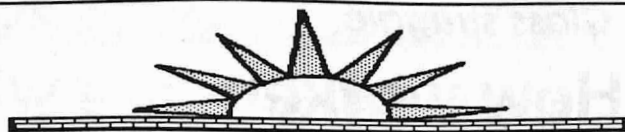


# **NEW LIFE**



**BULLETIN FOR A WORKERS PARTY (CONTINUING TRUTH AND WORKERS SPEAK)**

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**If you want  
more  
high-paying  
union jobs ...**

**Support  
striking Teamsters  
and Caterpillar workers!**

**Justice for Jose Iturralde! — page 4**

# How workers are winning strikes today . . .

*The big newspapers have not covered one of the most important stories for working class people—the struggle of the workers of Europe, of some of the richest countries in the world, against their governments and their employers.*

*There are more workers fighting in more countries in Europe than in many years. Many of the struggles have been successful in stopping or impeding government and employer plans against the workers.*

*Below we recount three key struggles.*



## **German metal workers — February - May, 1993**

In Germany, the richest European country, there was a fight for East German workers to have wages equal to those of West German workers.

On February 18, 1993, the major metal-working employers announced that they were breaking the contract for pay increases of 20-26% for East German workers that they had negotiated with IG Metall, the workers union. The increases were the first in a series to bring East German workers up to the same wages for the same work as West German workers. The employers offered 9%.

IG Metall demanded that the employers stick to the contract. On February 19, 20,000 steel workers demonstrated. Miners joined the steel workers and the unionists raised the slogan — “Steel workers east and west stay united.”

These actions built up to a national demonstration of workers from east and west Germany held in Bonn, the capital of West Germany, on March 26.

On April 24, 200,000 workers demonstrated in 7 cities, with trainloads of workers traveling from west Germany to east Germany.

On May 3 and 4, 30,000 workers went on strike in several states of eastern Germany. These were the first strikes in East Germany since the 1953 uprising. On May 9, the employers' organization stood firm saying that there was no way to meet the 1994 agreement. They threatened lockouts, which they had originally pledged not to do.

By May 10, there were 37,500 workers on

## **Air France workers occupy airport runways to stop layoffs.**

strike. They were supported by 300,000 workers throughout east and west Germany, who conducted strikes and demonstrations throughout Germany. At VW headquarters, 25,000 workers rallied against VW.

On May 14, the employers made major concessions. They agreed to a July 1996 deadline for wage parity. They agreed that East German workers will be at 80% of parity with west German workers by the end of 1994, with immediate pay increases of up to 26%.

## **Air France workers' strike — October, 1993**

In early April, 1994, Air France workers blocked runways at the major airports to protest a government plan to cut 5,000 jobs and reduce wages. The workers have since overwhelmingly approved a management plan that reduces the number of jobs, but through attrition and voluntary retirements. This struggle began last fall.

In October, the government announced that it was going to cut wages and 4,000 jobs from the workers at Air France, the government-owned airline.

The workers' response was immediate. Workers welded the freight center doors shut at the two major Paris airports.

Hundreds of strikers marched onto the runways at the two major Paris airports — Orly and Charles De Gaulle — forcing Air France to cancel 500 flights. When police occupied the runways the following day to prevent the strikers from coming back, the workers blocked the highways up to the airport. When the police cleared the highways, the workers went back to the

runways.

Daily demonstrations of thousands took place at Orly. There were violent clashes with the police. The government declared its plans could not be changed.

On October 22, the transportation minister announced the wage cuts would be canceled, but the job cuts would stay. On October 23, workers voted to continue the strikes, and plans were made for a bigger strike of all airlines personnel on October 26.

On October 24, the plans that could not be changed, were changed. The government promised a new plan under which no workers would be fired. The head of the state-owned company resigned. The government said, it “was no longer a strike but a revolt.”

Workers went ahead with their October 26 strike. 10,000 workers demonstrated at Orly and Charles De Gaulle in the biggest demonstrations at the airports since May, 1968. Workers at the freight depot continued on strike until October 29 because they demanded written agreements from the government that there would be no layoffs.

## **General strike in Spain — January, 1994**

On January 27, 1994, there was a general strike in Spain of nearly all the workers in the country, some 3 million workers. They were protesting a series of attacks by the government on workers' rights and standard of living. The general strike was the product of the struggle of the Spanish workers of the last year.

In March, 1993, 15,000 unionists

## Class struggle

In March, 1993, 15,000 unionists demonstrated in the state of Galicia, demanding emergency measures against unemployment; they threatened more convincing actions if these demands were not met.

In March, there was a general strike in a section of the Basque region, demanding re-industrialization of their region and jobs.

In March, 100,000 peasants from all over Spain occupied Madrid to protest the situation in the countryside — especially the reduced income resulting from the Common Market plans.

On June 6, new elections were held — and the workers returned the socialist government to power with many more socialist deputies in the parliament.

In June, 15,000 telephone workers demonstrated in Madrid from all over Spain demanding a 35-hour week, creation of new jobs, and no loss of rights.

In September, the government announced plans, the "social pact," to resolve the economic crisis. Unemployment in Spain was, and still is, officially, 25%. The plans of the government placed the entire burden for the crisis on the backs of the workers.

