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# TRUTH

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**ORGAN OF THE TROTSKYIST ORGANIZATION USA/FRATERNAL SECTION/FOURTH INTERNATIONAL,  
FOR A TROTSKYIST CONGRESS REBUILDING THE U.S. SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

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**IMPEACH  
REAGAN**

**BUILD A LABOR  
PARTY**

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Organ of the Trotskyist Organization of the USA,  
Fraternal Section of the Fourth International,  
For a Trotskyist Congress Rebuilding the U.S. Section of the Fourth International

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# Lessons of the French Students' Strike

By Kevin FitzPatrick

The recent events in France — the victory of the students' struggle against the right wing Chirac government's plan to "reform" the university system on a more elitist and business-oriented model — have cast a long shadow over the bourgeoisie of the United States.

The *New York Times*, the most important newspaper of that class, tried to whistle in the dark about the situation here: "It's not France and it's not 1968," concluded an editorial. But this inane statement was belied by what had just preceded it — "No American who was conscious in 1968 can see French student protests in 1986 without seeing other images: An occupied president's office at Columbia. The National Guard moving up Blanket Hill at Kent State. The shot-out windows of a Jackson State dorm. A burning building in Madison." (December 11, 1986; emphasis in original.)

## Prepare Now

The very phrase that began this article — "the recent events in France" — awakens echoes from American history, all the way back to the great French Revolution and the struggle against the Alien and Sedition Acts in the United States that led to Jefferson's "revolution of 1800." In more recent times, as the world economy has become one, "the recent events in France" (in 1936, in 1968) have been the harbinger of massive upsurges in this country. The wishful thinking of the *Times* is even more obvious when we recall that it is full every day of pages devoted to "The White House Crisis!"

If now we can see "the shape of things to come," the question is how to bring them to reality, how to prepare.

The movement of the French students was organized on a basis that concerned the interests and feelings of the widest layers — their futures, the democratic tradition of education, the across-the-board attack of a

reactionary government. No demand of a particular group, however valid in itself, was counterposed to this mobilization. The most advanced elements of the youth, especially those in organizations calling themselves Trotskyist, could find the most fruitful ground in this situation for broadening the horizon of the others, for giving them the big picture.

Thus, the struggle must be a mass movement, united in action.

The French students also met in democratic assemblies, worked out their policies and selected their representatives on the basis of their fight for these policies and their ability to carry them out.

Thus, the struggle must be democratic and open.

The French students did not retreat on their demands, the withdrawal of the Devaquet-Monory proposals, the punishment of those responsible for the attacks on the demonstrations, the murder of activists, the infiltration of provocateurs. These demands were what we, remembering our own 1930s, would call "non-negotiable."

Thus, the struggle must be for clear goals, not for bargaining them away.

The French students, from the beginning, sought the support of the workers and their mass organizations. It was the entry into action of these forces that ultimately convinced the government that it could not win.

Thus, the struggle (even of students) must be based on the mobilization of the working class.

## The Vanguard

All these points are important in winning in our own future struggles. But they did not arise spontaneously from the French students' movement. They are the product of the

presence of the vanguard in this movement, the product of the lessons of the revolutionary workers movement. And these lessons are expressed above all today in the forces that lay claim to the Transitional Program of the Fourth International.

To be sure, the French working class and student movement are more imbued with these traditions than is the case in the US. But that only makes all the more important the question of a *united front of this vanguard* in every movement, in every struggle that develops.

The most important lesson of the French students' struggle, especially for those who read this paper — who are actually or potentially part of this vanguard — is the need to organize our forces on the basis of a *united front in action*, around the central questions of the day. That is how we will be able to overcome our relative weakness and isolation, to increase our specific gravity in the mass movement. Without this, at any stage the movement can be broken and be forced to retreat. It has to be conscious, determined, able to withstand abuse, red-baiting and physical attacks. Not a single one of these things is possible without the active intervention of the vanguard, which can, again, take place only on the basis of *unity in action*.

