

SOCIALISM!



CONTINUING NEW LIFE, A SOCIALIST BULLETIN FOR THE LABOR PARTY

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Detroit labor needs decent jobs by law!

Support the
Labor Party's
campaign for
the 28th
Amendment
to the U.S.
Constitution!

"Every person
shall have the right
to a job and to
receive a living
wage for their
work."

Inside:



Windsor workers march during general strike, October 17.

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Detroit labor needs decent jobs by law!

The U.S. economy is continuing to expand and a higher percentage of workers are working. According to official statistics, unemployment is now only 4.7%. This figure is deceptive because it doesn't include workers who have stopped looking for work, or the many working part-time who want to work full time. Nonetheless, so many workers are employed that there is a labor shortage in some situations. For the first time in many years, some workers can demand higher wages and get them, without worrying about being fired and replaced.

The owners of finance capital are so concerned about this situation that Alan Greenspan, head of the Federal Reserve, is again warning that the economy is expanding too rapidly and that workers are demanding and getting higher wages. He warns that interest rates may be raised to discourage owners from borrowing and expanding their operations and hiring. The last thing that the rich bosses want is a big, growing working class!

While the percentage of workers working has been increasing in general, workers in Detroit still face difficult conditions. It is still difficult for workers in Detroit to find decent jobs with decent wages. Unemployment in Michigan is 3.7%, but unemployment in the Detroit metro area 5.7%. Within the City of Detroit, where most African Americans live, it is even higher.

Dennis Archer, the current mayor of Detroit, now running for reelection, claims that he is going to make this situation better by luring business to Detroit. He's established zones in Detroit where businesses won't have to pay any taxes. This may help some workers get some jobs in the short run, but it is no long run solution. Once you accept the principle that Detroit labor has to lure business to Detroit by selling itself as cheaply as possible, there is no stopping. What are we going to do if these businesses want to move? What are we going to do if another group of workers in another city offers them a better deal? Are we going to work for free? Are we going to pay them to let us work? Where does it stop?

Ed Vaughn, the other candidate for Detroit mayor, criticizes Archer for pandering too much to finance capital, but he doesn't have a clear alternative.

The current leadership of the UAW is calling for a campaign against "fast track NAFTA II," for a "fairer" trade agreement, and for

campaigning for Larry Owen for Michigan governor in 1998. At best, defeating NAFTA II may stop some job losses. But the UAW leadership doesn't have any programs, strategies or tactics for fighting for decent jobs and wages for all Detroit workers now.

For years the UAW leadership has attempted to deal with the problem of the lack of decent jobs and wages by making concessions to the owners and through collective bargaining, attempting to get certain job guarantees in certain contracts.

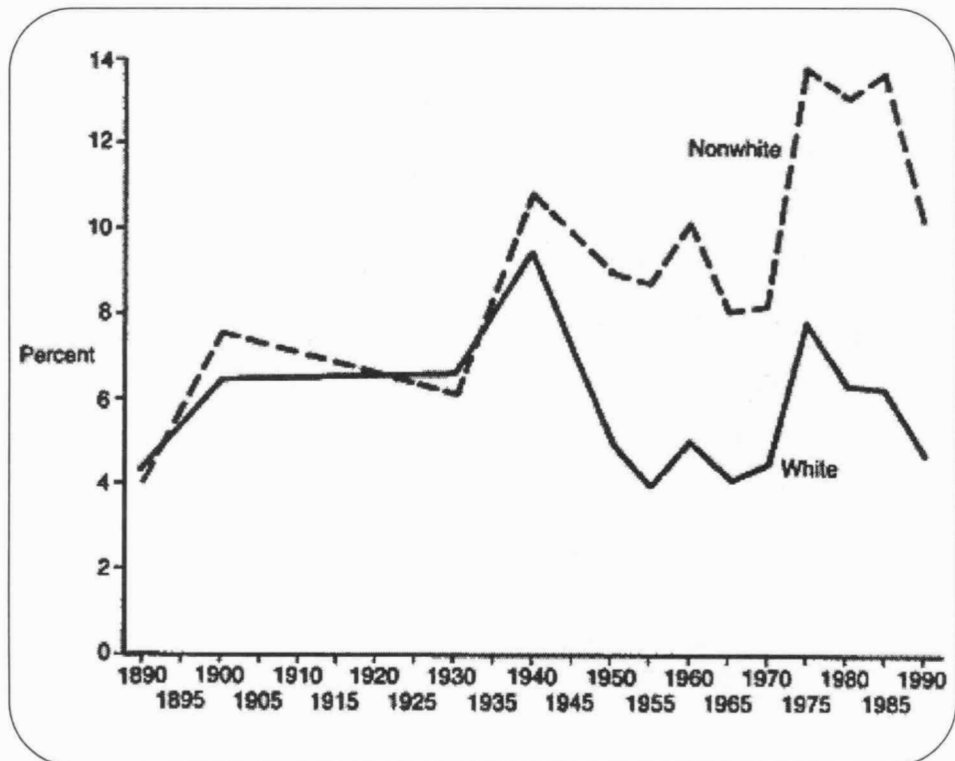
But this hasn't stopped the deterioration of the working and living conditions of Detroit labor. It is precisely the lack of decent jobs, wages, working conditions, housing, health-care and education, that is leading to the destruction of so many Detroit residents, young and old, whether through injuries or illnesses from work, alcohol or drug addiction, or violent attacks from family members, acquaintances, or unknown residents.