A conference of unionists opposed to the social pact was held in early October. One major union, the CNT, declared itself

against the social pact.

More and more unions, factory by factory, took positions against the social pact. In October, there was a one-day general strike in Asturias, convoked by the two major unions, the UGT and the CCOO, responding to another wave of layoffs. This was the sixth general strike in Asturias in the last 28 months, the majority over the layoffs, working conditions and the closing of mines.

On October 27, students at the universities called a strike to protest the rise in tuition. The students demanded that the universities remain "popular," that is, of the people, and low tuition. The slogan: "The children of the workers to the university."

On November 25, people in every major city in Spain demonstrated to "impede the social pact" — 60,000 in Barcelona, 40,000 in Madrid. In November, after 50 days of strikes, demonstrations, and so on, against the closing of the huge SEAT (VW) auto works outside Barcelona, the government said no to VW's plans.

In December, the major unions decided to call a general strike against the social pact for January 27.

The wave of working class struggle has crossed the Atlantic and has begun in the U.S. Just like in Europe, the next period in the U.S. will see struggle, the depth and the breadth of which, has never been seen before. — Fred Russo ■

## Teamsters and the labor party movement



The Teamsters' strike shows once again that workers need their own political party and their own candidates for office.

Teamster pickets are restricted. They've been told that if they go too far in stopping freight, if they get "too violent," that there will be an injunction against the strike and picketing. They've also been told that if workers from one firm picket at another firm, that there will be an injunction against the strike. They've been told that if the strike gets too big, and too effective, that the government will use the Taft-Hartley act — a whole series of anti-labor laws passed in 1947 and 1951 — to make the strike illegal.

The bosses are getting the police to escort various elements across the picket lines. But nobody is escorting the pickets. One scab drove a truck straight into a picket and knocked the picket up over the hood of the scab's truck. Fortunately, the picket wasn't permanently hurt. The police then escorted this scab to safety.

So the bosses are getting help from laws and public officials, but the workers aren't. There isn't a single public official who has come out and made a statement in support of the strike. Nor has the media given the workers much of an opportunity to speak for themselves to the public.

Workers need their own political party and their own candidates, to fight to overturn all the anti-labor laws that restrict the struggles of the workers and their unions, and who will use their campaigns and their positions in public office to fight for the interests of the workers. This will strengthen the struggle of the workers immeasurably.

What can workers do to advance this struggle today? Join Labor Party Advocates, which is pushing for a convention to found a labor party in 1995. Push for unions to put forward their own candidates for office in 1994. — M. Guttshall



In March, millions of French students, with the support of their parents, teachers and the unions, stopped the government plan to lower the minimum wage through demonstrations in every city in France.

## On the Teamsters' strike picket lines

Members of Labor Party Advocates have been picketing with the Teamsters to show support for their strike. They picketed at Yellow Freight and Roadway (Teamsters Local 299).

During the first week of the strike, the mood among the pickets changed dramatically. There were about thirty pickets at Yellow Freight on Thursday. At first it was pretty laid-back—folks standing around talking, shifting around and joking to each other from group to group. By Saturday, it was tense. Nobody spoke between groups—they hung tightly to their own conversations. There was a lot of concern that the union leadership was going to keep the drivers from the big companies out and send drivers from the small companies back to work. A meeting of Local 299 was set for Sunday, and afterward it looked like the majority had won—no one was being sent back to work. After the Local meeting, nearly 300 pickets stopped freight at O.J. Transport. Everyone seemed to be digging in their heels.

Here are some of the things we heard on the picket line:

### Thursday, April 7th, Yellow Freight

"I think this Labor Party idea is a good one. They should do that—form another party. It's true that the Democrats and Republicans aren't doing anything to really help us—the working man."

"I think everybody should be in the same union—one big union. Enough of this dividing people into little groups—we need to have more power, we need to all get together."

"Well, we do let through the managers from the warehouse and girls who work in the office—you have to respect their point of view—everybody's got a right to their own opinion." (RESPONSE: Yes, but you have the right to convince them of your point of view—to stop them from hurting your strike.)

"One guy in a rented U-Haul truck plowed right through the line last night. He didn't even stop. He hit a couple of guys—one went over the hood, but he checked out OK at the hospital. It's a good thing the police came and took that driver out, or

some of us would have really messed him up. They handcuffed him and headed for the precinct, but who really knows if they booked him."

"The cops have been escorting a lot of trucks in here to pick up loads. One driver we hassled going in called the cops and they showed up right away to escort him out. You certainly don't get that kind of service from Detroit police if somebody breaks into your house."

### Friday, April 8th

"There were some guys here yesterday who work at Ford. We were telling them about the guys at O. J. Transport striking to get union recognition. They have picket lines at the Ford Rouge Plant—they deliver there—but Ford workers have been crossing them. These guys we were talking to went down there, and then went to the UAW Local 600 and demanded to see one of the union officers to find out

why UAW wasn't supporting their strike."