In turn, the vanguard can really strengthen and define itself on this basis of action. The ideas, methods, propaganda and importance of every tendency can be tested in this open battle, something impossible in the atmosphere of sterile disputes among small groups that is the real alternative to the orientation we are putting forward here.

### **The Trotskyists**

The American Trotskyists look forward with confidence to this struggle. We do not regard it as being in any way accidental that our comrade, David Assouline, was able to play a key role in the French events. Instead, it is a product of our whole analysis, outlook and activity. We are prepared to meet the challenge that is coming, and we believe that every militant of the vanguard who wants to win, to fight for the victory of the working

class and the oppressed, knows that the verification of program and policy can be found only in this open struggle.

As the nascent radicalization in this country develops in the coming period, the leadership of the American Revolution will be selected, trained and hardened in the struggles that are already taking shape. Understanding the lessons of the French students' fight will mark a real advance on this road.

From the mines of Bolivia to the shipyards of Poland, from the British Labour Party to the French students' movement, capitalism and Stalinism increasingly see their enemy as *Trotskyism*. If we learn today how to prepare for tomorrow, we can make this "spectre of communism" into a highly tangible reality.

## Reagan's Crisis, An Opportunity for Workers and Oppressed:

# Impeach Reagan! Labor Party! Labor Candidates in '88!

By MARGARET GUTTSHALL

Robert McFarlane, former national security advisor, now in a hospital after attempting to commit suicide, just told Reagan's special review board, the Tower Commission, that he had tried to cover up Reagan's role in the Iran arms sales. The Tower Commission, on the other hand, says Reagan "was not aware of a lot of things that were going on" and that "chaos ... descended on the White House."

While the Tower Commission Report is obviously trying to cover for Reagan, it cannot cover up for the crisis. It is becoming clear that Reagan and his staff are indeed in a state of chaos, crisis and even panic, as Nixon was when he and Kissinger fell on their knees and prayed to God to save them.

And it is going to be extremely difficult for American imperialism to resolve this crisis because it is a result of the crisis of imperialism as a whole: its inability to resolve fundamental economic, social and political problems (unemployment, deteriorating social services, racist oppression, etc.); the consequent struggles of the workers and oppressed in Central America, South Africa, the Philippines, Haiti, Europe; imperialism's inability to put a stop to these struggles. And neither Reagan nor anyone else in the White House really knows what to do about this.

Thus the Reagan regime's crisis is a tremendous opportunity for American youth, militants, workers, Blacks, and all oppressed peoples and their organizations to take the offensive against the Reagan regime, bring down Reagan, strike a blow against the bosses and the system as a whole that he represents. It is an opportunity for youth, militants, workers and their organizations, to press their own demands, begin to build their own party, their own political power, and strengthen their own position in society in opposition to the

bosses.

But in order to do this it is necessary to initiate a struggle to impeach Reagan now and build an alliance for a Labor Party based on the unions, with its own candidates for president and other offices, as a concrete alternative to the bosses and their criminal and corrupt parties and politicians.

It is necessary to stop the bosses and their parties, Republicans and Democrats, from covering for Reagan, from reaching a compromise, from finding a solution to their crisis and renewing their attacks on the workers and oppressed before the working class can intervene, as the bosses did in 1974 with Nixon.

In 1974, Republicans and Democrats were forced to initiate impeachment proceedings against Nixon, but the working class was not mobilized and did not have its own party. Thus the Republicans and Democrats were able to draw back, to allow Nixon to resign, to allow Ford to pardon Nixon, then regrouped around Carter who resumed Nixon's and Ford's attacks on workers (Carter used Taft-Harley against the miners, forced Chrysler workers to take concessions and plant closings, supported the Shah of Iran, Somoza in Nicaragua, etc.)

Today they are trying to do the same. Thus the Tower Commission Report accuses Reagan only of mismanagement and calls for government reorganization in an obvious attempt to save the Reagan regime until the bosses can find an alternative, a way to continue develop Reagan's racist, anti-working class policies.