The only solution to this problem is a united, all-labor fight for decent jobs and wages *by law*. Banks, corporations and governments must be forced to do whatever is necessary

to provide more decent jobs and living wages. Anyone who works 30 or 40 hours a week should make enough to live comfortably. This means making a *political* fight for the Labor Party's campaign for the 28th amendment — "Every person shall have the right to a job and to receive a living wage for their work" —, for laws for a shorter work week without cutting pay so that more can work, for a \$10/hour minimum wage with automatic increases in accord with price increases, and other pro-labor laws.

With a united fight for pro-labor laws that guarantee workers' basic rights to decent jobs and wages, Detroit labor can begin to win the whole oppressed population to its side and to impose its will against the will of the rich owners.

The more the Labor Party grows, the more the fight for a Labor Government based on an independent mass mobilization will grow. This will be a step toward a workers' revolutionary democracy, a socialist society in which working people own and control the most important banks, industries, transportation, and run them in the interests of the working majority. — M.Guttshall □



Unemployment in the United States from 1890-1990, comparing workers of color to white workers. Since the 1930s, workers of color have been unemployed *twice* as much as white workers, through Democratic and Republican administrations.

After the UPS strike, how can labor use its power?

The UPS workers' strike showed that labor has a tremendous amount of power. Over 185,000 workers from across the United States went on strike. They organized mass picketing of UPS package distribution centers. They stopped the movement of approximately 80% of small packages.

The owners were so afraid of the strike and the strike's popularity that they agreed to some important demands fairly quickly — hiring more full-time workers and wage increases for the lowest paid UPS workers.

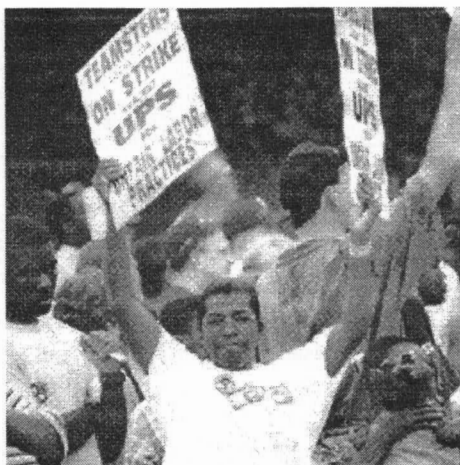
Now the owners and their government are so afraid of the UPS workers and the revitalized Teamsters' union continuing to make progress, that they are "investigating" the Teamsters' union, accusing the current leadership of engaging in illegal activities, invalidating the election of the president that led the strike, and even saying that they might not allow him to run for president again.

Now that it is once again clear that the labor movement does have quite a bit of power, the question is: what can the labor movement do to use that power? How can it best use its power?

Two roads

There are basically two roads that the labor movement can take. Labor can continue to fight for more decent jobs and wages sector by sector, and try to organize more workers into unions sector by sector. Or labor can make a united fight for more decent jobs and wages *by law*.

Right now, the majority of the labor movement is following the first road. Each time a contract is about to expire, sections of the leadership and membership try to figure out how they can get the best possible contract, get job guarantees, higher wages, benefits, etc. The current leadership of the AFL-CIO is setting aside a larger percentage of its budget so that it can organize more workers and they can follow this same road. However, the unions, the current leadership of the labor movement, the AFL-CIO, are not fighting for any kind of independent labor platform or program in the political arena. They aren't fighting for any kind of independent labor program of laws, or legislation, designed to address labor's problems. Instead, they basically pick and chose among the various laws and pieces of legislation being promoted by the bosses, with the goal of finding those least harmful to



labor. Even when labor does strike out on its own and try to promote a law or piece of legislation favorable to labor, it's an isolated effort. It's not part of a consistent and all-sided effort for its own program of laws and legislation favorable to labor and the oppressed population.

AFL-CIO Convention

It was easy to see this at the last AFL-CIO convention in Pittsburgh. The convention focused on organizing the unorganized, getting a "fairer" trade agreement, running "union family" candidates for political offices (that is, candidates with union members in their families, not necessarily, independent labor candidates, owned and controlled by labor and loyal to it), and providing a platform for various Democratic Party leaders and hopefuls — Clinton, Gore, Gephardt.

A certain section of the labor movement is going to continue on this road. It is difficult to say for how long. But it is not going to make a lot of progress.

UPS workers were able to have some success because there were so many of them, they were relatively well-organized, and had a certain amount of control in their union. But most workers aren't in that situation. Even if there were a massive campaign to organize the unorganized, even if every worker in the U.S. were in a union, it would still be difficult to make big improvements in jobs and wages, company by company, contract by contract. Bosses would continue to play one group of workers off against another. Workers would continue to confront serious obstacles to successful strikes — private police, scabs, laws protecting scabs, etc.

For these reasons, the most thoughtful, seri-

ous, and devoted sections of the labor movement are going to be turning more and more to making a united fight for more decent jobs, wages, and other things that labor needs, *by law*.