### Saturday, April 9th

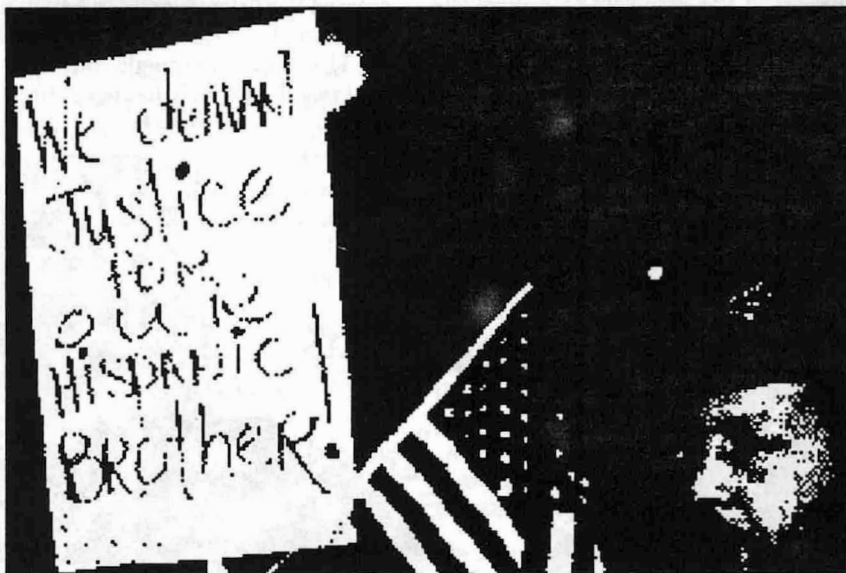
"We should all be out—not just some of us. If nobody—none of the Teamsters—was working, then we would win this strike. As it is, this could go on and on...."

### Thursday, April 14th

"I don't know why they sent the Preston drivers back to work. They didn't ask us. TMI (the owners organization) let Preston out of their contract so they could negotiate separately. I don't know why the union allowed it."

"The problem is nobody hangs together. It's the old thing—'united we stand, divided we fall.' Sometime we're going to have to all stand together; it's going to come down to a conflict between the few rich people and all of us working class people. And there's more of us." — K.M. ■

## Justice for Jose Iturralde!



Detroit police officers Todd and Hardy who murdered Jose Iturralde, a Cuban immigrant, were declared not guilty this week by a Detroit jury. The officers, both African-Americans, murdered Jose Iturralde, claiming he had made threatening remarks and drawn a gun on them. The officers could not

understand Spanish and later admitted that there was no gun. There must be justice for Jose Iturralde! The police must be punished. The unions in Detroit need to take a stand on the side of the Spanish-speaking people, immigrant workers, and mobilize their ranks to fight for justice. — F.R. ■

## The United States

### Staley workers protest

Staley workers, members of United Paperworkers International/Allied Industrial Workers Local 7837, have been locked out of the Staley corn processing plant in Decatur, Illinois for 20 months. Their struggle for their jobs and a decent contract is supported by the AFL-CIO. The local, along with workers from the United Rubber Workers and the United Auto Workers, held a rally on February 22 at the plant and blocked the gates for 25 minutes before the Decatur police and state police moved in full riot gear. Four workers were summoned later to the police station. A Decatur Area Solidarity Committee, a coalition of labor unions, has formed and is publishing a monthly *Decatur Labor News* for all workers in the Decatur area like the Staley workers and the Caterpillar workers.

### Steelworkers strike

3,500 members of the United Steel Workers of America walked out of Allegheny Ludlum steel on April 1 to fight cuts in pensions, healthcare benefits and for job security.

### GM Strike

In March, 3,000 UAW workers at two GM Delco parts plants in Ohio struck to protest the plans to layoff up to 500 workers. After 3 days, the company agreed to maintain production of parts at the plants, keeping 200 jobs.

### Ford workers reject MOA

On March 14, 1,900 workers at Ford's Avon Lake plant in Ohio rejected a proposed Modern Operating Agreement (MOA) contract. The MOA had been imposed on workers in 1990 without a vote. The workers make the Mercury Villager. 1,400 workers who make the Econoline vans at the same plant approved a more traditional contract with Ford.

### ACTWU strike

The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) in three Healthtex plants in the South staged a 3 day strike to force demands for better insurance, higher wages and guarantees that 1,000 jobs will remain at the three plants.

### Railroad workers protest attacks

100 railroad workers met in New York to discuss their fight against the union-bust-

ing sale of the Central Vermont Railroad. They have gathered 13,000 signatures demanding hearings by the Interstate Commerce Commission. They also plan a regional support rally in early May.

### Miners face trial, need support

West Virginia miners face a trial for a murder of a scab during the miners' strike last year. The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) are requesting that support be sent to UMWA Region II Defense Fund, 4500 MacCarkle Ave., SE, Charleston, WV 25304.

### Rodney King

Rodney King is now suing the Los Angeles police for the damage that they did to him when they nearly beat him to death after they stopped him for a traffic violation. According to a neurosurgeon, a portion of King's brain is still not functioning properly. His jaw was dislocated, his teeth were cracked, he was struck repeatedly on his head, body, and legs with a nightstick, and he was shot with a stun gun, causing him to convulse violently. Pain that he still suffers makes it difficult for him to sleep at night.

### State of Black America report

The State of Black America report issued by the Urban League of America details the increasing poverty of the African-American communities in the U.S. Over 33% of all African-Americans live in poverty; the unemployment rate for African-Americans, including involuntary part-time workers is 23.2%. Between 1970 and 1990, the median income for African-American families rose \$272; for white families, \$2434.

