

SOCIALISM!



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Stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal!

**New trial now!
Millions for Mumia April 24!**



Thousands of young people and activists are demanding that the Pennsylvania government stop its plans to execute Mumia Abu Jamal and allow him a new trial now. They are working to bring together millions on April 24 to speak out for this cause, in Philadelphia and San Francisco.

Many, including the editors of this publication, are convinced Mumia is innocent; he did not shoot the policeman, Daniel Faulkner; he is being persecuted by the police and government officials because, as an award-winning radio journalist, he spoke out so effectively against the racism and violence of the Philadelphia police, particularly the police bombing of the African-American MOVE organization, which killed adults and children.

Others aren't sure whether Mumia is innocent or guilty; they are convinced he has a right to a fair trial, which he never got. Mumia has always said he was innocent, but he was not allowed to defend himself at his trial; he had a court-appointed lawyer who tried to withdraw; \$1000 was allotted for his defense; Black people were excluded from the jury; the presiding judge was a member of the Fraternal Order of Police, which tried to paint Mumia as some kind of terrorist, "cop-hater," "cop-killer," and pushed for executing him, even though he had no criminal record. The judge had put more Black men on deathrow than any other sitting judge in the U.S.; a witness against Mumia has admitted she testified under police pressure, in exchange for immunity from prosecution; a witness for Mumia, at the scene and prepared to testify Mumia did not shoot the policeman, was not allowed to testify; a policeman, prepared to testify Mumia never said he killed Faulkner, as other policemen claimed he did, was not allowed to testify ...

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Rouge explosion shows we need workers' control

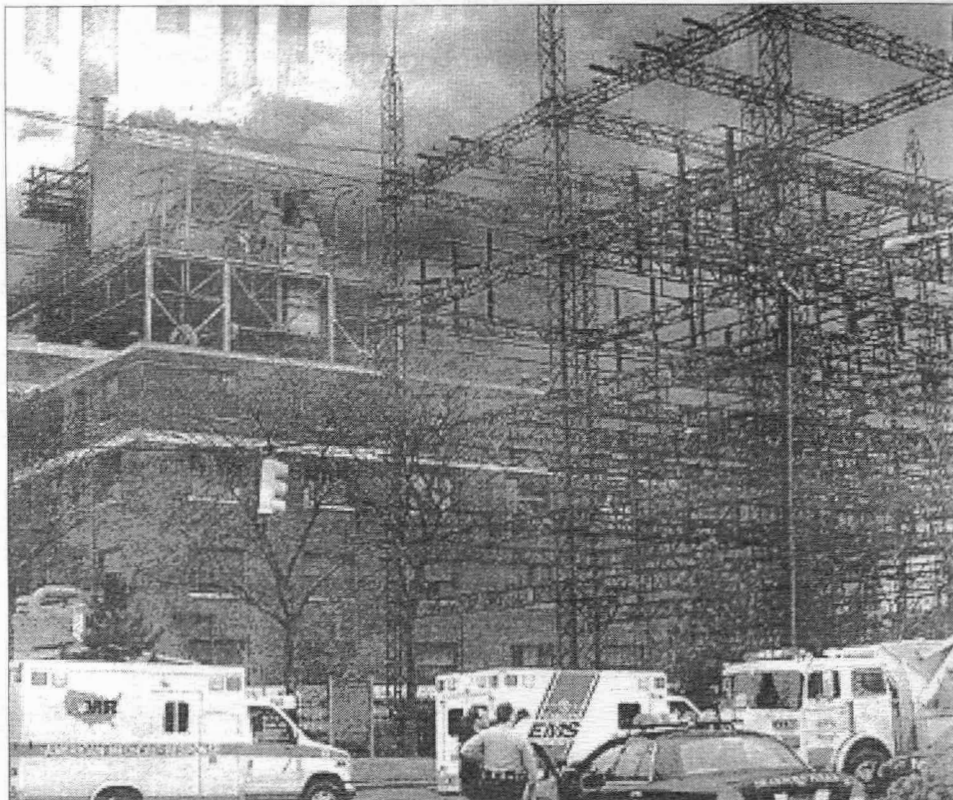
The recent explosion at the Ford Motor Company's Rouge complex and the deaths of six workers so far, show working people need workers' control of basic industry by law. It's impossible to rely on owners and managers of basic industry to take the steps necessary to protect the health and lives of working people, because their primary goal is to make profits, to enrich the owners. According to the Southeast Michigan Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (SEMCOSH), over 66,800 workers in the U.S. die every year as a result of on-the-job injuries and illnesses. If we add to this the number of people who are injured, ill, or die as a result of causes related to work, but not counted as work-related — heart attacks, alcoholism, drug addiction, conditions from air, water, and food pollution —, the number of people suffering and dead every year as a result of the owners insatiable drive for profits is very high indeed. Many who work at the Rouge complex are convinced the explosion and deaths are a result of the owners' and managers' constant cutbacks in the number of workers, which have meant important preventive maintenance has not been done. They also feel the union leadership must assume some responsibility for what has happened, as it has been going along with the cutbacks. Workers who want to fight for more workers' control can support and join New Directions and other working class opposition groups within the UAW fighting for more workers' control, against the union leadership's policy of labor-management cooperation. They can also join the Labor Party, which is fighting for national legislation for more workers' control. In the long run, a workers' government and public ownership of the banks and basic industry are necessary.

*In this issue, we are printing an article on the explosion by Ron Lare, a skilled tradesman at the Rouge complex and one of the few speaking out publicly against the owners. This article first appeared in **Labor Notes** and **The Michigan Citizen**.*

Will Ford-Rouge blast expose cost-cutting on maintenance?

Topped by eight large smokestacks, the power house dominates any view of Ford's huge Rouge complex in Dearborn, Michigan. When an explosion followed by fire ripped through the power house on February 1, the results were disastrous.

Power house boilers provide steam and electricity to run a steel mill, a stamping



plant, an assembly plant, a tool and die shop, a glass plant, a frame plant, and an engine plant on the 1,100-acre complex.

Normally, 70 or 80 people staff the power house. The blast killed six and injured 25 more. Several remain in the hospital, many of them with severe burns.

Immediately after the explosion, UAW Local 600, which represents workers in the complex, provided a gathering place, hotline information, counseling, and fresh clothing. The local hosted a blood drive for burn victims; nearly 1,000 people — mostly Local 600 members — donated, some waiting in line five or six hours for the privilege.

Ford scrambled to get alternative power to re-start production, bringing in generators and outside power, but it was a week before Ford's full operations resumed.

Damage control

On February 5, a state inspector said boiler number six exploded due to a gas build-up in the fire box. The real question, though, is whether the underlying cause was just a random "act of God," or corporate neglect of maintenance and safety procedures.