Does this mean that labor is going to draw up a program of laws and legislation, work to pass it, and then sit back and wait for the bosses and their politicians and police to enforce these laws. Hardly. As labor is more and more successful in its fights for laws favorable to the working class, it is also going to develop its own candidates, legislators, administrators, and armed forces to enforce these laws, composed of millions of working women and working men.

The foundation of the Labor Party and the Labor Party's campaign for the 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution — "Every person shall have the right to a job and to receive a living wage for their work" — is a first step toward a united labor fight for more decent jobs and wages *by law*. There will be others: a fight for a shorter work week without cutting pay by law; a fight for a \$10/minimum wage with increases in accord with price increases; a fight to repeal laws that restrict labor's rights to organize and strike.

The UPS workers' strike shows labor has power. The Labor Party's campaign for the 28th amendment shows how labor can use that power to fight for more jobs and wages for all working people. The more organized labor uses its power to fight for all working people, employed and unemployed, organized, and unorganized, the more that power will grow. — M.G. □

Eddie Kornegay

Teamsters International Trustee
Teamsters' Black Caucus
Labor Party leadership

Why Teamsters support the Labor Party

November 13, 7 pm
UAW Local 417
Stephenson and Maple

A newspaper worker on lessons of the struggle

I'd like to start by saying that one of the most important lessons we have learned is that there are many, many generous and dedicated men and women in the labor movement. Without the support of the labor movement, this strike would have been over long ago. For this, my wife Jane and I, and the over 1,800 newspaper workers who are still locked-out, are thankful.

While there have been disagreements over strike strategy, one can't fault the CWA (my international) for not looking after its members financially. They have paid our health insurance premiums and provided adopt-a-family assistance and strike benefits that have kept us afloat during this long and bitter strike.

This strike is over two years old. By the time all the unfair labor practice charges and law suits get through the court system, another three to four years will be gone. *The court system is not the place to win strikes.*

Of the many lessons learned in this strike, two seem to be most important. First, a militant and determined labor leadership is needed that is dedicated to winning strikes no matter what it takes. If the rank-and-file are prepared and given a voice in the running of the strike, they will follow strong, militant leaders anywhere.

Secondly, labor laws have got to be reformed and a political party has got to be built that truly represents working people and the dispossessed in our society. Activists, who are dedicated to making things better for working people and the poor, have got to run for political office. I think the newly formed Labor Party is a step in the right direction.

We in Detroit are fighting two giant media chains, Gannett and Knight-Ridder, who are two of the most powerful in the country. Money does not mean anything to them when it comes to breaking unions. In Detroit we had a very successful ad and circulation boycott in place. Circulation was cut by 40% and 1,400 advertisers were out of the paper at one time, but it was not enough to get them to call off their attack on workers. The *Detroit News*, although it is Gannett's largest newspaper next to *USA Today*, accounts for only 4% of the company's revenues. In the midst of all the destruction here in Detroit, Gannett's stock rose to over \$95 per share and then split. We can't beat them economically, but we have a resource that they don't



Newspaper workers joined the general strike in Windsor, October 17.

— working people, hundreds of thousands of them. Union people have to be willing to take to the streets, if necessary, and do whatever it takes to stop this world-wide attack on workers and organized labor. We can't rely on the courts. Too often they are the tools of the bosses. As I've said before, we are looking at possibly 4-5 years before this strike is resolved. Even then, many people probably will not be going back. Homes have been lost, marriages strained to the breaking point, and dreams for the future shattered. We need to be willing to walk picket lines of other unions that are in trouble, break unjust court orders and injunctions that unfairly curtail working peoples' rights to decent contracts and a good standard of living for their families. Maybe the most important of all would be the willingness to participate in general strikes and work stoppages to protect the gains we have made from attacks by huge, greedy corporations in search of even greater profits.

Politically labor law has got to be reformed. Bad laws such as Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin have got to be repealed.

I don't think any of us here in Detroit realized how the cards were stacked against working people until we began our fight. The way the NLRB functions has got to be streamlined. It took two years before a Federal judge made a decision that our strike was an unfair labor practice strike. His decision on this and all other NLRB rulings (there are many), could be appealed all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which takes years. In the meantime, working people, which are the backbone of the country, are enduring emotional, physical and financial hardship that can never be made up. Frank Vega, CEO of Detroit newspapers, made the statement early in the strike that "the company will appeal the court's decisions, if necessary, until all the strikers leave the papers or die." He said that to people who have worked at these papers for 20, 30 and

40 years or more.

I think that a third party, the Labor Party, is needed if changes are to be made. Some Democrats have supported labor causes but too many have all but abandoned the poor and working people of this country. NAFTA, welfare reform, the lack of a national health care system and laws banning permanent replacement workers (scabs) have shown that. If permanent replacement workers were banned by law, our strike would have been over long ago. Laws dealing with private security firms (goons), such as Vance International, are also needed.

Also, as companies get larger and more powerful, unions have got to do the same. We have to work together, in this country and around the world and, where practical, merge. We have to put into practice the slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all," for it truly is. We are all paying the price for not taking to the streets to stop the firing of PATCO workers. We have to educate our children and grandchildren about labor history. They have to know where they have come from to know where they are going.