Youth, militants, workers, organizations, can stop them from doing so by demanding that the House of Representatives impeach Reagan and put him on trial for his crimes, by organizing an independent mass mobilization to force the House to do so (union meetings, investigations,

marches, strikes against concessions and plant closings, union boycotts of aid to the contras and apartheid, etc.), by trusting only in this mobilization.

At the the same time, this mobilization will provide a mass forum in which to show the need for and build an alliance for a Labor Party based on the unions, with its own candidates. Without a concrete, living alternative to the Republican and Democratic parties, including Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition, which is really just the Democratic Party left wing, workers and oppressed will again turn to them as they did in 1976, 1980, 1984, etc. The Democratic Party, rather than the workers and oppressed and their party, will be strengthened.

This is why youth, militants, workers, Blacks and all oppressed peoples and their organizations must initiate a struggle in the unions to impeach Reagan now and build an alliance for a Labor Party based on the unions.

Many organizations are calling for a mobilization to bring down Reagan and for a Labor Party. Now is the time to make this happen. We can put forward resolutions in union locals, mobilize union locals for the April 25th march on Washington, build contingents under the banner: Impeach Reagan! Labor Party! Labor Candidates!

This opportunity will not last forever. If you are interested in a common fight, contact the Trotskyist Organization now!

## Union Resolution

1. Both Republican and Democratic Party politicians are trying to cover up for Reagan and his criminal activity in an effort to save the Reagan regime until they can find an alternative, a way to continue Reagan's attacks on workers, Blacks and all oppressed peoples. The unions must not let this happen.

2. Therefore, this union local demands that the House of Representatives initiate impeachment proceedings against Reagan, in accordance with the Constitution's provisions.

3. We call on all union locals to join us in building an independent mass mobilization to force the House to impeach Reagan (meetings, marches, strikes, etc.) and an alliance for a Labor Party, with our own candidates for president and other offices, in order to provide a concrete alternative to the bosses and their corrupt parties and politicians.

4. In conjunction with this, the local will initiate a discussion on our platform for the Labor Party and the 1988 elections.

## Excerpts from the U.S. Constitution Concerning Impeachment

Article I, Section 2, 5. The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other officers, and shall have the sole power of impeachment.

Article I, Section 3, 6. The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.

Article I, Section 3, 7. Judgment of cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States; but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial judgement and punishment, according to law.

Article II, Section 4. The President, Vice-President, and all civil officers of the United States shall be removed from office on impeachment for and conviction of treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

# Demonstrate Against US Intervention in Central America!

By FRED MICHAELS

A coalition of organizations from the liberal ACLU and National Lawyers Guild and the Committee in Solidarity with Central America (CASC) as well as UAW Local 1200, to the Socialist Workers Party and the Trotskyist Organization have called for a demonstration March 29 in downtown Detroit to demand an end to US intervention in Central America.

Also, a national demonstration is being organized with the support of the president of virtually every major union (UAW, IAM, AFSCME, etc.) against US intervention in Central America and against apartheid in South Africa on April 25 in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco.

Coupled with the growing mobilization of workers and youth around the world — from the Middle East to the Midwest — and the crisis of the Reagan administration, this demonstration could be among the most important of the last 15 years.

We urge all young people, workers and militants to join the various coalitions and mobilize all the forces possible for these actions.

## Impeach Reagan! Labor Party!

It is not the same situation as April 20, 1985. Today, the Reagan administration is in crisis and the liberals are trying to save it from the attack of workers and oppressed peoples around the world and in the US.

The liberals are trying to save it in two ways.

First, they are not attacking the president outright in their investigations of the Iran/Contra aid scandal. They are blaming his subordinates for misleading him.

Second, the left-wing of the Democratic Party has placed itself in, or, to be more precise, has been allowed to take a place in the leadership of the mobilization for the demonstrations. It is afraid that the

mobilization will get out of control — even out of control of the liberal Democrats such as Jesse Jackson. Therefore, their role today in "leading" it. They are afraid for the US presidency, for the US government, for the US bourgeoisie.