Ford says it's too early to determine the cause of the blast, though one millwright questioned whether alarms were maintained

properly.

William Clay Ford, Jr., 42 years old and recently named Ford Chairman, called February 1 "the worst day of my life." He said everyone at Ford is "family." Many workers were impressed that Ford showed up at the plant, hospitals, and a deceased worker's home. The company has been largely successful in diverting criticism, saying, "The power house is a well-oiled machine."

UAW Local 600 President Jerry Sullivan initially seemed to question whether Ford provided adequate maintenance resources, telling reporters, "It's a very dangerous place to work." Sullivan listed hazardous power sources and added, "You have to have tip-top maintenance to keep it going." Later, Sullivan seemed to let Ford off the hook. "Ford was maintaining it properly, but it was a very old building," he said. This bolstered site manager Art Janes's claim: "The UAW understands that things like this happen and we are family."

The power house, though, does have a history. Workers were burned in a 1986 incident. A 1989 explosion released asbestos, flooded tunnels, and killed two subcontract workers. In 1996 a power house worker's safety complaints about a turbine explosion led to state safety citations and fines.

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Newspaper workers finally win first contract

The long, bitter Detroit newspaper strike may be approaching some kind of resolution. My union, Detroit Typographical Union #18/CWA, has negotiated a long-term contract with the Detroit publishers. It is the first of the six unions to do so. It is a ten-year agreement with a 2% wage increase every year starting with the first anniversary of the contract. The contract language that covers work rules, classifications, vacation, etc., leaves a lot to be desired. The agreement also contained job buy-out language that for the first time included all locked-out and fired printers. (Many members still working at the time the strike began in 1995 had 'guaranteed lifetime jobs' that could not be eliminated without profound legal problems for the newspapers.) The average age of printers in the composing room is about 60 years, so many will take the buy-out and leave. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the contract.

Many of us look upon this contract with mixed feelings. We consider getting a contract and taking care of our fired printers a victory. You have to remember that the company's goal was a union-free workplace. On the other hand, many provisions of this contract are bad. Those of us who were fired have to sign off of any legal redress through the NLRB and the courts in order to take the job buy-out. We are also concerned about our brothers and sisters in the other five unions that have not settled. We hope that our breakthrough will lead the way for them.

Negotiations have been taking place with the other unions. There has been progress reported with the mailers (IBT 2040) and the Newspaper Guild (Local 22). The pressmen (CWA 13N) also are reported to be close. As I write, word has been received the engravers (CWA Local 289C) have reached a tentative agreement on a contract. No details are available.

The union won another victory on March 5 when the NLRB refused to reconsider their ruling that the newspapers are guilty of unfair labor practices and must return all strikers to their jobs. We are not waiting for the courts to enforce the NLRB's ruling. The company can now appeal to a Circuit Court in either Cincinnati or Washington, D.C. if they wish to drag this disaster out longer.

This struggle is over 3½ years old and could last another 2-3 years if no more agreements are reached. All this proves that future struggles have to be won in the streets, not in the court system. Solidarity among all working people and the rise of the general



strike is what will stop the attack on working people and union busting that has become a way of life in our country.

Very important to our cause is the success of the new Labor Party. By and large the Republicans and Democrats are tools of the corporations and look out for their interests, not ours! One thing we have learned here in Detroit is that the legal system is stacked

Labor law reform

Many newspaper workers have concluded it is very difficult to win strikes against big corporations like Gannett and Knight-Ridder with labor laws as they are, and large bodies of armed forces prepared to enforce those laws (the police!). Whenever workers organized truly effective actions that stopped the owners from producing papers with scabs (mass picketing!), the owners were able to get legal injunctions against the workers, threats to fine and arrest union officers, and large numbers of police from different cities and counties to break up workers' actions.

The labor movement needs to organize a nationwide campaign to abolish anti-labor laws that restrict workers' right to picket, and all anti-labor laws, and to get its own candidates on the ballot to fight for this. The Labor Party should be in the front ranks of this struggle. This can pave the way for defying anti-labor laws when it is necessary, and organizing well-trained and well-armed workers' security guards. This, not wasting millions of union dollars on Democrats and Republicans, is the road forward for labor.

Just Healthcare

Since the 1998 Labor Party Convention, Labor Party members have begun to speak out for "Just Healthcare," a healthcare sys-

tem in which all residents have access to quality healthcare, funded by a public, non-profit fund, rather than the private, for-profit-health insurance racket.

Some workers have responded by saying they don't want the government involved in their healthcare, or they don't want "socialized" or "socialist healthcare."

But the fundamental issue is not whether or not the government is going to be involved, or "socialized" or "socialist healthcare."

The fundamental issue is are all residents going to have quality healthcare or not, and, if so, how. With the system we have today, you only have access to quality healthcare if you can afford to pay for it, if you can afford to pay for health insurance, or, if you can find a job where the employer is willing to pay for it. Even the best healthcare plans are being more and more limited by insurance companies who want to restrict the amount of healthcare workers receive so they can keep their profits up.

All the healthcare dollars now being used to fill out insurance company forms, to pay bureaucrats to read the forms and tell doctors and nurses they can't treat patients, and to enrich insurance company executives, should go into a public, non-profit fund to pay for healthcare for those who need it. —M.G.□

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Support struggles against police murder and violence!

The murder of Amadou Diallo, a 22-year old Guinean immigrant, by four New York City white policemen on February 4, was the latest in a number of killings of innocent people of color by police. Amadou was standing in the vestibule of his apartment building when these four cops unloaded 41 bullets into the air; 19 of them struck Amadou, killing him instantly. The police said he looked like a rapist they were looking for. He was found to have only a wallet and beeper in his possession. Others include:

Tyisha Miller, 19, was killed by Riverside, California police, who fired 27 times into her disabled car on December 28.

Deron Grimmitt, 32, was killed by Pittsburgh policeman Jeffrey Cooperstein on December 21.

The following week, Seattle police arrested Michael Ealy and beat him to death.

On October 10, Donte Dawson, 19, was sitting unarmed in a car when Philadelphia police killed him.

Thomas Pizzuto was in Nassau County Jail, sentenced on January 11 to 90 days for a traffic violation. He was also on a methadone treatment program. When he asked for methadone on January 13, he was beaten to death. As his father Rosario said, "Tommy went in a for a traffic ticket. He got the death penalty."

Racists have also murdered people of color. Jason Byrd, Jr., an African-American, was murdered in Jasper, Texas last June 7 by three men. One of the murderers, John King, an outspoken racist, was convicted February 23 of first degree murder.

Every one of these people of color was innocent of any crime and yet they are dead, killed by the authorities or by racists operating freely in the society.

