

TRUTH

A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST TROTSKYIST BULLETIN IN DETROIT

No. 284 • 25¢ • June 6, 1992 • Box 441283, Detroit, Michigan 48244-1283 • 313-584-6556

Join the Kroger strikers' picket lines!

Kroger workers are now entering their ninth week on strike. Yet they still have not succeeded in winning their demands for a good wage increase for *all* Kroger workers. Kroger bosses are trying to increase their profits, divide the workers, and destroy their union, by giving wage increases to some workers and not to others, and by replacing full-time employees with part-time employees.

The only way to win is to *expand* the strike. This is why we urge all young people and working people in the Detroit area to *join the Kroger strikers' picket lines!* Show the Kroger strikers that you support them, not just by not shopping at Kroger's, but also by joining them on their picket lines. Give them some moral support. Help them turn away customers, delivery drivers, and scab employees. Demand that the union leaderships expand the strike — call out all Kroger workers, all grocery store workers, all unionized workers throughout the Detroit area and the U.S.

We need a national strike for higher wages, more jobs, and against union-busting.

If Kroger workers win their strike, it will be a victory for all working people. It will open the door to victories for other workers.

Some workers say they don't have enough time, or it won't make any difference. This is not true. Almost every worker can find an hour or two to join a Kroger picket line; a way to put pressure on his or her union leadership to support and expand the strike.

The fundamental question is a political question. How important do you think the Kroger workers' strike is? Can the masses of working people in the Detroit area make any real progress without supporting each and every strike and fighting to make it as big as possible?

The only road forward lies in more and more struggle against the bosses, more and more solidarity against the bosses!

Join the Kroger strikers' picket lines!

Demand that the union leaderships expand the strike! ■



Join the picket lines
at any Kroger Store
Call the Kroger
hotline:585-9671

Solidarity Cabaret

Friday, June 19, 8 pm
UFCW Local 876
In Madison Heights, between
John R and Stephenson Highway,
off of 13 Mile Road
\$5 (strikers free with identification)

Justice for Rodney King! — Inside

Justice for Rodney King! The struggle must continue!

The vast majority of people throughout the United States oppose the racist, anti-working class verdict in the Rodney King case. They want justice for Rodney King; they want compensation for Rodney King; they want the police who beat him punished in one way or another.

But the media does not show this. The media continues to try to discredit the popular uprising in Los Angeles that took place on behalf of Rodney King.

But if it weren't for this popular uprising, many of us would not even know about Rodney King. Many wouldn't know how racist and anti-working class the LA Police Department and city officials are. Many wouldn't know about the terrible conditions in which so many African-American, Latin, and other youth and their families are forced to live.

Nevertheless, the media continues to broadcast, over and over, videos of four African-American men allegedly beating a totally innocent white truck driver; interviews with other allegedly totally innocent people who were beaten or whose homes or stores were destroyed.

Such incidents undoubtedly took place in LA that day. They take place every day. Innocent people, in the U.S. and throughout the world, suffer pain and death every day. George Bush tortured and murdered thousands of Iraqi men, women and children.

But attacks on innocent people and their homes was *not* the *essence* of the popular uprising in LA.

Eyewitness accounts and videos show that after the verdict, African-American, Latin, and poor white working class youth



gathered at police headquarters and city hall. They chanted and carried signs that said: "Justice for Rodney King!" "No justice, no peace!" and "Gates (the racist police chief) must go!" They clashed with the police guarding the buildings and finally attacked police headquarters, city hall, and the police and the officials themselves. The police retreated; the people gained control of the streets for a certain period of time.

What took place may have *looked* like a sudden outburst of anger to outsiders. In reality, it was the latest development in a long battle against the racist, anti-working

National Meeting! Twin Cities • June 13

A national meeting to discuss the possibility of nationally coordinated actions for justice for Rodney King including the possibility of a march on Washington.

For more information contact Justice for Rodney King, c/o Zion Baptist Church, 621 Elwood Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411 • (612) 377-5436, Fax (612) 827-6433.

class police in LA. Last year, there were legal, peaceful demonstrations for justice for Rodney King and for ousting Gates. Many people also circulated petitions to recall Gates. When a Korean storekeeper shot a fifteen-year-old African-American girl *in the back of the head* for allegedly stealing a bottle of orange juice, when this was captured on video, when a white judge gave this same Korean storekeeper *probation*, there were more legal, peaceful demonstrations. There were also some clashes with the police and officials.