This is why nearly all the organizations claiming to be Trotskyist have correctly stated what the stake of the current crisis of the Reagan administration is for the working class: the workers own party.

The Socialist Workers Party in the January 9 issue of *The Militant* stated: "There is no satisfactory alternative within the two-party system. . . . A party of working people, based on the unions . . . a new party of the toilers — this is the kind of radical change in U.S. political life that is called for by the current controversy in Washington."

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT), expelled oppositionists of the SWP stated in the February issue (No. 38) of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, "Working people of the United States should do their best to turn this scandal into the unraveling of the entire bipartisan counterrevolutionary foreign policy of our government and use it as a strong argument in favor of a break by the labor movement from its policy of giving support to the capitalist politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties."

And further, "What the outcome of the present scandal will be depends upon how the struggle against corruption is conducted by those who have no voice in government. It could even lead to the formation of a network for a labor party based on the union movement before the political crisis in Washington is resolved."

And Socialist Action, also an organization of expelled oppositionists of the SWP, in the Political Report approved by its Second National Convention in November of last year stated: "Most importantly, we call on the labor

movement to break with the Democratic and Republican parties and form a labor party based on the unions. . . . In the last analysis, the absence of a labor party has put tremendous pressure on social protest movements to rely on the Democratic Party. The only way to break out of this impasse is to consistently advocate independent mass actions like demonstrations, rallies and picket lines. These actions can be a springboard to develop an independent labor party."

And finally, the Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference in San Francisco passed a resolution in favor of labor party and in favor of a national demonstration against US intervention.

In particular, the Trotskyist Organization is fighting for impeachment of Reagan. This is an integral part of our political struggle for working class leadership of the struggle against Reagan in crisis. (See the article called Reagan's Crisis in this issue).

We call on all these tendencies to join with us in a political struggle for a response to the Reagan crisis in the coalitions, for contingents in these demonstration to raise, linked to the slogans of the demonstration, the unique contribution to the labor movement that we have to offer: Impeach Reagan! Labor Party!

Every effort should be made to build the largest contingents possible in Detroit on March 29, and in San Francisco and Washington, D.C. on April 25 under these slogans.



# Fight the Cuts in Educational Funding

By Barbara Putnam

Under Reagan, the poorer students and working class youth are being systematically denied an education, supposedly a basic right in a bourgeois democracy, and not only that, but being made to pay for the crisis caused by the bourgeoisie itself. At the same time, the campus unions, proven to be a militant section of the American working class, are in the forefront of the struggle against the attacks on education and on the unions themselves.

Students are hit up for both tuition hikes and increased loan payments, while campus employees are attacked for concessions to bankroll college administrators.

The Reagan administration has a particularly ignorant and blunt method for dealing with problems in education: attack the students and their families, ostensibly for their heavy debtor status for Federal student aid loans. The five-year Income Contingent Loan plan is its response to at least a third to half(!) of all undergraduates being in deep debt to the government, most with no hope of ever being able to pay off loans. Their parents who attempted to help them go to school will never recover financially either, creating two generations of debtors.

The government's "flexible" repayment terms will require students to pay *interest* accrued from the time they first received the loan. This marks a change and a step backward from the government subsidizing interest costs while the students are still in school.

The attitude of the Reagan administration toward students and education could not be clearer: "Who should pay the bill — the student or the cab driver who didn't even go to college?" "Nobody's holding a gun to these people's head and saying, 'You will take this loan, and you will go to this expensive school.'" This enlightened rationalization for shifting the burden of costs of tuition loans onto the shoulders of the student and away from the Federal Government belongs to Bruce

M. Carnes, Deputy Under Secretary of Education in charge of its budget. (New York Times, January 29).

Carnes' formulation implies that the federal government is only mediating finances gleaned from common taxation in the interests of society as a whole. If this were true (everybody knows it is not) then we could argue by the same token; must the cab driver and the student finance Star Wars? Support to the contras against Nicaragua on behalf of the interests of a select minority? If the government were really such a neutral arbiter standing above society, it would seem that it would necessarily be the main proponent of free education for all, be the most consistent upholder of the basic right of all citizens to attend the college or university of choice — including cab drivers. After all, this is what the vast majority of people would want if they could have it.