The Teamsters' recent victory at UPS shows us what a large, determined number of people can do. They were successful because the strike did not take them by surprise. They planned for over a year for the possibility of a strike and were ready. They educated their members and the general public on the issues involved. Their members stuck together and the public realized that they were fighting for all of us and gave the Teamsters their support.

We in the labor movement have a tough job ahead. But with strong, militant leadership and an informed, active and dedicated rank-and-file, we can turn things around in this country and regain the ground we have lost. — Armand Nevers, Member of Detroit Typographical Union No. 18, CWA □

Why working class Teamsters support Carey

Shortly after the victorious UPS workers' strike, a U.S. government official announced that men working for Ron Carey — the leader of the strike and president of the union — had been involved in allegedly illegal activities, that Carey's recent election as president was no longer valid, and that Carey would again have to run for reelection. Days later she announced that Carey himself may have been involved and that she might not allow him to run for reelection.

According to official reports, Carey authorized giving union funds to the Democratic Party. Some of Carey's staffers arranged for Democratic Party supporters to contribute to Carey's reelection campaign.

Naturally, many workers are disappointed with Carey. He didn't support the Detroit newspaper workers' struggle in the way many workers wanted. He insisted on making an offer for the workers to return to work unconditionally, without allowing workers to vote on it. He wouldn't support the fight for a national labor march on Detroit until after the unconditional offer was made and the strike was over. Now workers read that Carey authorized contributions to the Democratic Party and that he may have made these contributions in exchange for support to his own campaign. Even if Carey himself only authorized the contributions to the Democratic Party, and wasn't involved in a deal to exchange union funds to the Democratic Party for Democratic Party supporters' funds to Carey, he hired staffers who did this kind of thing.

It's not surprising that workers who supported and campaigned for Carey, especially in Detroit, are a little disappointed.

But this should not blind workers to the big picture. Hoffa Jr., U.S. government officials, and the banks and corporations they represent, have not invalidated Carey's election and threatened not to allow him to run again, because he didn't adequately support the Detroit newspaper workers' struggle, because he authorized union contributions to the Democratic Party, or because he accepted contributions from Democratic Party supporters. There are countless numbers of so-called trade union leaders who didn't do what needed to be done with respect to the Detroit newspaper workers' strike and who have wasted union funds on the Democrats!

Hoffa Jr., U.S. government officials, and the banks, corporations, and reactionary sec-

tions of the trade union bureaucracy that they represent, are going after Carey and men associated with him, because Carey, unlike previous Teamster leaders after Hoffa Sr., has authorized three national strikes and these strikes have been successful in making some progress for Teamsters for the first time in 25 years.

By invalidating Carey's election and by threatening Carey with prosecution, the powers-that-be hope to get guarantees from Carey that he won't continue this struggle.

Workers who want union leaders willing to organize some kind of fight against the bosses should continue to support Carey and campaign for him in the coming election. A victory for Carey will make it possible to organize more struggles like the struggle against the UPS owners. A victory for Hoffa Jr. will be a set back, a return to no-win policies, deals with the bosses, persecution of workers who want to fight.

But reelecting Carey by itself will not solve all the serious problems facing Teamsters.

It is essential to fight all forms of government intervention in the Teamsters' union.

Many Teamsters thought they could rely on government officials to help them organize a fight against the most reactionary bosses and the most reactionary union leaders. They allowed government officials to have a say on rules governing union elections and to oversee union elections. The recent activities and decisions of these allegedly impartial officials shows that it is not possible to

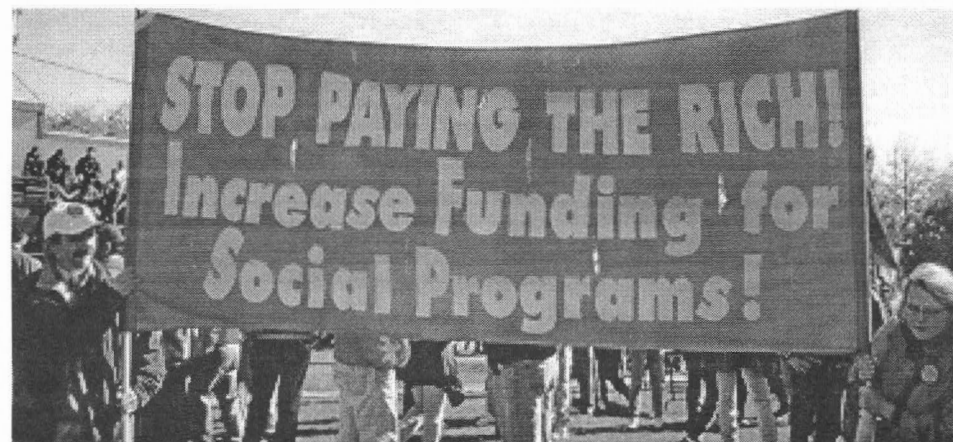
rely on them. Barbara Zack Quindel didn't bother to investigate Hoffa Jr. She just investigated Carey!

If Teamsters think it is necessary to investigate a situation in the union and/or have someone other than Teamsters oversee elections, they should fight for independent labor commissions to do this, composed of trade unionists with reputations for honesty.