### LA law attacks immigrant workers

Los Angeles County has just passed a law restricting where day laborers can gather to look for work. Workers and their supporters fought this attack on Mexican-Americans and immigrant workers for months. The final law restricts workers from gathering in commercial parking lots. It particularly targets skilled construction workers who often work as plumbers, electricians, or carpenters, and who gather at parks, playgrounds, etc., to offer their services to residents.

### Michigan House passes law against teachers' strikes

The Michigan House of Representatives

has approved a bill this week that is designed to greatly weaken the teachers' unions in Michigan. Teachers would be fined a day's pay each day they were on strike, and unions would be fined \$5,000 per day; school districts will be able to impose their last offer if contract mediation fails; it allows districts to use volunteers to start school without having to bargain for this right with the teachers' unions. The teachers' unions are expected to fight the law in the Senate. This struggle deserves the support of all unions in Michigan.

### Whitewater

A recent ABC News-Washington Post poll showed that 71% of U.S. citizens think that the media is paying too much attention to the so-called Whitewater scandal. But the problem isn't just the media, it's the government itself, from Congress to the White House. The Whitewater investigation against the Clintons is, in reality, a tactic on the part of many of the richest families, represented by the Republican Party and the most right-wing Democrats, to put pressure on the Clintons to make even more concessions to the richest families than they already have, and abandon even the small reforms in the healthcare system that they have been talking about. The richest and most powerful threaten to dig deeper and deeper into the Clinton's financial and personal affairs; they agree to back off if the Clintons go along with what they want. And what they want now, more than anything else, is to cut wages and benefits as low as they can without provoking a revolution. This means that even the Clintons' modest proposals for healthcare reform are too much for them. What should the workers do in this situation? Demand that the Republicans drop the Whitewater investigation; demand that Congress adopt union proposals for more jobs and healthcare, like a shorter work week without cutting pay and expansion of Medicare and Medicaid; run their own independent labor candidates to fight for these goals.

### Union membership grows

Union membership rose to 16.6 million, up 208,000 for the first time in many years. The increase came in the public sector. Membership in the manufacturing sector continues to decline. ■

# The origins of May Day

Over a hundred years ago, the First International met in Geneva, Switzerland. Workers' representatives from Europe and America, fresh from the class struggles in their own countries, resolved to wage an *international* campaign to impose the eight-hour day.

U.S. workers, newly industrialized, new to wage slavery, and led by militants who had been part of the First International, were among the first to take up this struggle.

Thanks to their efforts, the movement grew to massive proportions and won concessions in many industries. So workers' organizations, centered in Chicago, planned a general strike for the eight-hour day. The date: May 1, 1886.

The bosses were also organizing their forces. They launched a slander campaign that called the workers' leaders "anarchists/terrorists, and spies." They built private armies in the industrial cities.

On May 3, police fired on a strikers' rally at the Harvester plant in Chicago. On May 4, a police provocateur exploded a bomb at a rally organized in Haymarket Square to avenge the murder of the men the previous day. The police fired again, moved in, attacked the workers, and arrested their leaders. They jailed them and prepared to execute them.

Workers across the world rallied to the cause. In 26 countries workers went on strike to demand the release of the

Haymarket leaders. While the bosses went ahead with the execution, it wasn't possible to crush the movement. 275,000 workers gathered at their funeral. They sang "the Marseillaise," the battle hymn of the first workers' government, the Paris Commune, which had been organized in 1871 in Paris, France.

The Workers' International, because of the revolutionary and international nature

of this struggle, saw it as a turning point. At its World Congress in 1889, it decided to deepen its struggle for world-wide workers' unity and the eight-hour day. It proclaimed May 1st, in honor of the Haymarket martyrs, the fighting U.S. workers, and all who had come to their side, an international day of struggle for this cause. — M. Guttshall (*Reprinted from Truth No. 71, May, 1978*) ■

## Kent State massacre remembered

This May 4th marks the 24th anniversary of the killing of four students at Kent State University by members of the Ohio National Guard.

On Friday, May 1, 1970, students at Kent State organized a rally (to be held May 4) to protest the invasion of Cambodia by U.S. forces. Along with the rally, the students called for a weekend of sit-ins and speak-outs on campus and in town.

City and college officials worked to stop the students in their tracks. They set up curfews in town and on campus, and sent police to break up the sit-ins. When their actions proved useless, city officials called for the National Guard to be sent in to prevent any action by the

students.

On the morning of May 3, the Guard arrived at Kent. That evening the guardsmen were ordered to move in on a group of students at a sit-in with their bayonets fixed. In all, that night, eleven students were wounded. On the morning of May 4th, students began to gather for the rally. To disperse the students, the guardsmen lobbed tear gas at the crowd. The students retreated into a nearby parking lot at which point the guardsmen were ordered to open fire on the students.

