

NEW LIFE

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

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The labor party: a step toward socialism

The majority of young people and working people don't know that over 1,000 working class delegates decided to found a Labor Party based on the unions at a convention that took place in June in Cleveland, Ohio. There weren't many young people at this convention.

Nevertheless, the foundation of the Labor Party is tremendously important to young people, especially young people for socialism.

The Labor Party is a step toward socialism.

The working class is the class in this society that comes together every day and works together to produce and distribute the things that people need to survive.

The working class is the class that is in the location and has the knowledge and organization necessary to takeover the giant monopolies — oil, mining, agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, communications — and run them in the interests of the working majority, rather than in the interests of the rich.

The working class is the class that can — with its organizations (unions, parties, committees) — organize working class and popular militias, overcome the power of the rich and their armed forces, establish a revolutionary working class and popular democracy, and crush the resistance of the rich minority.

In other words, the working class is the class that can bring about socialism, a society in which working people own all the basic resources, have their own government, and democratically decide how to plan and organize the production and distribution of necessities. This, in turn, is a step toward a classless, communist society.

In fact, the working class and its organizations are themselves steps toward socialism within capitalist society. By the very nature of their day-to-day lives, workers and their unions come together and work together to produce and distribute necessities. Capitalists, on the other hand, play a role in organizing production and distribution only to enrich themselves, at the expense of workers and other capitalists. To begin to build socialism, workers only have to takeover what is already here, and get the capitalists out of the way (send them to some small islands with plenty of martinis and golf courses!).

So why don't workers do this? The fundamental problem is that workers' thinking — and hence workers' actions — are too much influenced by capitalists. Workers have to

use a lot of energy that might be used for study and thought for work. Capitalists constantly bombard workers with propaganda telling them that they are stupid, incapable of running society, that things will always be more or less as they are, that a truly socialist or communist society is impossible, etc., etc. Pro-capitalist trade union leaders, pro-capitalist socialists, and pro-capitalist communists echo this propaganda to one extent or another and/or lead workers' struggles into blind allies that undermine their confidence and wear them out.

So, to make progress toward socialism, workers have to get away from capitalist propaganda. They have to be in conditions in which they can learn to think and act more (Continued on back page)



Labor Party delegates demonstrate against Democratic Party mayor of Cleveland; he demanded that state laws be changed to weaken city workers' rights.

The purpose of a workers' election campaign: Tell the truth!

When workers run for public office, they suddenly get lots of advice from their family, friends and co-workers, all of it with the best of intentions.

Many workers think that workers shouldn't hold office. "What do you know about being governor?" they ask sarcastically. Or, "I wouldn't want to be president, that's too hard a job." (!!)

Workers may dislike Democratic and Republican Party politicians and they may have a low opinion of them, but some fear them and fear taking their place. They think that the world really needs this kind of politician to force concessions from the rich. "That's the way that politics is played," referring to the backroom deals, the compromises, the horse-trading of workers' interests

Workers often vote for union leaders who look, sound and act remarkably like politicians for the rich. Many people move back and forth between these positions (Coleman Young!).

Tell the truth

Friends and co-workers advise workers who run for office, giving them some strange advice. They can't really believe that someone just like them is really running. It's difficult for them to take such a workers' candidate, a workers' politician seriously, because it is so unusual. It's like telling them you're going back to school to become a nuclear scientist or an astronaut.

Many workers around the world, European workers, Canadian workers, think differently.

They believe that workers should run the country, that workers should hold office. They support and help develop worker politicians. Worker politicians are people who fight for the workers' cause with just as much skill and training as the Democrats and Republicans fight for the rich. Many workers in other countries are convinced that the only people who can fight for workers ... are workers and their open supporters.

Friends and family want the candidate to win, naturally. So they offer advice on how to get the most votes. The advice is often schizophrenic. With one breath they bemoan the fact that the rich control the news-

papers (certainly in the Detroit area!), the radio and television stations. In the next breath, they want to discuss how to get "media" attention!

Getting the most votes in a political system controlled by the rich is easy. Just sell yourself to the rich.

The only way for workers to advance is to change society. In order to change society, workers must change their thinking — above all about themselves. The elections are another, and very important way, to encourage, support and develop a change in thinking among workers.