The entire labor movement should take a clear stand against government intervention in the Teamsters and their elections. It should insist that these officials get out of the election preparations and process now. Representatives of the different factions in the Teamsters union and representatives of other unions should plan and organize these elections. If the entire labor movement takes a united stand, it can force the government to back down. Even if it's not possible to get the government out before the elections, workers should establish their own committees to plan, organize and oversee the elections.

It is also essential to fight Teamster support to the Democratic Party (and the Republican Party). The latest developments show that supporting Democrats is not just a waste of money. It also brings the union into contact with bad elements who use the union and discredit it. Both parties are chock full of dishonest, crooked politicians. There is no way to associate with dirt without having some of it rub off on you. How many more bad experiences does labor have to have before it learns this lesson?—M.G.□

Canadian labor shuts Windsor!



30,000 workers marched during a general strike in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, October 17. They were protesting legislation by the Conservative Harris government that attacked public employees and the people they serve.

Solidarity against discrimination!

Stop police brutality

October 22nd will be the second National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality. It's a time designated to publicize police brutality and the "criminalization of a generation." Organizers are asking everyone to wear black on Oct. 22 to show their solidarity with the victims of police brutality and murder. Victims themselves, and families of those murdered by police, are asked to speak-out about criminal acts of police. There will be demonstrations and marches in major cities all over the country. In Detroit, *Refuse and Resist* is holding a speak out at the Malice Green Memorial (Warren and 23rd) at 4 p.m. that day.

Million Woman March, October 25th

Black women all over the country are organizing a demonstration in Philadelphia as a follow-up to the Million Man March in October of 1995. Though its goals are the same — atonement and dedication to family — it has not been supported by Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam, or even the many church organizations which supported the Million Man March. On top of the lack of organizational support, other aspects of gender and class oppression are making it difficult for many to attend. Since the majority of Black women (even more than women in general) are working class and poor, most find their work, childcare and financial responsibilities make it impossible for them to attend. And, of course, requests for corporate sponsors have been ignored.

Organizers do not expect to achieve the goal of a million women at the march. They do expect, however, to use the day to build solidarity and unity among Black women — to become stronger as individuals and as a group. Black women from all over the country will stand together in support of Congresswoman Maxine Waters' efforts for a probe into CIA responsibility for drugs in Black communities, for better schools, professional development and health services, for help to women leaving prison, against welfare and housing cuts and for financial independence. That experience, as well as the organizational experience, will make the event one we can build on for the future.

Attacks on affirmative action

Among the latest attacks on affirmative action is a civil suit being brought against the University of Michigan over its admission policies. This lawsuit was brought by the

same group which succeeded in turning back the clock with a similar suit at the University of Texas — a group which claims to be "citizens against discrimination." Of course, what they really object to is that the discrimination which has gone on for hundreds of years is no longer in their favor. Affirmative Action hasn't even begun to level the playing field, let alone give

Black people an advantage over whites. Though it's been used cynically by racists, Affirmative Action has allowed *some* opportunities for a *few* who have otherwise been systematically denied opportunities. It was a significant victory of the Civil Rights movement and we must defend and extend it. — Kim Morgan □

Prisons for profit

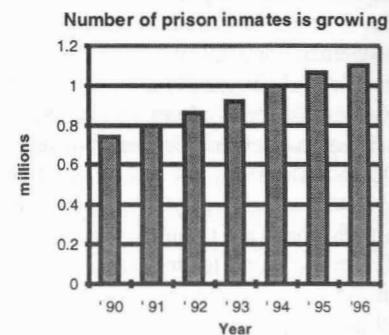
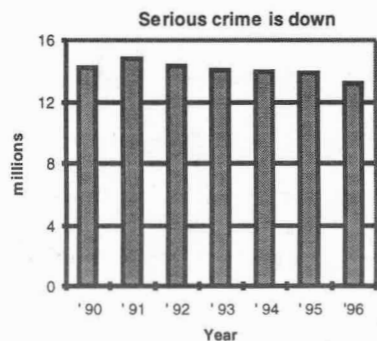
Recent attention was drawn to the privatization of prisons when videotapes were released of guards beating prisoners at a privately-owned prison in Texas. In addition to the huge profits made by construction companies and manufacturing operations in state-run prisons, now companies are gaining contracts to warehouse inmates more "efficiently." Currently, private prisons hold 4 percent of the more than 1 million U.S. prisoners. Inmate populations are increasing, in spite of the continuous decline in crime rates. Legislation which imposes more and more severe penalties, combined with the profit motive of many major corporations, serve to criminalize a large proportion of working class and poor people.

Since the implementation of increased mandatory sentencing for drug possession charges, Black men in particular are imprisoned at alarming rates — seven times as many in 1995 as in 1985 — more than twice the increase among white men. This is in spite of statistics which prove a much larger proportion of whites use drugs than do Blacks. Clearly, poli-

cies which enrich prison industries — to a tune of \$30 or \$40 billion annually — are enforced unequally.

Still, the number of white men imprisoned on drug charges increased three times over the same ten year period. On all charges overall, there was a 130% increase in Black men incarcerated between 1985 and 1995, and a 90% increase among white men. In addition, incarceration rates among Black and white women both rose more than 200%.