After the shooting stopped, 13 students had been shot and, of those, four were dead. — T.A. ■

### Divisiveness

Not all Teamsters welcomed LPA members on the picket lines. At least two times, some Teamsters were hostile. Apparently some of the strikers were anti-communist and accused the LPA members of being communists. Even though LPA is not a communist organization, we feel it's important to note that anti-communist attitudes are counterproductive in any class struggle — especially a strike. Communists have been vital to the growth of the labor movement in this country — particularly in the first stages of building the unions. It may be true that some people, calling themselves communists, have been unfriendly or unsupportive. Still, this does not justify rejecting the support of anyone on the basis of whether or not they are communists — that does not help working people, it helps the bosses. ■

### Bloodstains still remain! — a poem

Picture this in your head if you can  
13 bodies lay scattered of which 4 lay dead  
shots ring out across the campus town  
while weekend warriors invade the ground

How can a man with a gun fear a boy with ideals  
still they shoot at the football field  
students killed shamefully  
while their killers get off blamelessly

13 seconds not long enough to change your mind  
but long enough to take 4 lives one at a time  
blood stains still remain  
of students whose killers did not get blamed

We let weekend warriors break the laws  
by killing with no cause

— Tim Allen, Spring '87

## Support the Mexican revolution!

Tens of thousands of workers and oppressed people marched throughout Mexico on Sunday, April 11, the anniversary of the assassination of Emiliano Zapata, the famous revolutionary peasant leader of the 1910 Mexican revolution. It was the largest action in solidarity with the indigenous peoples and peasants of Chiapas, since the popular uprising led by the Zapatista National Liberation Army on January 1. The people of Chiapas, and people throughout Mexico, are fighting for land, for control of basic resources, including oil and basic industries, for democratic rights and freedom, and for independence from U.S. corporations, the U.S. government, and their hand-picked servants in Mexico. Salinas, the "president of Mexico," and a total lackey of U.S. corporations, who has been working systematically to sell-off publicly owned property in Mexico to U.S. corporations at bargain-basement prices, initially agree to work toward a "negotiated solution" with the people of Chiapas and the Zapatista National

Liberation Army. In reality, he has been using the time that he gained with this ploy to build up his armed forces in Chiapas and throughout the country, in preparation for an armed onslaught against the Chiapas people and their supporters throughout Mexico. Many working class revolutionaries in Mexico are fighting for a national work-stoppage to force Salinas to resign and as a first step toward a more working class and popular government. Workers throughout the U.S. should support the struggles of the Mexican people against U.S. corporations and their lackeys like Salinas. The more the Mexican people progress, the more difficult it will be for U.S. corporations to use the low wages and bad conditions in Mexico as an excuse to close factories and cut wages in the U.S. When Mexican workers and peasants have wages and working conditions equal to those of workers in the U.S., we will be able to work together to build a society in which workers and oppressed peoples throughout the Americas are comfortable.—M.G.

### South Africa

TV stations and newspapers are showing dozens of photos and videos of Black people fighting with each other and killing each other as April 26, 27 and 28 approach, the days for the first elections in South Africa in which Black people will be allowed to participate.

This is racist propaganda designed to convince people in the U.S. that Black people in South Africa are not capable of governing themselves. What the news media doesn't tell you clearly is that there have always been Blacks in South Africa who have collaborated with the racist apartheid forces, and that Buthelezi and the so-called Inkatha Freedom Party, fall into this category. The vast majority of Black people in South Africa support the African National Congress (ANC); the vast majority of people will vote for ANC candidates and other candidates with a history of struggle against apartheid (Workers List Party candidates, for example). And they are right to do so. Anyone who remains neutral in a contest between forces against apartheid, and forces for apartheid, is making a serious mistake.

At the same time, it's obvious that a large vote for the ANC will not, by itself, solve the problems of the Black people of South Africa. The ANC has already agreed to allow parties that get 5% of the vote to have a seat in the government, where they will have veto power

over the actions of the majority; it has also agreed to allow armed forces that served apartheid to join the new armed forces.

This is a prescription for disaster; it means that the racist white minority and their Black supporters will continue to be able to sabotage, terrorize, and kill the Black majority. All power must go to the ANC and to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU); there must be a Constituent Assembly to establish a Black Republic; all the forces of apartheid must be dismantled and the worst partisans of apartheid must be punished mercilessly. This is the only way forward.

### Palestine

On Wednesday, April 6, 40 days after Baruch Goldstein, an Israeli settler, assassinated approximately 40 Palestinians praying in a Mosque, a Palestinian car driver blew up himself and his car near a bus stop in Afula, Israel, and killed at least 8 Israelis and wounded about 45 others. The next day, Thursday, April 7, a young Palestinian, Ali Amawi, used an Uzi submachine gun to fire on Israeli soldiers and citizens. He killed one and injured 4 before he was shot to death by Israeli soldiers. During interviews with some of the 60,000 Palestinian refugees in the Shatil refugee camp, which a *Detroit Free Press* reporter called "one of the poorest, most crowded places on earth," Pales-

tinians said things like: "He was convinced that the peace negotiations were no good for the Palestinian people ... he wanted to liberate all of Palestine for us" ... "I am so proud of Ali ... He set an example for all of us" ... "We should kill every Israeli soldier we can ... We are not interested in these peace talks, because there is no peace in them. The Israeli occupiers aren't leaving; they aren't giving us real freedom. Until they do, we must kill their soldiers. Ali was a hero for trying to do that." Of course, U.S. officials have condemned "the violence on both sides." But the violence on one side isn't equal to the violence on the other. The Palestinian people are fighting to get back the land that was stolen from them by the Israelis with the support of U.S. and European governments. The Israelis are fighting to preserve and expand a racist state in which only those with Jewish mothers are allowed to own land. In this sense, the Israeli state is much like the racist apartheid South African state. If anyone doubted this, the Israeli state recently issued an order prohibiting any Palestinians from entering Israel for at least a week, just as the South African state has done on more than one occasion to Blacks in South Africa. Working people in the U.S. should support the struggle of the Palestinian people against the racist Israeli state. They can do this by demanding that the U.S. government cut all aid to the Israeli state. ■