Democrats and Republicans are responsible

What forces in this society are encouraging police murder and violence against people of color and emboldening racists?

Some would say the right-wing Republicans. They point to the predominance of right-wing Republican politicians in police murder and brutality cases. It is true many of the incidents have taken place in cities with Republican mayors like New York City and Los Angeles. Both states have had Republican governors. Some of the most virulent statements against people of color are made by right-wing Republicans. But this is an incomplete picture and therefore a false picture.



Political parties are representative of classes in the society. What class do the Democratic Party and Republican Party represent?

There are three main classes in modern American capitalist society, the ruling class, the working class and the middle class. These classes are defined by their role in providing the fundamental needs of the society – food, clothing, shelter – that is, the production of basic goods and services. The ruling class is made of the capitalists, the owners of industry and banks. They make profits from the labor of the working class. The working class produces all the wealth. It has the potential to take control of society away from the ruling class and run society in the interests of all. The struggle for control of society is between the ruling class and the working class. The middle class is made of small business owners, and professional people, such as doctors or lawyers, increasingly under the control of the multi-national corporations. They cannot play an independent role, but must take sides in the class struggle between the ruling class and the working class.

The Democratic and Republican parties represent the ruling class. The rich owners of industry, of Ford, General Motors, IBM, Exxon, and other multi-national corporations, control the government through these two political parties, through contributions, by direct control, by a million threads that tie them together.

The Democratic and Republican parties have given more and more speeches and supported more and more legislation that attack affirmative action programs, that increase police powers, that restrict the rights of immigrants.

Through this "peaceful" legislation, they have created an atmosphere that says: "People of color and immigrants are taking away white people's rights; they are threatening our way of life. It's o.k. to hurt them, to kill them, because they are taking things away from you. They ask for 'special privileges' like affirmative action or preferential hiring, that take jobs away from you and your children."

This legislation helps divide the working class, weaken it, and increase profits and profitability for the capitalists.

When people of color and immigrants protest against their treatment at the hands of the police, then the Republican and Democratic parties say that they don't have any legitimate complaints.

While the murder of Amadou Diallo may appear as an exception, police murder is becoming common in New York City. 187 people were killed by the police from 1992 to 1996. Claims of brutality have risen 45% from 1993 to 1997. Giuliani has been invited twice in the last month to testify before Congress about his "successes in reducing crime."

In California and Washington, referenda against affirmative action passed, dressed up as "civil rights," with Democrats and Republicans supporting the measure. The proposal in both states read: "The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education or public contracting."

"Welfare reform"

The passage of "welfare reform" legislation in 1996, proposed by Clinton and passed by both the House and Senate, created an atmosphere hostile to people of color. The Democratic and Republican politicians attacked poor people and people unable to work as though they were living off of the working class and the middle classes. They developed an entire set of outright lies about the people receiving assistance.

For example, they said that many were employable; they didn't say where the good paying jobs would come from. They didn't say how many children would be forced deeper into poverty. They didn't say how many were simply unemployable and should be taken care of. They didn't say that these people would be used to take union jobs, as they are now in New York City.

These attacks were directed especially at people of color. The media exaggerated the percentage of people of color who receive public aid; they hide that the majority are white.

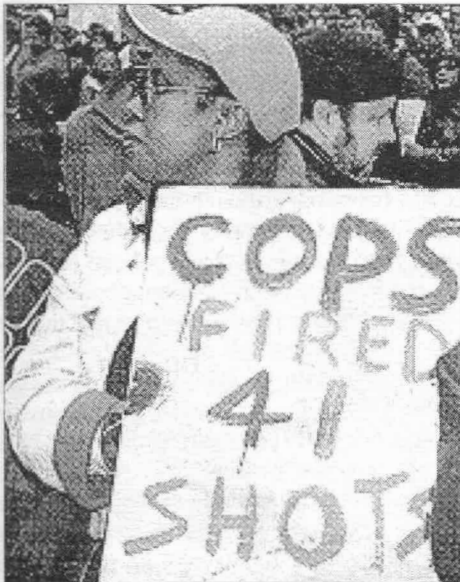
Legal immigrants were denied many benefits that they had received previously. If this legislation had been in effect at the beginning of the century, many of the grandparents and parents of present-day Americans would have died during the Depression in the 1930s.

Immigration reform, also passed in 1996 and supported by both parties, raised higher the hurdles to become citizens, and further reduced the legal rights of legal immigrants, many of whom are people of color. Legislation has been introduced to add thousands of troops to the Mexican border.

All of these murders have provoked demonstrations, protests and anguished appeals by the family members for justice.

It is critical that the trade unions not only speak against but also act against police murder and violence against people of color. It is necessary to unite the labor movement and the struggles of people of color against police attacks.

In the long term, the only solution to the scourge of police murder and violence is to change who is in control of the country and the economy. As long as the Democratic and Republican parties, doing the political work for the rich owners of industry, are in charge, there will be attacks on innocent people of color. We need a labor government that places the working class in power. We need a socialist economy so we can create the conditions to end the oppression of people of color and enter a new era of true freedom. — Fred Russo □



Rouge explosion

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A worker at the glass plant said that last August a power house substation caused a fire in the glass plant. A journeyman boiler operator, retired after more than 40 years, remembers time-study men cutting jobs in the power house. He describes a valve removed for maintenance while supervision thought the water seal would hold. The resulting explosion into a locker room would have roasted workers had it occurred 20 minutes earlier.

Cost-cutting as "Job One"

Ford is conducting a multi-billion dollar cost-cutting campaign. In a profitable period, jobs are eliminated and maintenance overtime severely cut. This endangers even machinery, but has pleased Wall Street. It helped Ford buy Volvo's auto operations for \$6.5 billion without seriously diminishing the company's \$24 billion cash reserves.

Workers point to Ford's failure to repair even the Miller Road bridge to the Rouge since it collapsed in a train accident last August. This delayed some emergency vehicle response to the explosion.

And there is a special reason to question power house maintenance funding. The power house was to be replaced anyway by a new Consumers Power plant under construction nearby.

Injured workers are frequently accused of violating safety rules that upper management ignored for cost reasons. The spotlight on this explosion, however, could make a cover-up difficult. Angry workers and a few independent-minded reporters are question-

ing the power house maintenance history.

Ford is chopping up its empire, through outsourcing, subcontracting, plant sales, spin-offs, joint ventures. Some "family" that puts its "children" up for sale!

Ford is counting on products and services being cheaper once they are outsourced (but still largely under Ford's control). Any piece of today's capital can be outsourced or spun-off tomorrow. This cuts any long-term commitment to anything beyond next quarter's profits.

Put Ford on trial?