African-American, Latin and poor white working class youth in LA used every legal, peaceful means they could think of. That's why, when, once again, racist thugs and murderers were set free, they decided to take justice into their own hands. They attacked police headquarters, city hall, and the police and officials themselves; they attacked storekeepers that they thought had been enriching themselves at the expense of the people.

At the same time, masses of working people of all races and nationalities, attempted to take advantage of the situation. They began to enter into stores and take things that they needed — food, clothes, appliances, etc.

This is the essence of the popular uprising in LA — a popular uprising against racist police brutality and poverty. The rest — attacks on innocent people and their property — was incidental, secondary.

Today, it is necessary to continue the fight for justice for Rodney King, for compensation for Rodney King, for punishing all the police involved in beating him in one way or another.

The popular uprisings in LA and elsewhere have forced the authorities to make some concessions and brought the whole situation to the attention of millions of people. At least one policeman has been charged and will be tried in LA, and not in Simi Valley, where the percentage of police and their families is very high.

It's necessary to take advantage of this situation and continue the fight. For example, with a national day of action for justice for Rodney King.

It's also necessary to take up a fight to get all the troops out of LA, restore elementary freedoms, like the right to meet and march without being attacked and arrested by police, and to force the authorities to drop the charges against the 12,000 arrested and imprisoned during the uprising. Remember, if it weren't for these people, you might not even know about Rodney King. ■

Remember Caterpillar,
Kroger and Rodney King!

No to Bush, Clinton and
Perot!

Yes to Labor Party
Advocates!

Bush, Clinton, and now Perot continue to campaign for working people to vote for them in the coming elections. But none of them has ever given any support to the struggles of masses of working people to improve their lives, like the Caterpillar workers' strike, the Kroger workers' strike, or the struggles of the masses of people in LA for justice for Rodney King that have been going on for over a year.

Bush doesn't even claim to be for working people, Black people, or women. Clinton and Perot claim to. But actions speak louder than words. As governor of Arkansas, Clinton helped break UAW workers' strikes. When UAW officials in Arlington, Texas agreed to make concessions to GM, and UAW officials at Willow Run refused to do so, Clinton cheered for the officials in Arlington and urged other UAW members to follow suit. He showed up at the *end* of the Caterpillar strike. Perot was head of EDS, where he legislated what workers would and would not wear; where he prohibited workers from seeing each other outside of work, in an effort to stop the development of any kind of solidarity that might lead to unions. He's already said that he won't hire anyone who is divorced, commits adultery, or is homosexual. What right does he have to legislate what someone does in his or her private life? Is this democracy, or are we going to go back to the 1600s and the 1700s?

Are these men doing anything today to encourage the masses of working people to *fight* for higher wages and more jobs against the rich bosses? Of course not, they are representatives of the rich bosses.

Workers need their own party and their own candidates. This is why we urge all working people to join Labor Party Advocates. Labor Party Advocates is open to all working people who are for a labor party, no matter what their political views may be. We also urge working people to demand that their unions stop all union support to all candidates of the bosses and put forward labor candidates.

The Socialist Workers Party is trying to get candidates on the ballot in Michigan for a labor party. We urge all working people to support these candidates for a labor party against the candidates of the bosses. For further information on this campaign, contact the SWP: 313-831-1177. ■

**Labor Party
Advocates**
Wed, June 10, 7 pm
UAW Local 600
15050 Dix, at Wyoming, Dearborn

Stop the Serbian assault on Sarajevo!

Bosnia-Hergovina, has been the site of the worst fighting in Europe since World War II. Yugoslavia was created by the national independence movements that achieved victory against the various kings, sultans and czars at the end of World War I. The country was composed of six autonomous republics and two smaller provinces. All these republics had been oppressed by larger, more powerful countries — the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, etc. Privately held property, industrial and agricultural, was taken away from the capitalists and the big landowners after World War II — a definite gain for the workers and peasants of Yugoslavia.