The way to get the most votes that count, the most support for change, is to fight for the truth. That is the purpose of a workers' campaign.

The truth:

- that the greedy owners of the corporations attack the workers through the politicians of both major parties;
- that workers need a \$10 minimum wage, a shorter workweek and laws that outlaw scabs;
- that workers must organize and fight if they are to push back the corporations;
- that workers need to build the Labor Party as an important part of this fight.

The time is ripe

The time is ripe for workers' candidates and workers' politicians.

In November, 1996, workers along with members of all the other classes will choose candidates for many offices including president. Most workers won't vote.

Top union leaders, as well as leaders of civil rights organizations and women's organizations, urge workers to vote for Clinton and the Democratic Party. Some workers will. Among these, many will "hold their noses." Some workers will vote for Dole.

Some workers will vote for Reform or Libertarian candidates to show their opposition to the Democrats and Republicans.

Some workers will vote for Socialist Workers Party or Workers World Party candidates to show their opposition to all the parties of the rich and their support for



Eugene Debs, workers' candidate for president in the early 1900s.

socialism. Increasing numbers of workers will vote for these candidates in this election. But most workers do not yet support socialism and are not ready to vote for openly socialist candidates.

In a few places, workers can choose to vote for workers' candidates, that is, workers who are running independent of the Democratic and Republican, Reform and Libertarian parties. These candidates support many working class struggles and demands.

Workers' candidates can make the greatest contribution to advancing the workers' cause in the elections.

Workers' campaigns help train working class people to understand politics — to expose the lies of the Republicans and the Democrats, to uncover the truth about these parties and the fact that they and the administrations and government they create serve the rich, and to open a road toward the Labor Party, a party that any thinking worker can support and join.

The living conditions of most workers continues to slide downhill. Wages continue to fall; work is harder, longer; jobs are even more insecure.

As a response to this fundamental economic decline, workers' support for the Democrats and Republicans is at an all-time low. In a poll conducted last year, the majority

wanted a third party in the U.S.

Unions and workers founded the Labor Party this year in Cleveland as a direct and positive working class response. The platform of the Labor Party is titled *A Call to Economic Justice* and contains demands that go toward resolving these fundamental economic problems.

In another, but distorted, expression of rising discontent, middle class people founded the Reform Party in San Diego, California this summer.

Workers support the Libertarians and the Reform Party because there are no workers' candidates. Workers stay home from the polls because there are no workers' candidates. In any country where workers have parties that they consider their own, three times as many workers vote as in the U.S.!

It is obvious to even the muddleheaded that workers' candidates backed by the unions would, in many important elections, defeat the Democrats and Republicans. They would contribute to building a powerful independent movement against the rich. Such candidates would support striking workers, attack the Democrats for cutting welfare, and open up an offensive against the rich.

The time could not be better for workers' candidates.

It is precisely because the time is ripe that all the forces in the unions, including forces that support the Labor Party, could not bring themselves to support workers' candidates in these elections. The socialists who are running could not agree to organize a workers' slate around a working class platform.

Isaac Newton discovered the law that a body at rest tends to remain at rest. This force, this resistance to change, is called inertia. The bigger the body, the greater the inertia. The American labor movement leadership is big; it has a great deal of inertia. It has failed to mobilize the ranks of the unions for *any* workers' cause.

This year they are spending \$70 million dollars of workers' dues to elect Democratic Party politicians who have done nothing to help striking workers, nothing to stop the suffering of mothers and children on welfare, nothing to advance a single reform for workers.

Enough is enough!

Workers need workers' candidates, workers' politicians, the Labor Party! — Fred Russo, a former workers' candidate □

Workers candidates on the ballot

Workers have made it clear in many different ways — including both union polls and public polls — that they are against both Democrats and Republicans. They want a third party and third party candidates. Yet union leaders keep spending union time, money and energy on these anti-labor parties and their candidates. Unions affiliated with the Labor Party and members of the Labor Party should make a united fight against this policy. If there aren't any independent labor candidates on the ballot nor