The UAW should hold its own investigation. It should promise workers protection against company retaliation, call dozens of rank and file workers to testify about Ford's safety record, and use that testimony to popularize strikeable demands before and during the 1999 contract negotiations.

Confronted with prosperous auto companies unwilling to pay decent wages and benefits, the UAW's Walter Reuther used to demand that the companies "open the books." The UAW needs to resurrect that demand, not only on finances, but on all company records, including safety, engineering, and management decision-making. Our working lives and very survival are at stake.

[Ron Lare works at the Ford Rouge plant. He is a member of UAW Local 600 and a member of the UAW New Directions caucus. Donations for families of the blast victims may be sent to UAW Local 600 Crisis Fund, 10550 Dix Ave., Dearborn MI 48120.]□

The Labor Party Program: Enforce safety and health regulations with worker inspectors

The regulation of occupational safety and health hazards is shamefully inadequate, and the enforcement of the standards we have woefully neglected ...

We call for national legislation to train and deputize workers to be on the job inspectors in each and every workplace.

Such inspectors should be protected against corporate harassment and discrimination and should be able to do their job without fear of reprisal.

Such inspectors should have the power to

shut down hazardous operations and to enforce the right of every worker to refuse unsafe work.

Such inspectors should have the power to investigate incidents to uncover their root causes and to force the implementation of their findings.

Because we know our work sites, worker-inspectors would be better able to protect the workforce from exposure and the community from disaster. Worker-inspectors will save lives.□

The Labor Party – now more than ever

Since the November, 1998 Labor Party Convention concluded, the need for the Labor Party has grown.

For over a year, U.S. politics were dominated by conflicts between Republicans and Democrats over Clinton's conduct with Monica Lewinsky and Ken Starr's investigation of Clinton. The most right wing Republicans came off as religious fanatics, trying to impose their hypocritical morals on the nation. Clinton and his Republican and Democratic Party supporters looked good in comparison.

But the real differences between various factions of the Republican and Democratic Parties are not on the table. The most right-wing Republicans tend to represent small businessmen and businessmen with holdings only in the U.S. They have opposed U.S. contributions to the IMF, the UN, and other measures aimed at aiding U.S.-based multinationals. These forces used the Ken Starr investigation and charges against Clinton to put pressure on Clinton to include them in his plans. Clinton and more moderate Republicans and Democrats are more representative of the giant U.S.-based multinational corporations. A recent series in *The New York Times* told how Clinton made a name for himself with U.S.-based multinationals by championing and paving the way for their global expansion – NAFTA; Clinton's involvement in regional conflicts throughout the world, including South Africa, Bosnia, Palestine, Ireland, Kosovo, with the goal of promoting U.S. interests; funds for the IMF and the UN, etc. Clinton even established a situation room in the White House where they chart the progress of U.S.-based multinationals in getting contracts throughout the world. Clinton appears to be more progressive, multinational, multicultural, for the same reason – you can't do business with Latin Americans, Asians, Africans, if you are known as open racists, as so many Republicans are.

Now Clinton is being hailed as a progressive because he has come out with a budget including funds for education, healthcare, and social security. But the same budget calls for billions more for the military!

The Labor Party is fighting for decent jobs, wages, education, healthcare and housing for all, for laws favorable to the working class, and for candidates and a government to fight for and enforce these laws. This is the way forward for the working class. As long as the union leaderships keep wasting union resources on the parties



and candidates of the bosses, the workers won't make much progress.

In this issue of *Socialism!*, we are printing a report on the Labor Party Convention written shortly after the Convention. We welcome contributions from our readers on this issue.

The 1998 Labor Party Convention: an important step forward

The 1998 Labor Party Convention was an important step forward for the working class.

Over 1,400 delegates, from unions representing over one million workers, Labor Party Chapters, and important working class and popular struggles like the Detroit newspaper workers, gathered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 13-15. Delegates came from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, California Nurses, American Federation of Government Employees, United Mine Workers, United Paper Workers International Union, and dozens of local unions.

They not only characterized the Republican and Democratic parties as parties of the bosses and took a strong stand against them. They also voted to fight for political power for working class people and to establish criteria for running Labor Party candidates

for public office, as one aspect of the struggle necessary to achieve working class political power.

The delegates' decision was an important one.

It is a call to working women and working men to see themselves and conduct themselves in an entirely new and different way.

To call for political power for working class people, for Labor Party candidates for public office, is to say that working women and working men are capable of governing this society. We have no need of a special class of politicians and administrators, over and above us, taking an unfair share of society's wealth, to govern our society.

If working women and working men are capable of governing this society, they need to prepare now to do so. They need to fight for shorter hours, higher pay, and more free time to read, to think, to attend classes, to educate themselves, so they can do the best job of governing. They need to set aside a certain amount of time every week to build the Labor Party, so they can gather together the forces necessary to achieve political power.

If working women and working men are capable of governing society as a whole, then they are also capable of governing the banks and basic industries. There is no need for a special class of owners, managers and administrators here either, over and above the workers, taking an unfair share of wealth.

As the Labor Party Convention resolution says:

"The Labor Party is unlike any other party in the United States. We stand independent of the corporations and their political representatives in the Democratic and Republican parties. Our overall strategy is for the majority of American people — working class people — to take political power ... The Labor Party will run candidates for public office in order to elect representatives to positions where they can help enact and enforce laws and policies to benefit the working class ... Although we accept electoral politics as an important tactic, we do not see it as the only tool needed to achieve working class power ... Criteria for running candidates ... are designed to ensure that Labor Party candidates can run credible campaigns to win office ... Endorsing unions (must) represent a significant portion of area union membership, sufficient to ensure that Labor Party candidate will be seen as the labor candidate ..."

Most Labor Party groups are not yet in a position to meet the criteria established by the Convention for running candidates, but they are mapping out plans and some hope to be able to do so within the next two years.

The Labor Party Convention voted to ask each Labor Party member to recruit at least one new person each year and to establish local organizing committees to reach out to co-workers, classmates, friends and family more effectively. The Convention voted to continue the fight for the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution — “Every person shall have the right to a job and receive a living wage for their work” — and to begin new campaigns for Just Healthcare, Social Security, to bring the Bill of Rights into the workplace, and for Fair Trade. Resolutions in solidarity with Mumia Abu-Jamal, Abner Louima, and against the blockade against Cuba were also adopted. A resolution against the U.S. bombing of Iraq was drafted, but not brought to the floor.

Weaknesses

The 1998 Labor Party Convention was not without weaknesses.