It seems the rich have got us both coming and going: while corporations are busting unions and cutting jobs, forcing more and more people into poverty, government policies are cutting welfare and forcing more and more people into prison — creating more profits for the rich. This further demonstrates the imperative of the Labor Party's 28th amendment campaign for jobs at living wages for all. We must go on the offensive against these attacks — taking the class struggle to a political level as much as the corporations have. —K.M. □



Sources: Federal Bureau of Investigation; Bureau of Justice Statistics (from the New York Times)

Working class political revolution in Cuba

In the last issue of *Socialism!*, we published an article on how important it is to defend Cuba against U.S. bankers and businessmen, to fight for lifting the U.S. blockade against Cuba so that it can buy the things that it needs. In this issue, we are reprinting an article by a Spanish revolutionary on another aspect of the struggle to defend Cuba, the need for a working class and socialist political revolution within Cuba itself. This article was written in September, 1994, at the moment of one of the worst crises in Cuba, when thousands were leaving because of lack of food and other necessities. The basic points are still valid today.

There is no doubt that Cuba is at a difficult crossroads. The "boat people" and the demonstrations of popular discontent that accompanied them showed to the eyes of the whole world the depths of the crisis of Castroism. It is not possible to continue looking the other way. The millions of workers around the world that are in solidarity with the Cuban people are fighting for something to help Cuba go forward: lift the blockade! This is correct: the blockade decreed by Washington was and is a prolonged siege to conquer the Cuban revolution through *hunger*, overturn its socialist conquests and convert it into a North American semi-colony.

But the struggle against the blockade is *insufficient*.

The conquests of socialism

Among the workers most dedicated to mobilizing for Cuba, there is concern for the socialist conquests of the revolution. For a generation of fighters of the international working class, Cuba has been a living example of the superiority of socialism over capitalism: the anti-capitalist conquests of the Cuban revolution were (and are) the pillars of its national independence, of its sovereignty always threatened by imperialist capital. Where other national or democratic revolutions *broke apart* because their bourgeois leaders did not want to go beyond the limits of capitalism, Cuba was *triumphant* by making socialism the necessary, logical extension, the consistent foundation of its independence. Facing imperialism, and supported by the working people, Cuban revolutionaries expropriated the capitalists. In so doing, they cut the Gordian knot that had chained the country to the North American millionaires and had converted it into their plantation, their tropical beach, their casino and brothel. And now: where are we now with the socialist conquests, with the nation-



Slogan on a wall in Havana: "We believe in socialism."

alized economy and the plans for the revolutionary state?

We have not yet come to grips with the complete bankruptcy of the USSR, of Eastern Europe or of China. The images of these last years, of the persistent attempts at destruction of the historic conquests of socialism, clouds our vision when we look at Cuba. How can Cuba ensure that it does not follow in the steps of Russia when, in the case of Cuba, it would throw it into the jaws of its imperialist neighbor?

The shouts of "Cuba resists!" and "Socialism or death!" are worth nothing if it is not capable of drawing conclusions from Soviet bankruptcy and acting accordingly.

The principal lesson of the events in the Soviet Union for the partisans of socialism is that, as soon as possible, it is necessary to throw out of power the bureaucracy that governs these countries under the label of "communist," "socialist," or "Castroist;" but, in the final analysis, a bureaucracy, a caste of functionaries, privileged and elevated above the people. It is a cancer and a mortal danger for socialism, illuminated and nurtured by the Stalins, the Ceaucescus, the Gorbachevs and the Yeltsins, in Havana as in Moscow. If the bureaucracy does not fall, if a revolutionary government that is really *working class* is not established, (not "working class" in name, but actually composed of workers closely united to the working people, democratically chosen by them), then the conquests of socialism are lost or will be converted into a mafioso framework of corruption, illegal private businesses and rob the people. For this reason the Trotskyists grouped in the International Liaison Committee [the organization that formed International Workers Unity — editor]

struggle against the imperialist blockade of Cuba, but we call on the Cuban workers to reclaim their liberties, to organize themselves independently and to fight the Castroist bureaucracy until they win a government of workers.

Workers' government

"Down with the bureaucracy, its dictatorship over the people, its agreements with imperialism!" is a cry as essential for socialism *in our epoch* as expropriation of the capitalist exploiters.

The question is this: the expropriation of the capitalist class, the public character of the principal means of production, and the organization of a planned economy are *very powerful* levers to free the workers from their exploitation by a minority. The Bolsheviks carried this out more than 70 years ago; the Castroists more than 30. But, *by themselves*, these methods are insufficient, above all in smaller, relatively poor, dependent countries. They are not sufficient, *by themselves*, to wrest these countries from capitalism, that is, a regime of production that, with centuries of world domination, penetrates all the corners of the people's lives.

To wrest a country from capitalism (and this will not be definitive without a victory of socialism in the whole world), socialism needs a suitable political instrument: a workers' government, a workers' state. This objective is the axis of a revolutionary and socialist policy. The greatest Marxists, observing the revolutions of their time with great attention, explained how a workers' government could be carried out in practice, and explained it in a way so clear that it condemns not only Stalin, as an enemy of socialism, but even Castro. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky struggled in the most

diverse situations for a state constituted of the workers themselves, without privileges for leaders, without a bureaucracy or nearly without one; administered with salaries no greater than that of a worker, with functionaries subject to the direct representatives of the workers; with policies rigorously watched and controlled by the people ...