Here's where the student has a gun held to his head, Mr. Carnes. The administration is using this five-year plan to rationalize cutting overall spending on student aid. Government blood hounds have been tracking down student loan defaulters through the IRS and seizing income tax refunds; 230,000 defaulters lost their refunds last year.

Free education for all! The right to attend the college of one's choice! That is what we should demand.

President Adamany of Wayne State University received a huge salary increase and now makes \$115,000 a year for strike breaking and for skillfully raising tuition. But educational representatives must be made to answer to the people instead of the interests of a minority of corporate heads and the government. We must demand: throw open the books of the state universities to show that public funds are not used to support and recruit students, not used to support real education, particularly for the sons and daughters of the working class, nor to provide

a decent standard of living for the employees whose daily labor insures the very existence of the universities.

Students and workers are prime targets for bearing the brunt of capitalist decomposition — its anti-worker policies, its stupid, reactionary character. This is due to another reason as well — traditionally, student struggles have led to a far more generalized working class offensive against capitalism.

The reason students are often in the forefront of social struggle is because universities are no more than factories churning out "expertise" for the bosses — not the repositories of the highest social values, according to the official lie. Those students "lucky" enough to attend college are treated like slaves under a rigid academic hierarchy and forced to take courses that do not enlighten but stultify, that are determined, not by the needs of society, but by the needs of industry and the corporations, determined by those wealthy benefactors who give "gifts" to higher education supportive of capitalism.

Over the years traditional classical education has given way to research related to the war industry, for example. This conflict has been openly expressed by students such as those at the University of Michigan who fight research for Reagan's Star Wars.

French students of the Sorbonne have already begun to point the way. They refused to accept the Chirac government's reactionary attacks and made Chirac withdraw reactionary legislation which would have meant poorer students could not go to college. Not only that, but the student's struggle led to a near general strike on the part of the working class. This phenomena has not been confined to France, it is more universal.

In every major capitalist country, the uninterrupted and international crisis of capitalism, taking sharp turns in recent years, has led to student uprisings (France, Spain, Mexico, the US). The same conditions have continued and degenerated, the same things that impelled the French students and workers

against the rotting social order in 1936, in 1968 and today have never been resolved and have worsened. It is not a question of the individual malevolence of this or that bourgeois figure (Reagan, Chirac, etc.) but a question of the decomposition of the entire capitalist order.

In a situation that deteriorates from day to day, it is necessary to band together and resist the bourgeoisie's attacks. Down with the criminal government! Open the books of state - run universities! Massive demonstrations against tuition hikes and the Income Contingent Loan Plan in the fall!

# The Unions Must Lead the Defense of Blacks!

By FRED MICHAELS

The past few months have seen an increase in the number and intensity of violent attacks on Blacks by whites. The two nationally known are:

. the Howard Beach incident. On December 20 a gang of white youths attacked 3 young Blacks whose car broke down in the white middle-class neighborhood of Queens in New York City of Howard Beach; one youth was murdered in the attack. Thousands have demonstrated against this murder and the open complicity of the courts, police and city administration in protecting the killers.

. The attack by approximately 400 racists, including members of the Ku Klu Klan, on a demonstration of 90 marchers in Forsyth County, Georgia near Atlanta; the next week 25,000 demonstrated against racist attacks. The Klan mobilized 1,000.

Several others have occurred:

. The murder of a Black man in Tampa, Florida followed by two nights of rioting by Black people there.

. Over a thousand white students at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst attacked Black students after the defeat of the Boston Red Sox in the World Series; one youth was beaten unconscious.

. At the Citadel, a military academy in Columbia, South Carolina, a Black cadet's room was raided by five white youth dressed up like Ku Klux Klan members; the incident was treated as a "practical joke" by school authorities; the Black cadet resigned.