The Convention did not adequately discuss the international economic crisis, the possibility of another recession, layoffs, plant closings, massive unemployment, and how to develop working class alternatives to this crisis that maintain and develop working class unity and solidarity. It voted to continue and refine the fight for the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, but it didn't spell out how it is going to do this. Neither the resolutions committee nor the organizing committee accepted a resolution calling for an emergency campaign for a shorter work week without cutting pay in the

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event of a recession, so everyone can keep on working and being paid. This was a mistake. The Labor Party can fight for a Constitutional Amendment to guarantee the right to a job and a living wage, but it also needs to fight for more concrete measures, in union contracts and legislation, like a shorter work week without cutting pay, so everyone can see there is a practical alternative to the capitalists' plans and fight for it. The Labor Party needs to fight for unions and working class parties throughout the world to make a united fight for a shorter work week without cutting pay and higher minimum wages so workers can work and live better throughout the world, so capitalists of different countries can't pit them against each other.

The Convention met under a banner calling for “global labor solidarity.” It affirmed its “commitment to promote a strategy of international solidarity and cooperation with the labor movement and labor parties in other nations through the exchange of information, worker organizing, collective bargaining, and other actions and strategies that demonstrate our commitment to work together to confront the global attacks on our environment and living and working conditions.” But the Convention also adopted a resolution on Fair Trade that left the door open to boycotting products produced by

workers in other countries, without support from the workers in those countries. The resolutions committee didn't accept a resolution calling for the Labor Party to take a stand against all U.S. corporate and government attacks on working people in other countries and for the Labor Party to establish a committee to develop a foreign policy in the interests of working people of all ethnic groups and nations.

Finally, the Convention was too expensive. The cost of transportation, housing, and registration fees was so high it was difficult for young people, rank-and-file workers, stewards, and committeemen and women from unions not financing their trips to attend. The Labor Party needs to find a more inexpensive way of organizing a Convention so participation isn't limited to the most comfortable sections of the working class.

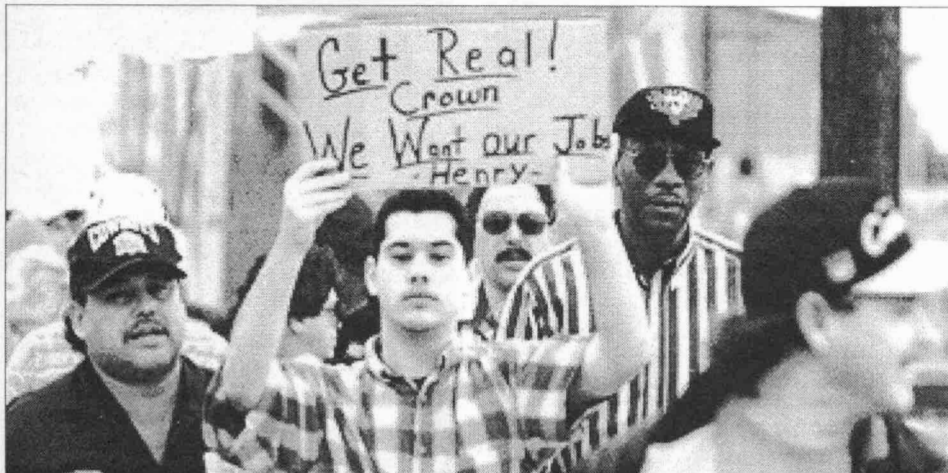
The road forward for the Labor Party lies:

- in growth in working class and popular struggles in the U.S. and throughout the world;
- in building the Labor Party, in recruiting young, unionized workers and young union, working class and popular leaders;
- in educating them in working class and internationalist principles and policies;
- in developing ties with unions, labor, working class, and popular movements and parties in other countries.

The work we are doing today is basically preparatory work. The struggle has not yet reached the point in the United States where it is possible to rapidly build the Labor Party into a party with hundreds of thousands or millions of members. But this doesn't mean the work we do today is not important. We are laying a foundation. That foundation needs to be well-designed; the materials need to be carefully chosen and well-laid.

When the Labor Party movement in the U.S. numbers in the hundreds of thousands, in the millions, when it links up with labor movements and parties in other countries and makes a united fight for working class and popular measures, for working class and popular governments to carry out these measures, there won't be a force on earth that will be able to stop it.

Working women and working men in the U.S. and throughout the world will see they can build the kind of truly socialist, communist, and classless society that the great revolutionaries like Marx dreamed of.—M. Guttshall □



Locked-out Crown Petroleum workers from PACE.

International working class solidarity

The ability of U.S. workers to fight for their needs and rights has been dramatically affected by the growth of U.S.-based multinational corporations. Workers fight for more jobs, wages, benefits, better working conditions, and the owners simply threaten to close the workplace and move production or services to another location – the South, Canada, Mexico, Latin America, Asia, etc. These threats are sometimes enough to make even the most militant union leadership and rank-and-file give in. In this way, workers in the U.S. and throughout the world have been forced into the no-win situation of competing with each other – each group of workers tries to do the most work for the least pay, with the hope that the owners will keep its workplace open. The top leadership of the unions in the U.S. has embraced this way of doing things, but there are many workers looking for an alternative. One of these alternatives is international working class solidarity against the giant multinationals, a united fight on the part of workers in all countries for decent jobs, wages, education, healthcare and housing for all. It's not easy to build international working class solidarity. Bankers, businessmen, professional politicians and media men often work very hard to pit workers of different ethnic groups and nationalities against each other. But it is possible. One of the things that workers have to learn to do is to look at each situation and conflict in an independent way, develop an understanding, a position, a policy, that is independent of U.S. bankers, businessmen and politicians and that will promote international working class solidarity.

Iraq

Since the U.S.'s December, 1998, bombing, it has continued to bomb Iraq. While the U.S. claims it is not hitting anything having to do with oil, the Iraqis say different, that the U.S. is hitting both computer centers that control the flow of oil and oil pipelines. The U.S. also continues to maintain sanctions against Iraq which are keeping essential food, water, and medicine from Iraqis, resulting in the deaths of countless workers and children. To date, many workers and labor organizations have believed what the media has said about these bombings and sanctions – Saddam Hussein is a serious threat, U.S. military attacks and sanctions are the only way to contain him, the U.S. is doing everything it can to avoid causing death and misery to the Iraqi people. If U.S.



workers want to develop solidarity with workers in other nations against U.S.-based multinationals, they have to question what U.S. politicians and the media say. Why not send a U.S. labor delegation to Iraq so labor can find out for itself what is really going on? Why don't we speak directly with Iraq workers and find out what they think? In the meantime, we should fight for the U.S. to stop bombing the Iraqi people and stop imposing sanctions against the Iraqi people. Get all U.S. forces out of the Middle East! How can we get workers in other countries to unite with us against U.S. multinationals, if we support the U.S. government, which is owned by these same multinationals, when it drops bombs on workers in other countries?