Bureaucracy

However difficult the triumph of the revolutionary uprising may be, it is *relatively* easy for it to end or tend to end in a government of the workers based on the enthusiasm and the energy that has accumulated, unchaining the masses in order to bring down the exploiters. History has proven that it is *more difficult* to continue this struggle to the point of totally dismantling the former state administration, eradicating its habits, and not only dismantling it, but also putting the people in its place, in a permanently active and leading way. Today we know that depends not only on the will of the revolutionary party but on a lot of factors, national as well as international.

What is important is to take this struggle *as far as possible* at each historical moment, at each crossroad, like those that occurred in Russia, Eastern Europe, China, Cuba or Korea. Lenin, in 1919, explained the attempt in this way: "The revolution we have begun and have been making for two years, and which we are firmly determined to carry through to the end, is possible and feasible only provided we manage to transfer power to the new class, provided the bourgeoisie, the capitalist slaveowners, the bourgeois intellectuals, the representatives of all the owners and property-holders are replaced by the new class in all spheres of government, in all state affairs, in the entire business of running the new life, from top to bottom." And the great difficulties in accomplishing this in old, uncultured, isolated, peasant Russia, moved him to say to the workers sorrowfully: "One of the greatest evils of our revolution is the timidity of our workers, still convinced that only their 'superiors' are able to govern the state ... 'superiors' in the art of pillage." (See box on this page.)

Political revolution

We know (without entering here into the explanations) that Lenin and his comrades did not succeed in this aspect of their gigantic revolution, and the Leninist program of a workers' state from top to bottom was trapped in a thousand compromises with the reality of a country encircled by the imperialists. Now what is important is that the deep crises of socialism today give an opportu-



Havana, 1959, the revolution triumphs.

nity to the workers of Russia and other countries — much more numerous than in Lenin's time, more cultured and knowledgeable of the tremendous historical difficulties of the construction of socialism, and deeply hostile to the bureaucracy "of socialism" — to make a workers' government a reality, a government without bureaucrats, and, in this way, to give socialism the new push forward that it needs.

Unlike Lenin, Fidel Castro did not even attempt this profound revolution in the state. The real power and leadership of the country *never* arrived in the hands of the worker, the peasant, the cleaning woman. It was always held by a bureaucracy, which was self-sacrificing in revolutionary times, then conformist under the protection of Moscow, and

now dedicates itself to speculation. Tomorrow it will be capitalist.

In Cuba, as in the other countries, the forward movement of the initial conquests of socialism is exhausted, and only a new workers' revolution will reanimate it, a *political revolution* that, destroying the bureaucracy, hands over power to the democratic organizations of the workers. In the same way that we, partisans of socialism, count on and can only count on, the consciousness and organization of the Cuban workers, imperialism counts more and more on the narrow ambitions of the Castroist bureaucracy that, if not overcome by its people, will yield to the pressures of capitalism and be as capitalist as it was Castroist. — A. Ramos □

Lenin on the workers' government

"Now for the first time in history a revolution has begun which can lead to the complete victory of socialism — provided only that new and large masses of people set about the work of governing independently. ... The revolution we have begun and have been making for two years, and which we are firmly determined to carry through to the end, is possible and feasible only provided we manage to transfer power to the new class, provided the bourgeoisie, the capitalist slaveowners, the bourgeois intellectuals, the representatives of all the owners and property-holders are replaced by the new class in all spheres of government, in all state affairs, in the entire business of running the new life, from top to bottom.

"That is the task before us. The socialist revolution can only be lasting when this new class learns, not from books, not from meetings or lectures, but from the practical work of government. Only when it enlists the vast mass of working people for this work, when it elaborates forms which will enable all working people to adapt themselves easily to the work of governing the state and establishing law and order. Only on this condition is the socialist revolution bound to be lasting. Given this condition, it will constitute a force which will brush away capitalism and all its survivals as easily as straw or dust." (*Collected Works*, Volume 28, Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress, pp. 419-421)

Why you should read the *Communist Manifesto*

Why should you read a book almost 150 years old? What relevance could it have on the world today? Well, this article I hope will answer these questions and more.

The *Communist Manifesto* was written in 1848 by Karl Marx, 29 years old at the time, and Frederick Engels, 27. The two were asked by the Communist League in England to write the program. The result was the *Manifesto*. The document provides a clear idea of socialism and communism, providing their basic principles and politics.

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggle." This quote from the *Manifesto* explains that the driving force behind history is the struggle that exists between classes. The *Manifesto*

"The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat as a class; overthrow of bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat." — Communist Manifesto

explains: the historic development of societies; the force behind them, past societies as well as our current society (capitalism); the bourgeoisie (owner class) and the proletariat (the working class), and the antagonism that arises and creates conflict between the classes. It explains the reason for this class conflict and explains its irreconcilable nature. It explains, as well, the working class's historic role as the only class capable of bringing down capitalism.

The *Communist Manifesto* is more than an old book written by two dead communists. It provides a basic understanding of the struggle of the working class and provides an understanding of the path the working class should take. It also shows the place and part that communists play in that path to revolution.