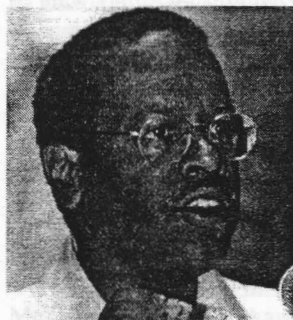
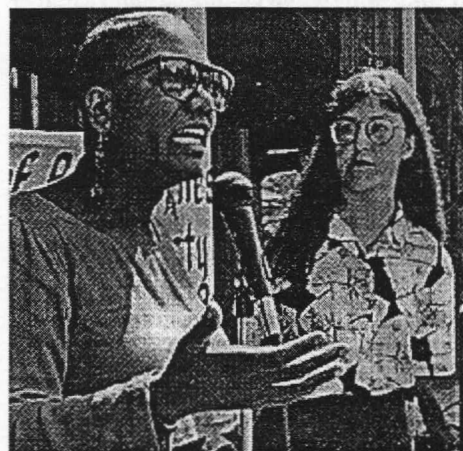
any unions willing to organize write-in campaigns for independent labor candidates, then unions should endorse and campaign for working class candidates that are on the ballot, like the Workers World Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and Doug Young, a striking newspaper worker running for office in the Detroit area. Voting for anti-labor parties and candidates encourages these parties. It's better to vote for a small working class and socialist organization, even if you don't completely agree with it. □

The Workers World Party

The Workers World Party is on the ballot as a party in Michigan.

Their candidates are:

President: Monica Moorehead
Vice President: Gloria LaRiva
U.S. Senate: Bill Roundtree
Congress 13th: Jane Cutter
15th: Kevin Carey
16th: Dave Sole
State Representative 1st: Kristen Hamel
State Representative 26th: Bev Bloedel
MSU Trustee: Ernesto Mireles
WSU Board of Governors: Durk Bastor



The Socialist Workers Party

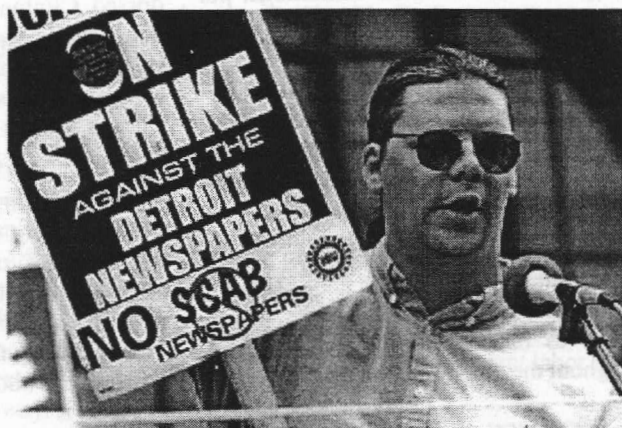
The Socialist Workers Party is not on the ballot as a party in Michigan. However, some of their candidates are on the ballot as independents.

President: James Harris
Vice President: Laura Garza
U.S. Senate: Mark Gilsdorf
Congress 10th: Rosa Garmendia
14th: Willie Mae Reid (on the ballot)
15th: Cindy Jacquith

Douglas Young: striking Detroit newspaper worker

Doug Young is a striking newspaper worker, member of the mailers' union, Teamsters 2040, and member of the Labor Party.

He is running for Michigan State Representative in Shelby Township, the 32nd district, as an independent working class candidate. He is running against David Jaye, notorious right-wing Republican.



The Labor Party Convention: strengths and limitations

In the last issues of *New Life*, we said that the Convention to found the Labor Party was going to be a tremendous step forward for the working class. Indeed it was.

Working class delegates established a framework in which young and working people can discuss and decide what they want to fight for and organize a fight for it in a more effective way. Delegates adopted a platform that begins to put forward alternatives to the capitalists' policies of unemployment and low wages, like a shorter work week without cutting pay and a higher minimum wage. The Convention was also an important opportunity for different working class tendencies to get to know and understand each other better.

The Convention had some positive consequences not entirely expected. The Convention passed a resolution by Detroit newspaper strikers supporting the call for a national labor march on Detroit. The Convention passed this unanimously and with so much enthusiasm that this encouraged strikers to continue their struggle to win the strike. The experience encouraged a Detroit newspaper worker to run for local office as an independent working class candidate. It also encouraged a small number of Detroit newspaper workers to find out more about socialism and Trotskyism as a result of the positive role played by socialists and Trotskyists in building their strike and the Labor Party.