### Bosnia

U.S. forces, functioning as part of the "United Nations" and the "North Atlantic Treaty Organization," bombed Serbs on Sunday, April 10. This is the largest U.S. attack on Serbian forces since U.S. intervention began. U.S. attacks on Serbs are doing absolutely nothing to help the Bosnian people, who have been deprived of much of their land and freedom, and in thousands of cases of their lives and health, by the privileged Serbian bureaucracy and its murderous armed forces. On the contrary, U.S. attacks on the Serbs can only make the situation worse for the Bosnians. The Serbs will retaliate, not against U.S. forces in the air, but against the Bosnian people on the ground. The Bosnian people have said over and over that they want guns to defend themselves, to fight for their freedom themselves. But the U.S. not only refuses to give the Bosnians guns, it also maintains an embargo against guns to the Bosnians, preventing other forces from getting guns and other forms of aid to the Bosnians. The U.S. doesn't want small nations to be independent, to have some say-so over their own fate. Every U.S. citizen should demand that the U.S. government lift the embargo against Bosnia now! There will never be peace on this planet until larger nations like the U.S. learn to treat smaller nations like Bosnia with respect. ■

# The workers can make socialist lemonade from capitalist lemons

A lot of working class people are feeling pessimistic about the future. This isn't surprising. All of us are affected by corporate cut backs, layoffs, declining wages and longer working hours. All of us face fears of violent crime, poverty, homelessness and isolation in a society where family and other social institutions are degenerating. Young people especially are threatened by the economic and social changes we all face. Everyone knows that the generation entering the work force in the last 15 years will be the first in the United States to not surpass the standard of living their parents had.

In fact, young workers are confronted with even higher unemployment, more part time jobs and drastically lower wages than the working class as a whole. Second-tier wage scales, automation and the drive by multinational corporations to move production to super-exploited, low-wage regions all draw a depressing picture for a young person leaving high school today. And even if they make it to college — where tuitions are higher and higher — they have no guarantee of a good job. In fact, they may have many friends with college degrees who can't afford to live independently of their parents.

And so a lot of us — especially young people — believe we have nothing to look forward to; that things are only going to get worse. But that's not true — things will get worse, but the very conditions which allow them to get worse will *force* us to make them better. Unemployment is a good example: the army of unemployed will push us to fight for working class demands — if for no other reason than the threat that it may be us tomorrow. And, having so many people out of work also points to the solution to some of our problems — with more people working, we could all work fewer hours to produce the same amount. Striving for that working class demand will lead us to fight for taking control of what we produce.

This is an important point: *the foundation for the solutions which socialism can provide are laid in capitalism.* In fact, both the advances and the crisis' of capitalism are what allow for our progression toward

socialism — toward a society where all people have security and the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives.

Let's look at this from an historical perspective: We've gone through several stages of economic development in the course of human history. Human societies, like the Native Americans', were once based on primitive communism. Once farming was productive enough to provide surpluses, slave societies were created, where slaves were completely dependent on their owners. Then came feudalism, where the serfs owed their living to their landlords. The last major shift was to capitalism — where large-scale, industrial production pushed masses of people into wage-slavery, so that they had no tools to make a living independently of the capitalists.

In some ways, the transition between feudalism and capitalism was similar to our current transition between capitalism and socialism. Under feudalism, the serfs lived in miserable circumstances. They had to toil for most of the day, and most of what they produced was taken by the landlord. They did not have the freedom to move somewhere else because they were owned by the landlord, along with the land.

Then, when developments in production and exchange allowed for it, the new system of capitalism began to develop. For a while things were worse — the serfs were thrown off the land, and forced to migrate to the cities to look for a way to make a living. Everything was in upheaval. Many of them starved. But, eventually, through the large-scale, *social* production of industrialization, the standard of living of most people who lived in industrialized countries was improved.

People could produce more together as a group than separately as individuals. They had shoes, they could buy their basic necessities, and they had the freedom to look for work somewhere else — if it was available. Also their concentration in the cities and their socialization with other people brought a higher level of intellect and culture to the new proletarians. Their literacy, organizational and social skills

were greatly improved from those of the previous peasants.

Now, through producing things socially — and through advances in technology — we have developed the ability to meet the needs of all people. The only things that prevent this are the wasteful use of our resources — the false adjustments of supply and demand where the government pays farmers *not to* grow food and where most of society's resources are controlled by a tiny minority of the society — the rich, the capitalist class. Essentially, what holds us back is the final contradiction in our system of production — we produce things socially — as a group — but still appropriate the resources produced privately — to individuals.

