guarded by police, and the "Mr. and Mrs." have their maids that are able to buy with dollars in special shops. Here reside those bureaucrats that have the top posts in the party, the Ministries, the Army or the Police; that have ties to exports, or tourism, or are singers or ballerinas ... This is a "select" group which forms the bureaucracy and government of the country. It has no poverty and it is very much above the general poverty that there is in the country.

The party that governs, the Cuban Communist Party, reflects and sustains this bureaucratic caste. We see an example in the composition of its Central Committee in 1994. It was composed of 225 people, of which only 10 were workers and 2 were peasants. The rest were divided in this way: 77 were party functionaries; 35 were part of the government or from its highest circles; another 35 were professionals or intellectuals; 31 from the military; 26 heads of enterprises; 8 were considered as other professionals, and in all the Central Committee, there is only one Black person (50% of the Cuban population is Black). Scarcely 5% of the Central Committee is workers and peasants; the rest represent directly this section of functionaries, the military, leaders of enterprises, intellectuals, that form the heart of the bureaucratic caste that takes advantage of the conquests of the revolution for their own benefit. This bureaucracy is not able to truly represent the interests of the revolution and of the Cuban working people.

What is the *future*? The imperialists and the *gusanos* of Miami want to re-conquer the island, return it to the capitalist fold, get back their factories and latifundistas, convert it once again into a playground and gambling den to make good businesses, to liquidate national independence and to make Cuba a new semi-colony.

The policy of the bureaucracy consists in giving facilities to the capitalists that want to invest in Cuba and to convert itself into its representative, into the guarantor of the capitalists' interests on the island. In such difficult conditions of the Cuban economy,

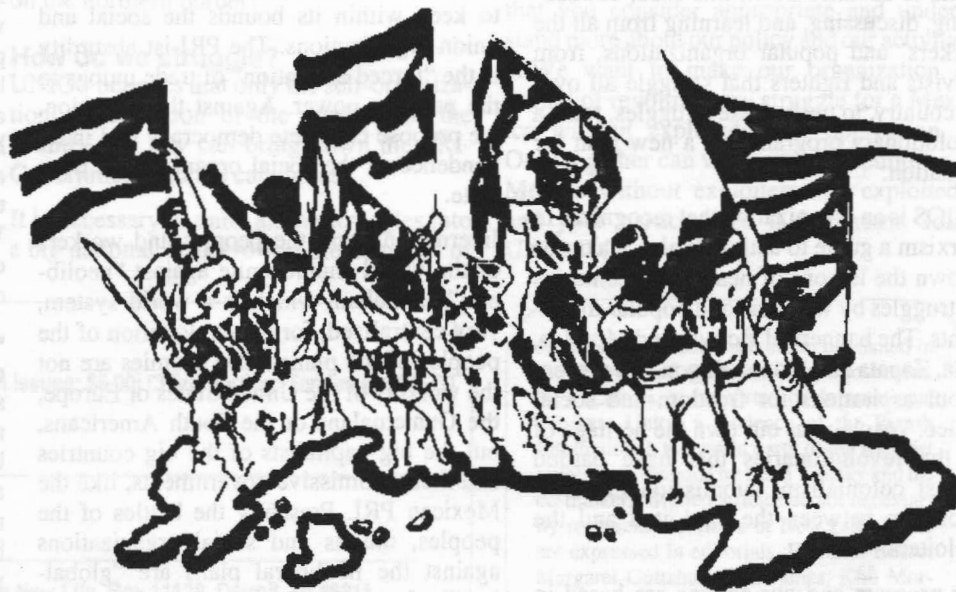
there are certain necessary concessions to achieve the basics. Lenin and the Bolsheviks had to make them in order to save the revolution through what was called the New Economic Policy (NEP). But they made it reinforcing *the power of the workers and peasants*, recognizing that it was a question of a concession imposed by the war and the imperialist blockade, and insisting that it was necessary in order to accumulate forces that would allow a new push toward socialism.

The policy of the Cuban leadership combines concessions to the capitalists with the reinforcement of the bureaucratic power, with impeding the workers and peasants from exercising power directly, so that they are able to defend and organize themselves. A new push toward socialism needs a *political revolution*, an uprising of the workers and peasants that permits unmasking the bureaucracy and passing state power into the hands of the organizations of the workers. The new power of the workers ought to organize workers' control of industry and the planned economy, combat inequalities, watch closely all capitalist investments, solicit support from workers of the world to lift the blockade and install freedoms for workers and peasants.