So the Convention to found the Labor Party was a huge step forward. All unions and working class tendencies should devote themselves to building the Labor Party in the biggest possible way, and oppose any attempt to tear it down. At the same time, our enthusiasm for this big step forward should not blind us to its limitations, nor prevent us from working to correct them.

Limitations

It's necessary to say frankly that the Convention did not deal adequately with the most serious and urgent problems facing the working class.

For example, while the Convention passed the resolution in favor of the national labor march on Detroit, there was no discussion of how to build support for the march throughout the labor movement. Leaders of

the unions affiliated with the Labor Party tried to influence other union leaders, but they weren't able to get enough support. Sweeney, Trumka, and Chavez-Thompson wrote a letter to striking newspaper workers saying that they would not call a national labor march on Detroit on Labor Day.

The Convention passed platform planks for a constitutional right to a job at a living wage, for a shorter work week without cutting pay, and for a higher minimum wage, but it didn't map out any plans to fight for these demands.

AFL-CIO support to Clinton

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Convention didn't talk about what to do about AFL-CIO support to Clinton and the Democratic Party. This is a very serious and urgent problem! It is precisely because of the AFL-CIO's support to Clinton and the Democrats that there is no mass mobilization in solidarity with striking Detroit newspaper workers in the heart of the Motor City, Uniontown, USA. There is no mass mobilization in solidarity with mothers, children and others dependent on welfare. Sweeney, Trumka, Chavez-Thompson, don't want to do anything to embarrass the Democrats — who don't support the strike or the struggle against the abolition of welfare (Clinton signed the bill!).

As long as the AFL-CIO continues to support the Democratic Party, every time there is an election, every independent, mass working class struggle is going to get sidetracked and/or crushed.

The failure to discuss this was not accidental. The current leaderships of the unions affiliated with the Labor Party have endorsed Clinton and other Democrats and don't really want much discussion of this issue at this time. There were forces at the Convention that oppose union support to Clinton and the Democrats. But their efforts to raise this issue weren't very successful.

At the beginning of the Convention, I raised an amendment to the preamble to the Constitution that said: "We believe that the bosses have two parties, the workers must have at least one ... we believe that the workers' party must not endorse the candidates of the bosses parties." Convention

leaders said that this amendment was not in order at that time as it concerned policy in elections and this was going to be discussed later under a different point. I withdrew the amendment on the condition that the issue could be discussed at a different time. Unfortunately, a delegate from another chapter then introduced a similar amendment, which was, not surprisingly, with little discussion, quickly voted down.

When the issue of the Labor Party's policy in elections finally did come to the floor, it was focused almost exclusively on the ILWU's amendments calling for the Labor Party to support independent labor candidates for local office and to run its own candidates for local office. There was very little discussion of the problem represented by the AFL-CIO's support to Clinton and of alternatives to it. Members of the Detroit chapter had sent in and begun to circulate an amendment that said: "Even the most 'pro-labor' Democratic and Republican Party candidates and public officials are not doing everything that candidates and public officials could do in the interests of labor. Therefore, the labor party will *advocate* that the labor movement run its own, independent labor candidates for all public offices." But we were not able to get this amendment on the floor.

To date, the way the debate has developed within the Labor Party, it seems that there are only two choices: go along with AFL-CIO support to Clinton and other Democrats, or press for the Labor Party to run its own candidates. Since almost no one thinks that the Labor Party is ready to run its own candidate for president, almost everyone ends up going along with AFL-CIO support to the leading candidate of the rich, to one extent or another.

An alternative

But there is an alternative. The Labor Party can take a stand against AFL-CIO support to Clinton and the Democrats. It can *advocate* that the labor movement run its own candidate for the presidency. If the AFL-CIO has the resources and the know-how to campaign for Clinton, why doesn't it have the resources and the know-how to campaign for Sweeney or Trumka?

(Continued on next page)

Revolutionary socialists on Mexico and Europe

Mexico

On June 12th, *New Life* hosted a presentation by Mariano Elias of the Mexican workers' and socialists' organization, UNIOS!, supporter of International Workers' Unity (IWU). He described the current situation in Mexico as much more volatile than it's been represented here. Following are excerpts from that presentation.