Kosovo

The people of Kosovo want their own nation. Like the people of Bosnia, they are now in a violent conflict with the Serbian government over this issue. Serbia is larger and has more men and arms; it wants to keep Kosovo as part of a Serbian nation. The U.S. claims that it wants to help Kosovo; this is suspect because the U.S. does not have a record of defending the right of small nations to self-determination. Whenever a small nation (or a large nation) has gone in a direction the U.S. did not agree with (Cuba, Vietnam, Iran, Nicaragua, Grenada, Iraq ...), the U.S. has reserved for itself the right to carry out economic and military attacks against it. What the U.S. has actually done to help Kosovo, shows it doesn't really want to help Kosovo at all. Madeleine Albright has intervened in the conflict calling for "autonomy" for Kosovo, which is different from independence. Kosovo would have more rights, but not the right to its own

nation, to determine all aspects of policy and develop as it sees fit. The U.S. and other nations would send troops to Kosovo to "guarantee this autonomy." The U.S. has threatened to bomb Serbia if it won't agree to this. Interestingly, a very large number of people in Kosovo don't want this "aid" either; they want independence and to build the Kosovo Liberation Army, which they see as the only way to achieve this. In reality, what the U.S. proposes, is to replace Serbian domination of Kosovo, with a kind of joint U.S.-Serbian domination of Kosovo, or a complete U.S. domination of Kosovo. We can't unite workers of all ethnic groups and nationalities against U.S.-based multinationals, if we go along with U.S. troops occupying other workers' lands. If the U.S. really wanted to aid workers and oppressed peoples fighting for national independence, it would provide them with arms with no strings attached. Those of us who support the struggle of the people of Kosovo for independence, against the U.S. and against the Serbian government, need to fight for getting all U.S. and Serbian troops out of Kosovo, for working class and union aid to the people of Kosovo and the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Ocalan and Kurdistan

The Turkish government recently kidnapped and imprisoned Abdullah Ocalan, a leader of the Kurdish Workers Party and of the struggle for a homeland for the Kurdish people. A number of Kurdish leaders say the U.S. and Israel were involved in this kidnapping. When the big powers drew the map in the Middle East, they divided up Kurdistan, so the Kurdish people are divided and live



in a number of different states. In Turkey, they aren't even allowed to give their children Kurdish names, to speak Kurdish, or to educate themselves in their own language. There has been a war against the occupation and division of Kurdistan for many years, led, among others, by Abdullah Ocalan and the Kurdish Workers Party, which identifies with socialism and Marxism. Naturally, whenever the U.S., or any other big power, disagrees with a particular cause, it characterizes the partisans of that cause as "terrorists." Workers in the U.S. should support the struggle of the Kurdish people for their homeland, and oppose the persecution of their leaders.



The international economic crisis

While the U.S. economy is still growing and it's still much easier to find minimum-wage jobs than it was 10 years ago, economies in other countries have entered into deep crises – Indonesia, other Asian states, Russia, Brazil. Capitalists have lost confidence in their ability to make profits in these countries, withdrawn their investments, and forced thousands of workplaces to close. Naturally, the U.S. government and other governments are concerned about these developments as they are resulting in unrest, the growth of working class and popular movements, and because they will eventually affect the economies in the wealthy countries. Clinton and others have been pressing for "aid for these countries" through the International Monetary Fund, the IMF, on the condition they make cuts in public spending – for example, cut public employees' wages, public education, healthcare, housing, pension plans, etc. Naturally, the most thoughtful workers want to help other workers and oppressed people, whenever they can. But Clinton's billion dollar aid plans are aid to the rich, not the



Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan.

workers and poor. First, in many cases, IMF funds are going to rich bankers and businessmen to compensate them for their losses, not to workers and poor who have lost their jobs. Second, Clinton and others are pushing local bankers and businessmen to attack workers jobs, wages, benefits, education, healthcare, etc., even more, as a condition for this aid. U.S. workers should take a strong stand against U.S. funds to the IMF and its aid-the-rich programs. We need a plan to aid workers and oppressed in these countries, not the rich. Many workers in Asia, Russia, and Brazil are fighting for their governments to stop making payments on loans from wealthy foreign bankers. That's a good step. Workers in the U.S. should support it.

Conflicts between U.S. companies and other nations over trade

Now that more sections of the international economy are entering into crisis and it is becoming more difficult for capitalists to find areas in which they can invest their

capital, sell products, and make profits, there are more conflicts between capitalists over markets. In the summer of 1998, owners of U.S. steel corporations began to complain that steel corporations in Asia and Russia were selling steel in the U.S. at prices less than what it took to produce the steel; they wanted Clinton to do something about this, to set some kind of quota on foreign steel. The leadership of the steelworkers' union joined this campaign, on the grounds that the foreign capitalists' sales of their steel in the U.S. were causing U.S. steelworkers to lose their jobs. Now U.S. capitalists are complaining that European capitalists have placed taxes on their bananas so high that U.S. capitalists can't sell bananas in Europe; Europeans are buying all their bananas from suppliers in the Caribbean. The U.S. is threatening to place a high tax on a number of products produced in Europe in retaliation. What should workers do in this situation? Should workers in each country join with local capitalists and fight for the highest possible sales for their products, against capitalists and workers in other regions, nations, etc.? We don't think so. Before workers in any region or country fight for quotas, taxes or boycotts on products produced by workers in another region or country, they should talk to the workers and their unions in that region or country (unless, of course, it is a question of scab products). Are they for it? What effect will this quota, tax, or boycott have on the workers in the other region or country? We need to find ways to fight for jobs for workers of all ethnic groups and nationalities – like a shorter work week without cutting pay so everyone can keep on working. □

The capital of Kosovo, Pristina, damaged by NATO air strikes.



Capitalism, socialism and the 21st century

After a year of talking about Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, one might think the popular media might turn to something more important and urgent, to a discussion of what's going on in the world, to the serious problems working class people face, and what might be done about them – the lack of decent jobs, wages, education, healthcare, housing, or the widespread problems of alcoholism, drug addiction, pollution of air, water, food, violence against women, children, peoples of color. But this hasn't been the case. Popular radio, TV, and newspapers try to reduce everything going on to a personal problem. The popular media has really become one long talkshow, whether it's a talkshow itself or the evening news, with one shocking story about one individual or group of individuals after another.