The bourgeoisie presents its campaign against Cuba as if it were defending human rights, as if its true interests were in implanting democracy. It is a lie, but it takes advantage of the lack of freedoms imposed by Fidel. The freedoms that we want are not those of the bourgeoisie, they are freedoms

for the workers and peasants that allow them to organize themselves to defend and develop socialism. The bureaucracy suffocates and impedes the free expression of ideas and proposals, but socialism is not able to truly represent the working people if it does not have at its disposal necessary freedoms. It would be irresponsible to raise this problem without responding to the threat from the *gusanos* in Miami, but equally irresponsible to hide one's head in the sand. Freedom requires that the workers have their unions and committees, democratic and controlled by themselves, not imposed by the government power. Freedom requires that they are able to form parties that define themselves clearly as defending the revolutionary conquests, and, for example, prohibiting capitalist parties or those that are financed with money from exiles. Workers' democracy will know how to establish methods against the *gusanos* while guarding the liberties of the workers and peasants. This will be the rebirth of socialism.

In conclusion: the most important and urgent task is to mobilize against the imperialist blockade. Struggling against it, we defend Cuba and its revolution and we make it difficult for the tendencies inside Cuba that are most favorable to going towards capitalism. We take a stand for a political revolution in which the workers and peasants take possession of state power and develop the revolutionary conquests. Freedoms that are necessary are for the working people, the *gusanos* have no rights, they have lost them. —M. Salas (Translated from the Spanish.)



A struggle for a socialist Mexico ...

We are printing excerpts from the platform of our comrades in Mexico — members of UNIOS, supporters of International Workers Unity (Fourth International). As our readers will see, they support all the working class and popular struggles against U.S. imperialism in Mexico and its puppets in the Mexican government. They want a socialist Mexico and are conducting a large campaign for this in conjunction with the elections.

What is UNIOS?

UNIOS (Unidad Obrera y Socialista/ Workers and Socialist Unity) is a political organization of workers of the country and the city, convinced of the struggle to finish with the evil PRI government and the capitalist system, which condemns Mexicans and all peoples of the world to misery and oppression. Mexico is a colony of the financial power of the United States.

We are a political grouping because it is not enough to fight everyday on our farms, workplaces, schools, and communities. It is necessary to struggle to change the world around us and to make Mexico a nation without exploitation, oppression, injustice and colonial domination by foreign powers. A Socialist Mexico, completely democratic, without any kind of military or political dictatorship.

UNIOS is not a finished revolutionary leadership that is able to answer all the problems of the country. We are a political group that wants to advance down this road, collaborating, discussing, and learning from all the workers' and popular organizations, from activists and fighters that struggle all over the country, to unify these struggles, raise a revolutionary program and a new plan for the nation.

UNIOS is an organization that recognizes in Marxism a guide to action. It also makes as its own the lessons of nearly two centuries of struggles by workers' and popular movements. The banners of Bolivar and Morelos, Villa, Zapata and Flores Magon, are present in our aspirations for freedom and social justice. We claim as our own the heritage of all the revolutionaries that have battled against colonialism, submission and collaboration between the exploited and the exploiters.

Our program and our actions are based in three principles:



Independence of the workers: only the exploited and oppressed of the country and city can take to the end the struggle against misery, exploitation and all marks of oppression. We have no confidence in any alliance with the owners, bosses or landowners, no matter how much "democracy" or "nationalism" they proclaim. We want a government of the workers of the country and the city, that cannot reach any "Transitional Pact" or compromise with the guilty that have remained in power for more than 70 years. The change in the country will come from the efforts of working people and their organization, action and revolutionary mobilization.

Workers' democracy: let us workers decide our future. No "professional politicians," no cafe intellectuals, no "commandantes," can substitute for free discussion and democratic decisions from below. Mexico has an enormous corporatist tradition. From Porfirio Diaz to the PRI, the government has sought to keep within its bounds the social and union organizations. The PRI-ist absurdity is the "forced affiliation" of trade unions to the party in power. Against this situation, we propose complete democracy and independence of the social organizations from state.

Internationalism: the peoples and workers of the world should unite against "neoliberal" capitalism which is a world system, very centralized, for the exploitation of the peoples of the planet. Our enemies are not the workers of the United States or Europe, the Guatemalans or the South Americans, but the big capitalists of the big countries and their submissive governments, like the Mexican PRI. Presently the battles of the peoples, unions and social organizations against the neoliberal plans are "globalized": from the Russian miners to the Patagonia, they continue to fight against low

salaries, layoffs, privatizations and corruption without end by the politicians entrenched in power. That's why UNIOS sympathizes with International Workers Unity (Fourth International) that unites revolutionary socialist organizations in 20 countries and is an effort to contribute to a single world organization for the peoples and workers of the world.