This is because a tiny minority still controls our society and what it produces. The latest statistic from the University of Michigan is that 90% of the wealth is controlled by 1 percent of the population. The rich still *live off of* the rest of us — they exploit us. This is a contradiction that must eventually be resolved.

Capitalism lays the basis for resolving this contradiction by creating the working class. And the working class, as a result of the conditions in which it works and lives, is compelled to struggle against the capitalist class. We see this everyday in the struggle that takes place between the workers and the bosses. The bosses try to get the most amount of work from the workers, in return giving the workers the least amount possible. So the workers resist—through stretching lunch breaks, letting parts go by, stealing supplies from work—but eventually through open, public ways like strikes.

This struggle against the capitalist class compels the working class to build unions and political parties, to fight for political power and eventually to overthrow the political and economic power of the capitalist class. Only then can we build a socialist society. We must do this eventually — either as a response to the current capitalist crisis, or another one in the future. And the sooner, the better. — K. Morgan



# A Workers International ...

Many working people are seeing more and more that the economies of different nations are becoming more and more interdependent. Finances come from different countries. Raw materials come from different countries. Parts come from different countries. Products may be partially assembled in one country, and completely assembled in another. Then they are shipped to different countries throughout the world. Even accounting and clerical work is being shipped to different countries.

This means that working people in different countries are becoming more and more dependent on each other, in different ways. First, in the sense that they need the products that workers in more than one country take part in producing. Second, in the sense that they are more and more dependent on each other when it comes to fighting for their interests against the big multi-national bosses. If workers in one country strike, and bosses can easily shift production to workers in another country, it's hard for a strike to be effective.

Many workers have already begun to see this. Thus they are making more and more efforts to get to know each other and coordinate their activities. Workers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico are traveling back and forth to each others' countries trying to learn more about the working and living conditions and labor struggles in each country. They are making joint efforts to organize more unions. When workers in one country go on strike, they seek support from workers in other countries. Working class and popular political parties, like the Brazilian Workers Party and others, have organized joint conferences to address common problems. At the highest level, efforts to get to know workers in other countries and coordinate struggles against the bosses will take the form of building an *international working class organization* to fight for the interests of the workers against the bosses, in other workers, a Workers International.

A Workers International will be able to bring together the strength and struggles of working people throughout the world and coordinate them; it will make it possible to overthrow the power of the bosses throughout the world and build a society in which working people will be truly comfortable.

Some people think that the best way to build a big Workers International is to build big workers parties in each country and then, down the road, work to bring them together in a big International. There is no question

that it is necessary to build big working class parties in each country, deeply rooted in the most working class sections of the working class and their organizations. Without this, a Workers International will be nothing but a shell. But it is necessary to carry on these tasks simultaneously. If we try to build a workers party in this or that country, or even workers parties on this or that continent, without simultaneously working to develop and strengthen ties with workers in other countries and build a common organization, then what we build in this or that country or continent, will be so peculiar to, so adapted to, that country or continent, that it won't be able to raise workers to the level of their tasks, or come together with workers in other countries. Working class parties can be like eccentric uncles: if they spend too much time alone, or just with their own kind, they can get a little crazy, and become incapable of getting along with others.

Thus it is necessary to pursue the construction of workers parties and a Workers International simultaneously.

There have been three relatively big international working class organizations in the history of the international workers movement: the First, Second, and Third Internationals.

The First International was founded in 1864. The Second International was founded in 1889 and functioned until 1914, when the major components of this International each decided to support the bosses in their countries against the bosses and workers of other countries in World War I. Various components of this International reassembled themselves after World War I was over, but this was more of an effort to try to make themselves look good, and give themselves mutual protection, than to fight for the interests of the workers. The Third International was founded in 1919, and played a tremendous role in the working class and popular uprisings in the early 1920s. But it was taken over by the privileged bureaucracy in the old USSR and its supporters throughout the

world, and ceased to fight for the interests of the working class.

The Fourth International was founded in 1938 to continue the work of the First, Second and Third Internationals. It was founded to lead the fight to build working class and revolutionary parties in each country, which in turn lead the fight for working class and socialist *revolutions*, in which workers overthrow the power of the bosses, take all the power into their own hands, and begin to build working class and socialist societies in which workers and oppressed are truly comfortable.

Over 50 years have passed and the Fourth International still hasn't become as big as the Second or Third Internationals were. It's passed through many crises and broken into many different tendencies and factions. Yet there are thousands of working class militants who consider themselves part of the Fourth International.

We think that the best way to begin to build a big Workers International today, is to work toward building working class and revolutionary parties in each country, and to *rebuild the Fourth International*. In the next issue of *New Life*, we'll say more about why we think this is the clearest and most direct road toward building a big Workers International. — M. Guttschall ■

*New Life* is a monthly bulletin for a workers party published by the Revolutionary Committee of Detroit. The Revolutionary Committee of Detroit is a supporter of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution, founded by Leon Trotsky and his comrades. The Revolutionary Committee of Detroit also supports the Liaison Committee initiated by two tendencies of the Fourth International — the International Revolutionary Current of the International Workers League of the Fourth International (IRC-IWLFI) and the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (ILRFI). Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *New Life*. These are expressed in editorials. Editorial Board: Tim Allen, Margaret Guttschall, Kim Morgan, Fred Russo.