Mexican society is very polarized. In the last year, wages decreased by 60%. Even in El Salvador, Guatemala and Vietnam things are not as brutal as this. The Mexican people are thinking now that if they're going to die of starvation, they might as well die on the barricades. We are in the shadow of a crisis that will produce a chain reaction in other countries, including Argentina and Brazil. This is the reason Clinton loaned \$50 billion to the Mexican PRI government. Even though for over four years Yeltsin has been asking less (\$30 billion) for Russia, within 20 days of the PRI government's request, Clinton gave them \$50 billion. In return, the U.S. is taking the profits from oil (oil is the main export of Mexico) until the year 2000. This money is being deposited directly into the U.S. Treasury.

Mexico now has the largest external debt of all the countries in the world. The payments for that debt are huge. Between the PRI and U.S. imperialism, the Mexican people are being robbed blind. Workers, fishermen, peasants — all kinds of people in Mexico are willing to rise up in arms. Of those polled, 76% support insurrection.

The North American bosses are threatening the North American workers that they will move to Mexico, but they won't. The situation in Mexico is too difficult.

Everyday there are deaths in struggles, deaths in Chiapas in confrontation with armed forces. This did not begin with Chiapas; there were big mobilizations before 1994, but Chiapas took things to a new level, to armed insurrection. In the maquiladoras in Juarez (which borders El Paso, Texas), there have been violent struggles. There was a strike in which the workers occupied 20 factories. The police tried to take them back, but couldn't. In Mexico City, which is a huge city of 18 million people, there are 13 marches and demonstrations per day. Re-



Mexican revolutionary

In other cities, the people have armed themselves and chased police. This is apart from what's happening in Chiapas. Chiapas is bigger in size, but what's happening there is spreading to the cities with more militancy.

Teachers from all over the country have been on strike for three weeks. They've occupied the center of Mexico City and confronted the police there. Many have been wounded, but the police haven't been able to dislodge them. So the government has been forced to negotiate with them, and the teachers have won some of their demands.

There are two possibilities: either there will be civil war, or things will calm down. For the situation to calm down, it will be necessary for the government to crush the mass movements. This is very important — and is vital to the interests of North American workers. There are 92 million inhabitants in Mexico, so this would have a big impact on the United States. We hope that the revolutionary situation will pass from Mexico to the United States.

We are concerned about the North American government — what will they do if we have a revolution in Mexico? If they chose to intervene militarily, it's likely there would be hand-to-hand combat. The U.S. army manipulates young people's consciousness a lot, but they can't have war without popular support. It's important to recognize that it wasn't the Vietnamese people by themselves (though they were heroic), it was the North Americans who forced the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. This was decided in a political way. It would

likely be the same in Mexico.

Europe

On August 15th, Andreu Sol of the Revolutionary Workers Party of Catalonia in Spain (a supporter of IWU) presented a report on the situation in Europe to a group of Detroit-area workers, including newspaper strikers. Below are some of the points he emphasized.

The conditions in Europe are ripe for socialism. The majority of workers in Europe are communists or socialists. In Europe there are extensive social welfare programs, such as public health care and pensions, primarily because there have been a lot of battles in the class struggle — including revolutionary ones — in which the workers have won concessions from the state. But now the bourgeoisie is trying to cut costs by cutting wages and public social welfare programs. In Spain, two million workers who are employed by state enterprises are currently facing drastic cuts — they will be paid less than minimum wage.

Having different states makes it difficult for bourgeois markets. Each state is considered sovereign, but the plans are made by the big European monopolies. They want to get bigger markets and compete with North America and Japan. They are trying to establish a common money system, through Maastricht, but this is difficult because workers in different countries are paid differently for the same kind of work. For example, Span-

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Labor party ...

(Continued from page 4)

The labor movement and the Labor Party have the power to make big changes in this society. But they can't do it if they waste time and money on forces hostile to labor like Clinton and the Democrats. The fight to break all ties with the Democrats and Republicans is essential to the future of the labor movement and the Labor Party.

All the different Trotskyist tendencies now taking part in the Labor Party — Socialist Action, Socialist Organizer, Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, Solidarity — need to come together and provide leadership for this struggle. Trotskyism is the only political tendency with a history of consistently fighting against union support to Democrats and Republicans and for independent labor candidates. — M. Guttshall □

The international situation and the Communist Parties

There has been a turn against capitalism in important sections of the international working class in the last months.