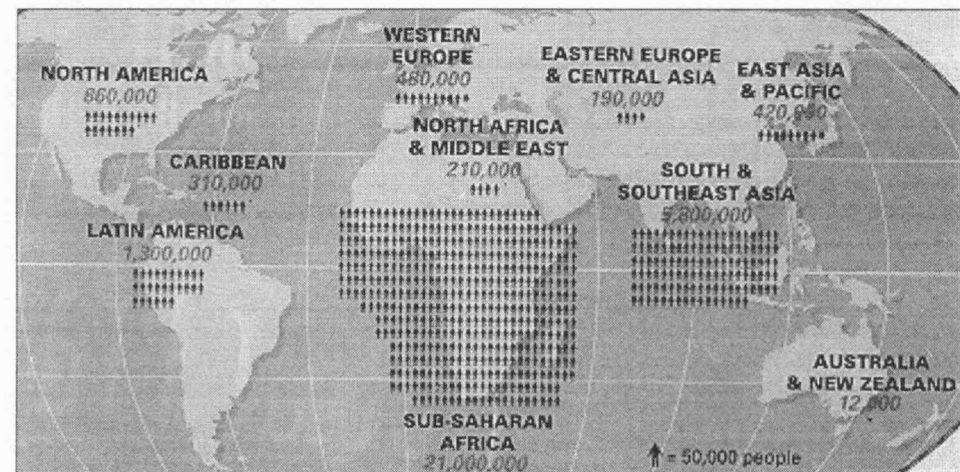
The media almost never talks about social and political problems, about problems that affect millions of people, like unemployment or inadequate wages. This is because there is no solution to these problems without a struggle against the rich families that own the media.

The same is true of discussions about the coming century. Almost all discussions in the media about the coming century are focusing on the Y2K problem, that some computers may break down because they can't handle the change in numbers from 1999 to 2000, and the possible dire consequences, and on the parties to be held on New Year's Eve, 1999.

This is a sad situation.

Developments in the 20th century have paved the way for massive and unprecedented progress in the 21st century. We now know how to develop nuclear power, so we

World distribution of people with AIDS. When workers take power, they will devote resources to wiping out AIDS and other diseases.



“We have the resources, the technology and a class capable of producing and distributing everything people need to survive and prosper. We could wipe out hunger in the 21st century ...

“ What stands in the way? The capitalist class ...”

are capable of providing power for all sorts of operations – agriculture, industry, commerce, transportation, education, healthcare, housing – much more inexpensively and safely than in the past. We are developing the ability to do genetic engineering in both plants and animals, so we can develop food that is much better and can be distributed more widely to those who need it; so we can learn to prevent certain congenital deformities and diseases. There is the development of computer and telecommunications technology that has put us in a position to both collect, analyze and disseminate information much more easily. Finally, there is the development of the working class and huge metropolitan centers, with so many workers of different ethnic groups, nationalities and languages, working and living together.

We have the resources, the technology and a class capable of producing and distributing everything people need to survive and prosper. We could certainly wipe out hunger in the 21st century; we might even be able to completely and totally wipe out disease.

What is standing in the way?

The capitalist class

All these resources, all this technology,

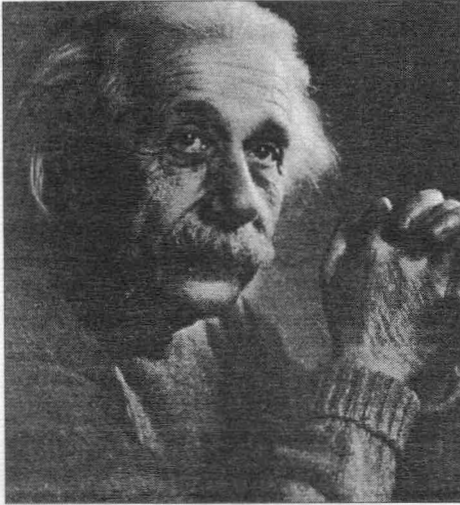
are legally owned by a small class of people – the ruling class, the capitalist class, bankers, businessmen and their families – who use these resources to enrich themselves, who aren't interested in the fates of millions.

This class looks toward the 21st century with scepticism and pessimism. They are worried about the international economic crisis, their investments, working class and popular discontent. They aren't very optimistic about capitalism and its ability to make big, positive changes for large numbers of people. They know capitalism takes care of a minority on the planet, not a majority. They are afraid of falling out of the “haves” into the “have nots.” Their talk about the 21st century reflects their position – worries and parties to distract them from their worries.

Working class people can't look at the 21st century in the same way. In the 19th century, workers made their first attempt to fight for political power as a class and keep it, the Paris Commune in 1871. It failed, but remained an inspiration to revolutionary workers' movements throughout the world. In the 20th century, workers made their first attempt to fight for political power on a large scale, to takeover the banks and basic industry, and to begin to try to build socialist societies – Russia, Eastern Europe, China, Cuba. These attempts, too, have not proven to be as successful or as durable as the workers had hoped. Under the pressure of the capitalist powers (the U.S., England, France), and with their active instigation, support, and collaboration, privileged bureaucracies arose within these societies that rotted them from within. All the gains of the workers' revolutions in these countries have not been destroyed and capitalism has not been completely restored, but a new workers' revolution is necessary to stop the drift toward capitalism, sweep away the privileged labor bureaucracy and replace it with a workers' revolutionary democracy, the best way to make progress.

What will the 21st century bring?

Women and socialism



Einstein's work will be developed when workers take power.

That depends on the working class.

Globalization, the expansion of the largest U.S., European, and Japanese corporations' operations and sales to more continents and nations, has caused a tremendous amount of suffering and misery to workers in all countries. But it has also provided workers in the richest countries an opportunity – to get a clearer picture of what capitalist society looks like throughout the world. Capitalism isn't just New York, London and Paris. Capitalism is also Rio de Janeiro and Calcutta, with hundreds of homeless children traveling in bands and people living in cardboard shacks.

Workers can decide to go along with the capitalist system, as long as it isn't causing them any immediate and overwhelming pain.

Or workers can decide to fight for a workers' revolutionary democracy, for a working class and revolutionary socialism, without privileged labor bureaucrats.

In the 21st century, the number of workers who chose the second alternative is going to grow. The more they do so, the more they work to see clearly, to organize and fight accordingly, the more quickly the 21st century will see a very modern, socialist society. It may even see a classless, communist society. — M.G. □

Socialism! is a bulletin for the Labor Party, socialism and rebuilding the Fourth International published in Detroit. We support International Workers Unity (Fourth International), an international workers revolutionary socialist tendency making an important contribution to rebuilding the Fourth International. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialism!* These are expressed in editorials. Editorial Board: Margaret Guttshall, Tim James, Kim Morgan, Fred Russo.

Women have made tremendous progress in the 20th century. When this century began, we didn't even have the right to vote. Working class women worked long hours in dangerous sweatshops for low wages and with no unions. Middle class women who wanted to work outside their homes were often looked down on, isolated, and persecuted. Women like Margaret Sanger, who spoke out for birth control, not to mention abortion, were arrested and imprisoned.