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# Support the striking Teamsters and Caterpillar workers!

On April 6, the Teamsters' union initiated a national strike against the largest trucking firms, involving 75,000 workers, which has now lasted at least 10 days.

The United Auto Workers union is organizing an international conference and rally against the Caterpillar corporation on Saturday, May 7.

We urge all young workers, students, and working people to support and participate in these struggles.

The Teamsters — now under the leadership of a new, more working class president, Ron Carey — are fighting to keep workers working full-time for \$17/hour and full benefits, against the owners of the big trucking firms who want the right to replace these workers with part-time workers paid \$8/hour and no benefits. They also want the unlimited right to move freight, not by truck, but by rail. This would allow them to destroy the Teamsters' union, which is the largest and most powerful union in the country.

The UAW is fighting for a union contract for Caterpillar workers, who have been working without a contract since Caterpillar threatened to fire all striking workers and replace them with scabs.

Some people have been reluctant to support the Teamsters' strike. They offer a number of different reasons: the Teamsters already make more money than most workers; the Teamsters don't support the struggles of other unionists and oppressed people, especially African-Americans and women; much of the leadership of the Teamsters is corrupt, criminal, etc.

But *not* supporting the Teamsters' strike won't change these things. If the bosses succeed in cutting the Teamsters' wages, it will be easier for them to cut the wages of lower-paid workers even more. Why stoop to the level of the most backward elements in the labor movement? Why not fight for a new policy, more solidarity, not less? Big, winning strikes are one of the best ways to drive the most corrupt, criminal elements out of the labor movement. The criminal elements are incapable of waging a serious fight against the bosses.

There are lots of different things that young workers, students, and all working people can do. Join the picket lines. Raise funds for the Teamsters, whose funds have

been drained by the government and the old union leadership. Come to the UAW rally in Peoria. Defend these struggles among co-workers and friends.

These struggles are an opportunity for

## Teamsters say ...

### It's not about money ...

We've had an opportunity to talk to a number of different workers on the picket lines in Detroit. Over and over they tell us, "It's not about money!" They want other workers in Detroit to know that they aren't striking for higher wages. They are satisfied with what they have now. They are striking to save higher-paying jobs. They don't want to see workers making \$17/hour and full benefits, replaced by workers making \$8/hour and no benefits. They are concerned about the future and the future of their children. They think that workers have to take a stand now to save what they have before the quality of work and life in the U.S. is totally destroyed.

### Spread the strike ...

Since the beginning of the strike, there has been talk about the Teamsters' union signing "interim agreements" with some of the firms organized in "Trucking Management Incorporated," the trucking bosses' organization. These firms would agree to go along with the final agreement, whatever it might be; the Teamsters' union would then stop striking these firms. We aren't experts on the trucking industry or the Teamsters' union, but we can say that many of the strikers we talked to didn't like this idea, especially the workers who would continue to be on strike while some of their fellow workers were being sent back to work. Some said they felt like they were being "hung out to dry." Many said they thought it would be better to *expand the strike*, call out every Teamster, including workers at UPS. "Then we'll see some changes," said one. "We'd bring 'em to their knees," said another. — M.G. ■

every worker to learn better how to fight the bosses and to develop ties with other workers in struggle. The more workers do this, the more quickly they will be victorious over the bosses. — *New Life* ■

**Caterpillar workers' rally**  
**Saturday • 1 pm • May 7**  
**Peoria, Illinois**  
**Call UAW Region 1A:**  
**313-291-2750**

## No impact? . . .

The newspapers in Detroit said that the Teamsters' strike had "little impact." The rich owners speaking through the *Wall Street Journal* disagreed. They said:

April 7, the day the strike began: "It won't be long before the system will just bog down," said Ford Motor Company transportation director Charles Wilkins. "There is not enough transportation capacity to absorb this shutdown without some effect on manufacturers and retailers."

"If the strike goes on for more than a week, it will affect our operations," said a spokesperson for Smith's Food and Drug Centers with 131 stores in eight Western states.

On April 8: "The strike is causing headaches for many shippers. Ford Motor Company hired vans last week to rush auto parts to assembly plants; in one case, the parts arrived two hours before the plant would have run out. 'We have to pay more and worry a lot, but so far we have been able to get shipments moved,' said Charles Wilkins."

On April 13: "As a national Teamsters' strike goes into its second week, many small companies are beginning to feel its sting. And they worry that the effects may be worse for them than for large companies. . . ."

" . . . Some firms fear losing substantial sales because of the disruption of supply lines." ■

## For a one day national strike to win the Teamsters strike!

The AFL-CIO has lent or given money to the Teamsters' union to help them finance the strike against the biggest trucking firms in the U.S. — Yellow Freight, Roadway Express, Consolidated Freightways, ABF, and others. And that's good.

But there is a lot more that the AFL-CIO could do. It could organize a one day

national work-stoppage to support the Teamsters' strike.

The vast majority of workers would support this; most think it was a mistake for the unions not to take a stand against the firing of the PATCO strikers in 1981.

If you'd like to see this happen, push for it in your union. Now is the time to make a change. ■