What does UNIOS want?

We want a workers and peasants government, a Socialist Mexico, with democracy for the workers. A Mexico where the riches are in the hands of and at the service of those who produce, the workers of the city and the country. A Mexico in which all the people really participate in decision making. A Mexico that bases its relations with other countries in solidarity and mutual respect, not in exploitation and dependence. A Mexico in which the native peoples are respected for their culture, their customs and their habits. A Mexico in which the natural resources are utilized rationally to serve the people. A Mexico in which all forms of oppression by sex, age, culture and opinion disappear.

The program of socialist revolution will be defined by all the people in the course of the struggle. UNIOS proposes a series of measures that permit us to advance down this road:

- **No payment of the foreign debt:** the only way to free ourselves from the yoke of the International Monetary Fund is also the only way to put our resources to the service of the people, and not for the big usurious world banks. Already we have borne enough decades of exploitation: from 1982 the country has paid more than 2 billion dollars as tribute and payment to the national and international usurious banks. Not a cent more to Wall Street! Use the debt money to have education, health and improved living conditions!

- **Nationalization of the big industries under the control of the workers:** it is necessary to finish with the usury of the banks, nationalizing all the foreign and national banks, converting them into a single credit agency to serve the workers. To avoid corruption by the PRI-ist nationalizations, the bank should be under the control of the workers themselves. The same should occur with PEMEX and CFE.

Neoliberal privatizations are a swindle, a total fraud: the sale under cost of TELMEX and the millions "loaned" to Raul Salinas for the purchase of TV Azteca. That's why we say that the businesses should be nationalized without indemnification. The petrochemical industry should not be auctioned to foreigners (not even 49%), it must be kept under the control of the nation and in the hands of the workers and their democratized union organizations. The products that we sell to other countries bring profits only to a handful of owners and foreign bankers; it is necessary to nationalize the main networks that control foreign trade and place them under workers' control. While this does not occur, year after year, the country will suffer from the stealing of its resources and the continued devaluation of the peso.

It is necessary to repeal the TLC (Tratado de Libre Comercio/Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA), signed by the unforgettable Carlos Salinas, which fundamentally profits Yankee businesses; the TLC only increases the exploitation, the racism and the anti-Mexicanism, in profiting the big Yankee multinationals.

• **For a true agrarian reform:** the reforms of Article 27 of the constitution must be annulled, to defend the communal lands against the neo-Porfirian haciendas and hidden latifundistas. Credits, technology and technical advice for the poor peasants. Complete unionization of agricultural workers and support to voluntary collectivization of the land. The speculation must end.

• **For the improvement in the standard of living of the oppressed classes:** a sliding scale of wages, in order to protect us from inflation. A sliding scale of hours of work, a 40 hour week with pay for 56 and a national plan of public works to combat layoffs and increasing misery. Nationalization of urban areas to build public housing; expropriation of big real-estate holdings. Maintain and improve the system of social protection under the control of the unions and popular organizations.

• **Constituent Assembly:** the famous "state reform" is no more than a pact among political professionals to prevent the country from reaching the democratic life and to close to the people the roads so that they might make their own decisions. We want a free constituent assembly, democratic and sovereign, that guarantees full rights of association, expression and assembly and that executes the measures that we propose and others that the people determine. We want freedom to register for all parties, independence of the unions from the government and the unrestricted right to strike, respect to the customs and habits of native peoples and collective businesses.

• **For the protection of the environment:** relocation of polluting industries and closing of those that constitute a danger for the population or the ecosystems, without affecting the rights of their workers. Plan of rational use of national resources elaborated by the workers with the assistance of democratic ecological groups.

• **For the rights of women, youth and native minorities:** complete equality of men and women; the right to abortion, to birth control and exemplary punishment for all sexual crimes. The right to a free and scientific education at all levels, decriminalization of drugs and informational campaigns against its use to finish with the mafias of drug trafficking. Complete support to the demands of native peoples. Defense of our compatriots in the United States. No to the Helms-Burton Law, no to the embargo. No more racial discrimination, or laws like Proposition 187 of Wilson! No to the construction of a new "iron curtain" on the northern border!

How do we struggle?

UNIOS believes that only the self-organization, mobilization of the workers of the country and city can bring down the PRI-Government and the capitalists.