The failure of the socialist revolution to spread throughout Europe made it impossible for the Yugoslav workers to resolve the problems of national oppression inherited from the past, just like the failure of the socialist revolution to spread after World War I meant that the national problems inherited by the Soviet Union could not be resolved in the national framework of the Soviet Union.

In the place of the true unity of workers of all nationalities, there arose in Yugoslavia, even more quickly than in the Soviet Union, a privileged bureaucracy that based its power on the dominant Serbian nationality. It proceeded to reinforce the subjugation of the other republics — especially Croatia and Bosnia-Hergovina — for its own gain.

The imperialist United Nations has given very belated recognition to these republics; the big imperialist countries have imposed some sanctions against Serbia. These are moves to deceive the people and leaders of these countries. The imperialists want these people to think that they can trust the imperialist wolves (especially the U.S., France and Britain) who engineered the oppression of these nationalities with the Stalinists after World War II, and who have supported the crushing of their struggles for independence. As workers, we participate in stopping weapons from going into Serbia and support weapons reaching Croatia and Bosnia-Hergovina. At the same time, we call for the complete destruction of the Stalinist bureaucracy in all the republics. We support the maintenance of the nationalized property in all the republics against the attacks by the various capitalists to take the property back.

The united Europe, planned in the back rooms of Paris, London and Rome, will not see the light of day. All the nationalities of Europe — from the Basques, to the Irish, to the Croatians — must be free and independent before there can be real unity. And that freedom and unity can only arrive in this next period on the shoulders of a powerful working class movement directed toward winning socialism. ■

TROTSKYIST UNITY

More on socialism, Trotskyism and LA

There are various socialist or communist groups and tendencies in the U.S. and throughout the world. Some of these, like the official Socialist Parties in power in Spain and France, or many of the factions that have come out of the old "Communist Parties," are socialist or communist in name only. The largest number of the most consistent socialists or communists are found among the followers of Leon Trotsky, often known as "Trotskyists."

After Marx, Engels, and Lenin, Trotsky was the most well-known leader of socialism or communism. He was a leader of the first successful workers socialist revolution in Russia in 1917. He fought to spread the socialist revolution throughout the world in opposition to the capitalists and to the privileged elite in Russia, led by Stalin. He founded the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution, in 1938, in order to lead this fight. He died in 1940, struck down by an assassin hired by Stalin.

Our tendency of the Fourth International — the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International — is struggling to unify Trotskyist forces to fight for the revolutionary socialist program of the Fourth International, and, in this way to build the nuclei of revolutionary socialist parties, and rebuild the Fourth International, which has suffered many crises and splits.

One of the biggest obstacles to unifying Trotskyist forces to fight for their program is the tendency in the workers movement as a whole, and even among the followers of Trotsky, to pay too much attention to bourgeois propaganda. There's too much confidence in capitalism, in not enough in the working class and socialism.

But with each upsurge in the class struggle, whether it is in Moscow or Los Angeles, the number and strength of the voices on the side of the working class and socialism, and against making concessions to the bourgeoisie and its propaganda, grow.

*We are reprinting a letter from a reader of **The Militant**. The reader defends the uprising in LA against the bourgeoisie and its slanders. It criticizes **The Militant**, a publication of the Socialist Workers Party which continues to consider itself a follower of Trotsky at least to a certain extent, although not "Trotskyist" — for characterizing as a "riot."*

We agree with the author's criticisms. We think that it is necessary not only to defend the LA uprising against the bourgeoisie and its slanders, but also to say what needs to be done now — continue the struggle, support and enlarge all working class and popular struggles, a big workers party, a program of working class measures to fight poverty, unemployment, racist oppression.

A common fight along these lines will bring revolutionary socialist and Trotskyist forces together.—Truth.

I do not think the term *riot* is useful in explaining what happened in L.A. from a working-class point of view, whether or not the adjective "anti-police" is attached to it. The word was put into capitalist criminal law in England in the early 1700s to help cops fight against freedom of assembly. If more than a few workers gathered and got

too uppity, the cops could read the Riot Act and then attack of the workers didn't disperse. In bourgeois public opinion, "rioters" are prosecuted as "looters," "thugs" who beat people, "arsonists" — a "mob" of "criminals." Today the liberal media puts a moral equal sign between the cop beating of Rodney King and a beating incident during the "riot." We say prosecute those cops, not the "rioters."