But we still have a long way to go. All working class women need to have good jobs so they can support both themselves and their children, so they aren't financially dependent on men. Working class women need shorter hours, without cutting pay, and access to 24-hour, high quality childcare and eldercare, so they aren't under so much stress. Above all, females – young girls, young women, women – need education. We need an environment in which we can learn about the world, develop our abilities and talents, develop our confidence in ourselves, free from all the horrendous propaganda we see and hear everyday, pushing us to be obsessed about our appearance, our figures, our clothes, our sex appeal, etc. We need decent healthcare, housing, and pensions for all women. If women had all these things, it would go a long way to free them from all the suffering so many women endure today – the medical problems, the problems of alcoholism and drug addiction, the abuse and violence of men.

There have been and will be many struggles for these goals. In the long run, the only way to achieve these goals is for the working class to take power. We need a working class and socialist revolution, in which working women and working men establish workers' control of the banks and basic industries and a workers' government, composed of workers' representatives, elected in workplaces democratically, to coordinate production and distribution and overcome the resis-

tance of the rich. As long as a small number of rich families – the capitalist ruling class – continue to legally own and control the banks, basic industries, various governing bodies and powerful armed forces, as long as we continue to have a society that is divided into classes, the majority of working class women and middle class women are going to continue to suffer. The goal of these rich families is to enrich themselves and the women in these families; it's not to overcome the problems of millions of working class or middle class women. For all women to be truly free and equal, we need a classless, communist society, without capitalists or privileged labor bureaucrats, as Marx, Engels and other revolutionaries have been fighting for.

If you are for the liberation of all women, if you want socialism, we urge you to join International Workers Unity. IWU is an international organization devoted to uniting workers of all ethnic groups and nationalities against the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies. It's fighting for workers' control and public ownership of the banks and basic industries, for workers' governments, and for a classless society in the spirit of Marx. □



Margaret Sanger

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Mumia ...

Continued from front page



Still others oppose the death penalty in all situations and want it abolished. Countless studies show judges impose the death penalty in a discriminatory way, against the poor, African-Americans, other peoples of color.

There have been large rallies for Mumia in New York City, with prominent labor and African-American leaders. Unfortunately, support for Mumia in Detroit is still relatively small. This is disappointing. Detroit as we know it today was born in a struggle against police racism and violence: the working class and popular uprising against the police in 1967; the struggle against the special police units that encouraged young African-Americans to steal, then shot them for it (STRESS); the campaign for an African-American mayor and police force. Workers in the Detroit area have been forced to face police violence again, during the newspaper workers' strike, when police in both Sterling Heights and downtown Detroit, attacked picketers with clubs and gas.

Unfortunately, Dennis Archer and other leaders of Detroit, the UAW, and the labor movement, are not interested in using their positions to fight for justice for Mumia Abu Jamal, for the right to a fair trial, or against the death penalty. They are convinced that the road forward lies in being servile to the owners of Coamerica, GM, Ford, casinos, ballparks, etc.

If you are outraged by the latest outbreak of police violence – the beating and torture of Abner Louima by New York City police, the shooting to death of Tyisha Miller by California police, the shooting to death of Amadou Diallo by New York City police —, one of the most important things you can do is take a stand against the execution of Mumia, for a new trial now. Join the fight for Millions for Mumia April 24! □

Labor must fight U.S. bombing of Iraq!

We are reprinting a statement we wrote and distributed at the moment of the U.S. bombing of Iraq in December, 1998. Unfortunately, it retains its validity today as the U.S. continues to bomb Iraq, although in a way not so obvious to U.S. workers.

Once again, the U.S. government has decided to drop bombs on the Iraqi people and their property, yet, so far, not a single major labor organization of any size, that we know of, has taken a stand against these bombings or the sanctions against Iraq.

The decision of Bill Clinton, the U.S. government, and the U.S. armed forces to drop bombs on, explode, and burn the Iraqi people and their property, is not only resulting in death, injury, illness, suffering, and trauma to thousands of innocent Iraqis that, in many cases, will last a life time, as if this

multinational banks and corporations – Exxon, Mobil, GM, Ford —, who open and close factories at will, throwing thousands of workers and their families into the streets, into poverty and misery; who arrest, imprison, and murder trade union organizers fighting for a better life.

The exact reason for the U.S. bombing of Iraq at this moment is not clear. Exxon and Mobil may want to keep Iraqi oil off the market; they may want to warn Iraq that it must continue to follow orders or it will suffer further destruction. U.S. corporations and the U.S. government may want to serve notice to the entire world that just because they are in crisis, just because Republicans and Democrats are at war with each other and about to impeach Clinton, this doesn't mean that the U.S. government isn't capable

“Imagine what the world would look like if U.S. resources (natural resources, banks, basic industry, transportation, the army ...), were used to build the most advanced agriculture, industry, housing, hospitals, and schools throughout the world, rather than to bomb, explode and burn people and their property, as they have done in Vietnam, Central America, Iraq and elsewhere!”

were not enough. It is also depriving working people in the U.S. and throughout the world of billions of dollars in resources that could be used to develop decent jobs, wages, working conditions, healthcare, housing and schools for working people in the U.S. and everywhere.

Imagine what the world would look like if U.S. resources (natural resources, banks, basic industry, transportation, the army ...), were used to build the most advanced agriculture, industry, housing, hospitals, and schools throughout the world, rather than to bomb, explode and burn people and their property, as they have done in Vietnam, Central America, Iraq and elsewhere!

The U.S. government tries to explain and justify this tremendous waste, destruction and murder by pointing to Saddam Hussein and painting him as a tremendous threat, just as they did with the leaders of Vietnam and Central America when they were waging war on them. But the most serious threat to the labor movement in the U.S., and to workers and oppressed throughout the world, is not Saddam Hussein, a weak and aging dictator, presiding over a ruined country. It is the owners of the giant U.S. and

of using force to continue to dictate to other corporations and governments throughout the world.

Regardless of the exact reason, it is clear that the U.S. bombing of Iraq serves U.S. and British oil, U.S. and British banks and corporations. It doesn't serve labor and oppressed in the U.S., Britain, Iraq, or anywhere else.

The U.S. labor movement was not founded to increase the profits of U.S. and British banks and corporations. It wasn't founded to practice “labor-management cooperation,” including mass murder of workers and their families in other countries. It was founded to fight for a better life for workers and oppressed in the U.S. and everywhere. It is high time for the U.S. labor movement to take a stand against the attacks of U.S. corporations and the U.S. government on working people in other countries, beginning with Iraq. Shame and disgrace on the U.S. labor movement if it fails to do so! Solidarity with Iraqi labor! Stop the U.S. bombing of Iraq! Stop the sanctions against Iraq! Bring all U.S. forces home now! □