After workers in the old USSR rose up against the privileged labor bureaucracy that dominated the area and called itself the "Communist Party," many thought that capitalism might be a solution to their problems. But after years of the dictatorship of the privileged labor bureaucracy, which totally isolated Russian workers from workers in the West, most Russian workers really had no idea what "capitalism" was. Now that Russian workers have had an opportunity to see what capitalism is — now that attempts have been made to sell-off and "privatize" whole enterprises and industries leading to layoffs, unemployment, failure to pay wages, etc. —, more and more are turning more consciously and openly against it. There are not only big strikes involving tens of thousands of miners and others demanding that Yeltsin pay back wages, there are also movements for the renationalization of factories and industries among workers.

In the United States, intense struggles against corporations' attempts to destroy unions at Staley, Caterpillar, Bridgestone-Firestone, the Detroit News and Free Press, and elsewhere, have caused workers to question the capitalist economic system. These same struggles have brought workers into contact with different socialist and communist tendencies. As a consequence, for the first time in many years, there is a growing number of workers in the U.S. who are against capitalism and interested in and sympathetic to socialism/communism. This trend is even more pronounced among young people.

In Europe, many workers have spoken out against capitalism for many years. Today there is a much larger struggle against capitalist policies, like the French workers' nationwide strike against the capitalist government's plans to cut social services.

The Communist Parties

Unfortunately, in important cases, the old, discredited Communist Parties are using this turn against capitalism to try to rebuild their apparatuses, authority, and influence, either openly or under different names. The

old Communist Parties have won many elections in Eastern Europe and the old USSR in the last months. Some say that the Russian Communist Party would have won the most recent election if they hadn't *thrown* the election, that is, deliberately lost. In the United States, the U.S. Communist Party — after hanging its head in shame as thousands watched workers and oppressed rising up against the Communist Parties in East Germany, Romania, Russia — seems to have a new lease on life. It's appearing publicly, trying to expand distribution of its press, etc.

This is a serious problem for the international working class because the old Communist Parties in the old USSR, Eastern Europe, China, and elsewhere are *not* consistent opponents of capitalism and partisans of socialism and communism. On the contrary, they have destroyed many workers' revolutions.

After Russian workers overthrew the Czar, took power, and crushed the Czarist and capitalist resistance, instead of working to spread the workers' revolution, Stalin and his followers abandoned this struggle. They just wanted to take all the benefits of the revolution for themselves, and didn't care about anyone else. Because the revolution didn't spread as quickly as expected and because the Russian workers were exhausted after all their struggles, Stalin and his followers were able to take over the Russian Communist Party, drive out and/or kill the loyal communists, and turn the Russian Communist Party into an instrument of oppression against the working class. Stalin and his followers were able to do the same in many other countries.

So, since the late 1920s, the official Communist Parties have not been parties that have consistently defending working class struggles and sought to inspire, lead, and organize workers to fight for power and socialism. On the contrary, they have been parties that have defended policies of collaboration with capitalists, conciliation with capitalists, and repression and violence against workers who disagreed with their policies.

In order to overthrow the capitalists' power, establish workers' power, and begin to build



Leon Trotsky

socialism, workers need political parties that are *totally devoted* to the workers' struggle against capitalism and to socialism and that are *self-sacrificing* and armed with the *most advanced* revolutionary theories and practices (summed up in the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and their co-thinkers and in resolutions of the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Internationals.) The old Communist Parties are obstacles to building such parties.

Why then have they been able to use the turn in the working class against capitalism to get ahead?

There are a number of reasons: the capitalists often promote the official Communist Parties because they know they are relatively harmless to the capitalists; these parties have a lot more money than genuine working class, revolutionary, socialist or communist tendencies; sometimes their policies correspond to a certain stage in a workers' development, where he opposes the old system but he's not ready to make a resolute fight against it.

However, the most important reason is the crisis and division of the Fourth International.