. There was a cross burning at the home of 9 Black basketball players at a college in Mays Landing, N.J.

In Michigan there have been a number of incidents at local universities including:

. racist jokes and slurs at the University of Michigan student radio station; racist threats slipped under the door of a dormitory room filled with Black students.

. The attack on Black students at Michigan State University. A theater full of Black students watching "A Color Purple" emptied as Black students came to the rescue of another Black being attacked by white students near the theater.

## The Source of Racism

The source of these incidents is the growing polarization of class society in the United States.

More and more, society is being torn apart by the struggle between the working class, the oppressed and their organizations, the trade unions, civil rights organizations, political parties on the one side, and the ruling class and its government, the Reagan administration, Congress, the Republican and Democratic Parties, the police and the courts, on the other.

The current crisis of the Reagan administration has driven the right-wing elements to act more violently. They realize that Reagan is more and more incapable of carrying out their program. So they have begun to do it themselves.

## The Civil Rights Movement in the '60s

The excellent series on the civil rights movement on public television, "The Eyes on the Prize" displays the development of the mass movement for civil rights, started and led in large part by young people. It also shows the collaboration between the racists and the government, including such liberals as John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

How can the racists rear their ugly heads so soon after the smashing of Jim Crow in the

South and the movement in the '80s? Because, in spite of the power of that movement, it never successfully destroyed the fundamental underpinnings of racism in US society — the capitalist class and its government.

### The Working Class Response

The working class and the oppressed, supported by the worldwide mobilization of workers and youth, has responded in a powerful way to the racist attacks with demonstrations and protests. This response has scared these reactionary elements, for example in Forsyth County, and rightly so.

One of the things that characterizes the recent racist attacks is that they involve young people. This underlines the fundamental nature of the class polarization. Young people in particular abhor the old way. Young people are drawn to radical solutions to society's problems. And radical working class solutions must be brought to the fore if this generation is going to develop leaders for the working class and the oppressed.

The working class response must be, above all else, concentrated in the unions.

As the only mass organizations of the working class, as in fact, the only mass organizations of Blacks too, they must be mobilized as never before to defend Blacks.

First, they must call and lead demonstrations and protests and involve other organizations in this framework.

Second, the unions must provide large union contingents to protect demonstrators, Blacks who are being harassed. On a more permanent basis, such as at campuses, the unions must organize union patrols and, remaining under union control, demand that they be paid for by the universities.

Third, the unions must wage the necessary political campaigns for union committees to deal directly with right-wing thugs. Naturally, such activity requires careful and extensive preparation.

This activity would have nothing in common

with the ultra-left "confrontations" with the Nazis and Klan that have taken place in the last few years, invariably in the presence of the police or armed forces.

Current models for such committees should be the anti-scab "committees" that existed in the Local P-9 strike, the General Dynamics strike and others.

In short, the unions must break from support to this decaying democracy and chart an independent working class direction in the struggle against racism.

This program of action to stop racist attacks is a practical program that flows from a revolutionary perspective.

The unions will not make this change without a political struggle in the unions. This is precisely the reason for an Alliance for a Labor Party. A struggle for a Labor Party in the unions allows all these questions to be posed around the fundamental question for the working class, whether it be in the struggle against racism or in any other struggle — will it have its own independent political expression?

As the ruling class crisis grows, as the right wing becomes more desperate, as the working class becomes more determined, the answer must be "yes"

Next issue: What is the Source of Racism in America? — The difference between the Trotskyist, revolutionary perspective and Jesse Jackson's

# National Strike of Auto!

By FRED MICHAELS

The mobilization of autoworkers against the GM plant closings has begun.

A rally was held in Flint, Michigan, birthplace of the UAW, and famous for the sit-down strikes in the 1930's. The rally was held in the week of the 50th anniversary of those strikes. It was called to protest the plant closings and was attended by autoworkers from across the Midwest.