It is necessary to unite all the struggles into a big national strike to win the demands of

the people. Workers, peasants, youth and farmers must decide democratically what are the best forms to organize and what are the main demands at each moment.

The militants of UNIOS fight in the front ranks against the trade union bureaucrats of whatever stripe that want to impose their slogans on the workers and against sectarian groups that place the interests of their group above those of the needs of the masses. Assemblies, democratic and with decision-making power, are the best form of organization up to now that the workers and the popular sectors have discovered.

It will not be through elections and pacts with the government that the oppressed will win their demands. Elections and the parliament must serve as a tribune to organize, educate, mobilize the masses and spread the program of socialist revolution.

The violence of small groups isolated from the masses only causes the useless sacrifice of their militants and the militarization of the country. Groups of workers and peasants must assume collectively the defense of their organizations, communities and mobilizations in order to face repression and to advance in self-organization. ...

How can you learn about us? How can we struggle together?

Our organization is open to all workers, youth and farmers who want to build a Socialist Mexico and to finish with the PRI government. You can come to our meetings and discuss with us how to organize the struggle that you are involved in at your workplace, school or community. You can write for our publications, make comments that you consider appropriate and understand more about our policy and our activity. ...We want to make our organization a school of revolutionary struggle for a Mexico without exploitation or oppression.... Only together can we succeed in building a Mexico without exploiters and exploited, and your participation is important. Join UNIOS! □

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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 Guttschall, Tim James, Kim Morgan, Fred Russo.

New Life is changing its name to *Socialism!*

Meeting of the Editorial Board of *Socialism!*

Sunday, April 13, 1 p.m.
Cass Cafe
On Cass, south of Forest
Detroit

Socialist Study Groups

Wednesday, April 2, 12:30
Wayne State University
Student Center Building
South Lobby
Detroit

Thursday, April 10, 7 pm
Borders Bookstore
Ford Rd. and Mercury Dr.
Dearborn

For the Detroit newspaper workers ...

Continued from the front page

bosses use these backward workers against workers fighting for more decent jobs, wages, healthcare benefits, union rights, etc. Even workers who do believe that the right to a job at a living wage is a fundamental right, aren't organized to fight for this and make it a reality.

Unfortunately, the top leadership of the unions in the U.S. is doing little or nothing to change this situation. They are putting union resources into dozens of small, isolated struggles, into the Democratic Party, which promotes the corporate agenda, and into their own pockets.

As long as millions of young workers, students and activists of all kinds, are not or-

ganized to fight for the right to a job at a living wage by law, as long as they don't have a political party big enough and powerful enough to pass and enforce that law, they are going to continue to suffer.

We urge youth, workers, trade unionists, activists, to support the Labor Party's campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage, and to join and build the Labor Party. As we change the way millions of workers and students think, as we change their level of organization, bring them together, develop and strengthen inner-connections, we will build an army that will be capable of marching right over the employers and getting and keeping everything that workers need. *New Life* □

New Life just held a conference to talk about the situation facing the working class and the tasks of revolutionary socialists.

We decided that our most important tasks are:

"1) Building the Labor Party and its campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage ...

2) Continuing to develop propaganda for socialism, Marxism, and internationalism oriented toward the most working class fighters in the Labor Party ...

3) Continuing to educate ourselves and others as Marxists."

We are going to be spending more time on building the Labor Party and its campaign and on aiding workers in becoming consistent members and leaders of the Labor Party. We also decided to change the name of our publication to *Socialism!*, a socialist bulletin for the Labor Party, so that the main purpose of our publication is clearer.

Our resolution on tasks argues: "... It's especially important to aid ... workers in becoming consistent fighters for the Labor Party and in becoming leaders of the Labor Party. The more we work with the most working class fighters in the framework of the Labor Party, the more we aid them in becoming leaders of the Labor Party, the more they will see that the working class does have the ability to overthrow the capitalists, establish its own government, and begin to build a socialist society ... It's important to continue to develop propaganda for socialism and Marxism, to take a clear stand against the bourgeoisie's and the imperialist trade union bureaucracy's campaign against socialism and communism, and to do this in a collective way. Socialism is the only solution to the problems facing the working class. The best working class fighters aren't going to see this if working class socialists and Marxists don't work together to promote socialism. The tendency among socialists in the Labor Party to simply dissolve and not make any common effort to promote socialism and Marxism is not best for the working class."

If you would like to know more about our struggle for the Labor Party, socialism, and Marxism, please feel free to contact us.—M.G. □