The *Manifesto* provides a framework for communists to build on, as well as providing a basic education for young workers and students who want to learn more about socialism and communism. It can give them a

foundation to start from and further their development and education about the class struggle.

It is important for all revolutionaries to study Marxist literature for the development of the

struggle and the success of a working class revolution.

"The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."
—Tim James □

Should working people run the society? ...

Continued from back page

You might say, "I don't know anything about running the economy."

But, you know the most important things — an injury to one is an injury to all; that workers need higher wages, better working conditions; that all workers should be treated fairly and equally; that unions should be in all workplaces that want them. There is a good chance that you realize that only when everybody is fed, has a good place to sleep, and a good healthy job at decent pay, will crime nearly disappear. Only when working women are treated with respect on the job, when children have good schools, heated, well-lit class rooms with books for everyone and teachers who care, then children will grow up healthy and educated.

These and other basic working class principles must be put into action. When working people are in charge, they will fight every day to make sure that everybody that wants a union has one; that all workers make decent wages and have quality health care; that every child has books; that every woman who needs childcare has it; that every young person has a job. And, if these things aren't so, why not, and what is being done to correct the problem. These will be the main

topics on the economy, not stocks on Wall Street, layoffs, and megamergers.

Working people have the basic knowledge, the principles, they need to run the economy. Of course, we need more training in many technical aspects. We need accountants so that we know how much money we really have; we need engineers to design good schools, healthy workplaces, based on all the advances of modern capitalism. We need scientists to tell us what are the best things for children to eat every morning so that we can make this food available for every child. These professionals need to be devoted to the people.

But the decisions, the control, the management, the ownership, these all belong to working people. When millions of working people taking charge of every aspect of the society — from the neighborhood patrol to international trade — only then will the socialized production really serve all the people. Only then will working people root out from the society all the conditions that breed attitudes like "we are all greedy."

We all want a better life for ourselves, for our loved ones and our children. Only together, as workers, can we make it so. — Fred Russo □

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Should working people run the society?

When we talk to working people about socialism, one of the things they often say is: "It's a nice idea but it won't work. People are greedy; it's human nature. There will always be people who will screw things up ..."

The economic system we have now, where a small group of very rich people run the country for their interests is called capitalism. This small group of people is very greedy. Look at the recent Detroit newspaper workers' strike, the "welfare reform" law, NAFTA. It might seem to some people that this capitalist system, this way of organizing society, corresponds more to "human nature."

The fight against corporate greed

To workers and young people struggling against corporate greed, to workers and young people expressing solidarity with workers fighting for their rights here and around the world, the idea that "we are all greedy" has begun to sound hollow and incorrect.

Workers fighting corporate greed, workers fighting against "welfare reform," find that many workers will give money, join picket lines, help with mailings, spread the news of struggles. They find that workers will help them win their struggle. They find that more and more workers take the idea that "an injury to one is an injury to all" as gospel truth and try to live by it. They learn that the biggest obstacles workers fighting corporate greed run into are the government, union leaders, etc., not other workers.

In other words, the argument that "we're all greedy," that this capitalist system corresponds to "the greed in all of us," is repeated by people who haven't struggled together very much with other workers. They haven't fought alongside others against corporate greed. They are repeating what is at best a half-truth. In fact, much of this kind of talk comes from the media machines of the rich and is directed against worker solidarity.

Each rich owner wants the workers that work for him to be on his side against the rest of the capitalists. Ford wants Ford workers to support Ford against GM; AT&T owners want AT&T workers to support them against MCI, etc. As a class, the capitalists want the workers of the U.S. to support them against the capitalists of Germany, Japan. They basically want workers to think like them. They want workers to adopt the capitalist way of thinking.

As workers engage in struggle, they reject that thinking.

What is the root cause, the fundamental reason why workers in struggle defend other workers? What makes workers hang together? What makes working people different than capitalists?

Working people work together socially to produce all the products and services. This is our place in the economy. Workers' self-interests are linked because we produce all things together. We are linked together because our fates, our futures, are linked together. When some of us get a raise, it creates better conditions for all to get a raise. When some of us win, like the UPS workers, it creates better conditions for all of us.

But the capitalists are different. They take the wealth that we create and use it to create more capital for themselves. There is a contradiction between social production and individual capitalist ownership. It is the fundamental driving force of our society. Social production versus individual ownership.

Socialism means that all the social property of the society — the banks, the big business farms, the factories, insurance companies, trucking companies, railroads, malls, etc., are all publicly owned. Socialism resolves the contradiction because it makes all the social production socially, that is publicly, owned.

Social ownership — the first step

But social ownership is not enough. It also means that working people run, operate, control, manage, own, all of this property. Working people plan what should be produced; working people control every level of the economy — from the decisions on who does what job in the factory, to how many shoes we make, to how we transport them, to how many new factories we build, to what they should make, to where does this society want to be in 5 years or 50 years, and what plans are we going to make to get there.

In the same way that working people can work together in struggles, like the newspaper workers' strike, the UPS strike or the Labor Party, in which every worker has a place, so working people can organize the production in society. In this struggle, too, there is a place for everyone.

If you are a working person, if you are a housekeeper in a hospital, if you operate a press in a stamping plant, if you pick vegetables in the field, if you are loyal to the working class, you have all the fundamental knowledge you need to make these decisions.

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