Malcolm X used the term *riot* in brief references to events in Harlem during the summer of 1964, but when he took time to discuss the question in a speech on Feb. 11, 1965, he rejected that term: "... they weren't riots in the first place; they were reactions against police brutality ... When the store windows were broken in the Black community, immediate it was made to appear that this was being done not by people who were reacting over civil rights violations but they gave the impression that there were hoodlums, vagrants, criminals, who wanted nothing other than to get into the stores and take the merchandise. But this is wrong ... This doesn't say it's intelligent. But who ever heard of a sociological explosion that was done intelligently and politely?" (*Malcolm X Talks to Young People* pp. 28-29)

In other talks he described how the cops planned to incite a "riot" and then victimize militant groups who might get drawn into combat. The word he used for this police action was pogrom.

Socialists should reserve the word *riot* for what the cops did to Rodney King, the vigilante raid they made to arrest workers in L.A., the mayhem of Operation Rescue, and all sorts of racist pogroms. It does not apply to the unorganized actions of the oppressed workers of L.A. This was not a bunch of hoodlums disturbing the peace. It was our class saying "enough!"

Fred Stanton

St. Louis, Missouri

(From *The Militant*, June 5, 1992, p. 15) ■

Solidarity, a group with some Trotskyist members, along with several other groups, is sponsoring a public meeting: "Rebellion and Beyond: The View From Los Angeles," Sunday, June 14, 7 pm, Central United Methodist Church, 23 E. Adams, Detroit. For more information contact: Solidarity, 841-0160. ■

Labor Party Forum, a San Francisco-based coalition that wants a labor party in the U.S., has called a National Conference for Independent Political Action, July 25-26. The Labor Party Forum is supported by **Socialist Organizer**, a Trotskyist group associated with the International Center for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (led by Pierre Lambert). We support all efforts that contribute to building a labor party in the U.S. For more information contact: Labor Party Forum, 2940 16th St., Suite 304, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 641-4610. ■

Spark, a Trotskyist group, is holding its annual Summer Festival August 16. There will be food, activities and meetings for workers to discuss the Los Angeles uprising, the Caterpillar strike and so on. For more information contact: Spark, Box 1047, Detroit, MI 48231. ■

Truth sold 19 copies of the last issue at a meat-packing plant in Detroit. A leaflet in support of the Kroger strikers was also distributed. The workers has been very supportive of the strike, but picketing with the Kroger workers is still limited to a few workers. Workers are more and more favorable to socialism in discussions. ■

LA shows we need socialism!

The popular uprising in LA shows that the capitalist ruling class in the U.S. and its economic system are totally bankrupt.

Thousands of African-American, Latin and poor working class white youth and their families in urban centers like LA are living without decent jobs, food, clothes, housing, health-care, schools, recreation facilities, freedom from police brutality, etc.

Many people think that the capitalist ruling class and its economic system are *capable* of providing all these things to the people, that they don't do it because they are greedy.

But this isn't true.

For years the U.S. capitalist ruling class made super-profits through favorable terms of trade and overseas investments. It was able to and did make certain concessions to the people; it was able to buy some social peace.

Now, it is unable to.

Now that the popular uprising has taken place in LA, many authorities admit that the conditions in which thousands are being forced to live are absolutely desperate. But what do they propose? Only \$14 billion for LA! They spent \$14 billion in 2 days in the war on Iraq, but they are only going to spend \$14 billion altogether on LA. And most of this is going to go to businessmen, not to the people. Why? Because war on Iraq is an investment, an investment in oil, that will pay off. Money for LA is hush money, money to hush the people up, buy a little time, until they feel in a better position to crush the people.