The Fourth International

The Left Opposition in Russia, and later the Fourth International, were founded by Leon Trotsky and his co-thinkers to continue the fight for workers revolutionary democracy and socialism in opposition to capitalism and the privileged labor bureaucracy in the USSR. When the Fourth International was founded in 1938, it brought together many of the best fighters throughout the world, and it still does. However, the Fourth International is divided into different tendencies and factions. Many of these tendencies and factions adapt themselves way too much to privileged labor bureaucracies, whether it's the imperialist trade union bureaucrats in the United States, Social Democrats or Stalinists in Western Europe, or Stalinists in Eastern Europe and the old USSR. One of the

worst examples, if not the worst example, of this problem is that many who claim to be Trotskyists or Fourth Internationalists, failed to support the working class and popular uprising against the privileged bureaucracy in the old USSR. They aren't working to support and provide leadership for the struggles that are taking place in the old USSR today against capitalist restoration and against the privileged labor bureaucracy in a way that is completely independent of the privileged bureaucracy.

As a consequence, it is difficult for workers to see that there always have been and there still are consistent working class, revolutionary, socialists/communists who are always on the side of the workers, who always support the workers against all forms of oppression and exploitation. In other words, it's difficult for workers to see the Fourth International because there are too many different tendencies and factions and too many of these tendencies and factions aren't fighting consistently for its principles.

The working class and popular uprising against the privileged bureaucracy in the old USSR in the late 80s and early 90s, the turn against capitalism today on the part of the most advanced workers in the old USSR and in the U.S. (the international stronghold of capitalism!), shows that the tide is turning our way. More workers oppose both capitalism and the privileged labor bureaucracies. They want a society in which the workers call the shots and in which the workers can be comfortable. This is what the Fourth International is fighting for.

Rebuild the Fourth International

It's high time for all the tendencies of the Fourth International, true to the workers' struggle for workers revolutionary democracy and socialism, against capitalism and the privileged labor bureaucracies, to come together and rebuild the Fourth International, so it can appear clearly in the class struggle. It is the Fourth International that must grow in the coming period.—M.G. □

New Life is a socialist bulletin published in the interests of the labor party movement. New Life is a supporter of International Workers Unity, a tendency of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution, founded by Leon Trotsky and his co-thinkers. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of New Life. These are expressed in editorials. Editorial Board: Margaret Guttshall, Tim James, Kim Morgan, Fred Russo.

Lenin on opportunism

Leaders of the labor movement in the U.S. look at Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky with hostility and contempt. They especially hate Lenin. They say that his efforts to build a consistent, highly-disciplined, working class and revolutionary party to overthrow the capitalists and begin to build a new society, resulted in the Stalinist dictatorship in the old USSR. They hide that Stalin was able to take power only through the destruction of Lenin's Bolshevik Party. They really hate Lenin because of his irreconcilable struggle against opportunist leaders of the labor movement who sacrifice workers' fundamental interests for short-term advantages and their own comfort.

"The opportunists are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of certain strata of the working class who have been bribed out of imperialist superprofits and converted into watchdogs of capitalism and corrupters of the labor movement.

"The opportunists ... are alien to the proletariat as a class ... are the servants of, agents of the bourgeoisie and vehicles of its influence ... and unless the labor movement rids itself of them, it will remain a bourgeois labor movement.

"Avowed opportunism is openly and directly opposed to revolution and to incipient revolutionary movements and outbursts. It is in direct alliance with governments, varied as the forms of this alliance may be — from accepting ministerial posts to participation in war industries committees. The masked opportunists, the Kautskyites, are much more harmful and dangerous to the labor movement, because they hide their advocacy of alliance within the forms of and under the cloak of plausible pseudo-Marxist catchwords and pacifist slogans.

"One of the necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for its victory is a long, stubborn and ruthless struggle against op-

portunism, reformism, social chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and trends, which are inevitable, since the proletariat is operating in a capitalist environment. If there is no such struggle, if opportunism in the working class movement is not utterly defeated beforehand, there can be no dictatorship of the proletariat." □

Mexico and Europe

(Continued from page 5)

ish metal workers make 1/2 that of German workers, even though they work 40 hours per week in Spain and 32-35 hours per week in Germany. Also, for Maastricht, each country's debt could be no more than 2-3% of its GNP.