Does this mean that people shouldn't fight for decent jobs, higher wages, etc. No. On the contrary. Big fights can and will force the capitalist ruling class to make concessions. But it does mean that any gains that are made will not be secure until the masses of working people succeed in overthrowing the power of the capitalist class, and building a socialist society. That is, a society in which the working people own all the things necessary to produce what people need, and in which everyone has what he or she needs, without a privileged elite. As long as the basic resources of the society, necessary to produce the things that people need remain in the hands of a small class of privileged, who use these resources to enrich themselves at the expense of the people, the masses of workers and oppressed will never be secure.

Truth is published by the Trotskyist Committee of Detroit. The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit is named after Leon Trotsky, a leader of the first successful workers socialist revolution and a founder of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution. The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit is associated with one of the international tendencies of the Fourth International, the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. Editor: M. Guttshall

Subscribe to Truth!

Introductory subscription: Ten issues for \$3.00 (Detroit only)
Regular subscription: Ten issues for \$6.00

Name _____

Address _____

(Send with check or money order payable to M. Guttshall, to Truth, Box 441283, Detroit, MI 48244-1283.)

Bourgeois propagandists and ex-socialists and ex-communists try to discredit the struggle for socialism by pointing to the situation in Russia. But the problem in Russia is not that the people have tried to build a socialist society. The problem is that a privileged elite arose, which has tried to take the benefits of socialism for itself, and, in so doing, undermined the struggle for socialism. Now the working people in Russia and other republics are rising up against this privileged elite. If they can succeed in overthrowing it and its armed forces, and replacing it with a working class and popular democracy, made up of the workers and oppressed in arms, they will make big progress toward socialism.

How can the masses of workers and oppressed in the U.S. begin to make progress toward socialism today?

— Actively support the struggles of all workers and oppressed peoples, like the Kroger workers' strike; push for them to be as militant and as large as possible; fight for a national strike for higher wages, more jobs, and against union-busting now ...

— Join Labor Party Advocates; demand that the union leaderships stop all union support to all Republican and Democratic Party candidates, and to all candidates of the exploiters and oppressors, including Ross Perot; build a big labor party now; labor candidates now ...

Serial killers, capitalism and socialism

People heard one gruesome detail after another last week about Leslie Williams, a man who has repeatedly sexually assaulted and killed women. Williams had already been convicted of four felonies, when he was convicted of kidnapping and assaulting a woman in 1983. Yet Williams was given a minimal sentence and, later, relatively early parole.

Many people have already pointed out that the U.S. justice system allows white cops to beat a Black construction worker nearly to death for a speeding violation; that it allows white men to physically and sexually assault women without much consequence.

But there's more. What creates a Leslie Williams in the first place? Many have pointed out that he himself was physically and sexually abused as a child. What was done about this at the time? What is done about this today? Here is a side of motherhood, fatherhood, and family life that Bush, Quayle — and all the others talking about how glorious all these things are — aren't talking about.

— Fight for a program of working class measures to combat poverty, unemployment and racist oppression, including laws like:

- o Increase the minimum wage; automatic wage increases in accord with price increases;
- o Abolish overtime in periods of high unemployment; 30 hours work for 40 hours pay; a program of public works to provide jobs for the unemployed at union wages;
- o Full representation of women, African-Americans, Arabs, Latins, Asians, and other oppressed in all positions;
- o Nationalize all enterprises that refuse to cooperate with this program ...

Obviously, this struggle is not going to be easy. Many workers are reluctant to take even the first step in an active struggle against the exploiters, like joining a picket line, or attending a Labor Party Advocates meeting. But there is no other way. Until the masses of workers begin to struggle in a massive and organized way against the exploiters, there is not going to be much progress.

The working class is the only class that has the power to force the exploiters to make big concessions. And it is the only class capable of building a new society that serves the interests of the masses of people, not a handful of rich. — M. Guttshall ■

We need high quality children's centers, full of adults devoted to children, and the latest in absolutely everything, so that children have an alternative to abusive parents.

In this society, children have no rights, and no place to go, if they are abused.

The capitalists are not going to solve this problem because their primary concern is profits.

But the working class can and will solve this problem by taking over the resources of this society and using them to supply things that people need — like children's centers.

Capitalism has no answers; socialism does.—M.G.

**Just out — one dollar.
Call Truth at 584-6556.**

*The crisis
in the
auto industry:
a working class
and socialist solution*