Russia is really the big question — they have a more concentrated workforce with better technical skills and more culture. Capitalists from North America, Germany and Japan are trying to control Russia. But they don't have enough money to buy a big enough share of it — you can find a few people who will prostitute themselves for little money, but you can't get 1 million workers to do that. The Russian working class has a deeply-rooted collectivist consciousness. Russian workers see production as a social thing — owned by the community. They look at a rich person as a thief. This is very different from North America — here, no one disputes the right of the capitalist to take a percentage of production — they just argue about how big the percentage should be. But in Russia, workers don't believe the capitalist should be involved at all. This is a socialist perspective — workers want jobs, food, etc. and capitalism can't provide those things for everyone. It's just not very useful. We need to bring together the revolutionaries from all countries; we have the same struggle — against the bourgeoisie. □

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Labor party ...

(Continued from front page)

independently.

This is why the Labor Party is such an important step toward socialism. It's not open to capitalists. It's not open to openly capitalist politicians. It is open to young people and workers who are hostile to the capitalists and their parties and who want to build a party that represents workers and oppressed. It is open to revolutionary socialists/communists.

So it is a framework in which workers can begin to learn to think and act more independently, learn more about the different tendencies in the labor movement, and organize their struggles in a bigger and more effective way.

Does this mean that the problem of workers' thinking and actions being too much influenced by the capitalists is over? Not at all. Many of the current leaders of the Labor Party don't see any alternative to the capitalist system. The Labor Party's program calls for many things that point toward a socialist society; it will certainly require a working class and socialist revolution to achieve all the goals in the Labor Party's program. But the Labor Party's program doesn't call for overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism. So the capitalists still influence the Labor Party.

But workers and revolutionary socialists/communists are in a much better position to confront this continuing problem now that the Labor Party exists and inside the Labor Party than they were before the Labor Party existed, or outside the Labor Party, disorganized and divided into dozens of different tendencies and factions without any common organization. Inside the Labor Party, young people, workers, revolutionary socialists/communists can get to know each other, work together, and mutually influence each other.

We urge all young people and working people, especially young people for socialism to join the Labor Party, become the best builders of the Labor Party, begin to spread your ideas within it. In this way the Labor Party will become bigger and bigger; the revolutionary socialist tendency within it will become bigger and bigger. We will build a party capable of doing what needs to be done. Every young person who takes this road will bring the socialist future one step closer. □

Why isn't labor going all out for Detroit strikers or welfare mothers?

Many Detroit newspaper strikers have been pushing for a labor march on Detroit in solidarity with Detroit strikers, like the Million Man March on Washington in October, 1995. They collected several thousand signatures for a march and spoke to Sweeney, head of the AFL-CIO, about this more than once. But Sweeney, Trumka and Chavez-Thompson just wrote strikers and said: no! They say it takes too much time, money, and that there are plans to get a settlement that don't include a march.

Many strikers would also like a city-wide, county-wide, state-wide or nation-wide strike in solidarity with Detroit strikers, but that's not happening either.

Mothers, children, the disabled, and others dependent on welfare would like labor to organize a big mobilization against Clinton's bill abolishing welfare. But there is no such mobilization.

Why?

The answer to all these questions is the same. The labor movement is devoting almost all of its resources to electing Clinton and other Democrats. They don't want anything to happen that might embarrass Clinton and other Democrats, that might convince workers that they aren't worth voting for. Any big labor mobilization against union-busting or abolishing welfare would certainly embarrass Clinton and the Democrats. They don't support the newspaper workers' strike; only one or two have participated in strike activities. Leading Demo-

crats, Stabenow and Levin, are talking to scab reporters. The majority of Democrats voted to abolish aid to mothers, children, and others who need it.

As long as the unions continue to commit themselves to campaigning for Democrats or Republicans, workers and their struggles are going to suffer.

All the big changes that have taken place in this society — independence from England, the abolition of slavery, the formation of unions, more equality for Black people, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam — have taken place because of independent mass mobilizations, in many cases with arms in hand, including and especially revolutions. There isn't a single big change that has taken place in the U.S. simply through going to the polls and electing this or that candidate to office.

Workers should demand that the AFL-CIO stop all forms of support to Democrats and Republicans and organize an independent mass mobilization to fight for workers' demands, with independent labor candidates for all public offices. Workers should refuse to vote for Democrats and Republicans. Vote for working class candidates on the ballot. As long as workers continue to vote for Democrats or Republicans, the union leaderships will continue to throw away union time and money on these anti-labor parties.

The Labor Party should be in the front ranks of this struggle.—M.G. □