Immediately following the rally a "Stop the Plant Closings" Conference was held at UAW Local 15, the Cadillac Fleetwood local, in Detroit, the initiators of the Flint rally. Another rally is planned for March 21, 2 pm, at UAW Local 174 in Detroit, with unionists again coming from across the Midwest. We urge all workers and militants to attend.

The existence of this mobilization outside the narrow framework of the union bureaucracy is further proof, if any more were needed, of the growing opposition to the line of Bieber and the top leadership of the UAW among autoworkers. Bieber's response to the closings last year was "Cut Japanese Imports". Not a word about or against GM.

## Moratorium or Strike?

The main political force behind this committee is the Workers World Party (All People's Congress). It appears that they have reanimated some of the founders of the various opposition groupings that have appeared in the UAW in the last few years.

The goal of organizers of these rallies is to put pressure on Congress to pass "plant closing moratorium" legislation sponsored by liberal Democrats John Conyers of Detroit and Charles Hayes of Chicago.

This is something of a fraud. In the first place the legislation, as explained by Joe Wilson, president of Local 15, does not demand a moratorium or freeze on plant closings. No. The company's must "justify" closings plants before they are allowed to be closed.

This campaign is not counterposed in any way to the chauvinistic anti-Japanese campaign of the union leadership — in fact it is its "left face."

But, most importantly, it is counterposed to a struggle for a national strike of auto and independent political action.

First, it focuses autoworkers attention on a legislative solution virtually endorsed by the bureaucracy while sentiment for a national strike, certainly not endorsed by the bureaucracy, is growing. Thus, 3,000 signatures collected by Fleetwood workers demanding an end to plant closings were presented at a meeting of the UAW's political arm, CAP (Community Action Program), in Washington, D.C., along with the rest of the UAW's legislative agenda, including reactionary trade legislation.

Second, the leaders of this moratorium campaign want to tie workers to supporting legislation, and empty legislation at that, of the Democratic Party left wing. They do this at a time when the UAW bureaucracy is trying to find its place among the most politically conservative Democratic Party candidates in 50 years. Both the bureaucracy and the leaders of this campaign want to tie workers to the Democratic Party as it defends the Reagan administration during its deepest crisis.

That is why messages of support to the rally were read from both Bieber and D. Riegle, Democratic senator from Michigan. And the CAP meeting in Washington was devoted entirely to lobbying Democrats.

## National Strike of Auto

Several of the unionists at the rally mentioned the upcoming Special Bargaining Convention to be held in Detroit April 12 - 15 and the contract expirations with Ford and GM.

This convention comes on the heels of the announcement by GM that there will be no

profit sharing for GM workers but there will be bonuses for the GM executives!

For Bieber and the rest of the top UAW leadership, the purpose of this year's contract is endorsing GM's plant closings and trying to marshal its support for the UAW's "stop imports" campaign. In return, they hope that GM will slow down its attacks on those still working.

Don Douglas, president of Local 594 in Flint, and a founder of Locals Opposed to Concessions (LOC) in the early 1980's, has just had a strike vote at his local. The very high turnout and the nearly unanimous desire of the workers to authorize a strike, indicates the deep desire for a militant response to GM. Douglas hopes to use the sentiment as a bargaining tool, but a threat is only real if it is occasionally carried out. It is time for a national strike of auto!

It is this sentiment that can be the basis for a national strike of auto as a response to the plant closings.

Since 1979 the union has been so battered and so misled that workers do not see the strike as a weapon in the struggle against GM and the plant closings. But it is.

The Trotskyist Organization supports wholeheartedly the Labor Notes Plant Closings Workshop's call for a national demonstration against the GM layoffs. A good place to start would be the April 25 demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Now more than ever it is necessary for autoworkers to fight for the action program adopted by the Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference in San Francisco last December:

1. Defend workers' struggles with broad support committees to organize strike support, mass picketing, legal defense of workers, unionists, and their leaders, arrested and jailed in these struggles;

2. A nationwide auto strike to stop all GM layoffs and plant closings;

3. 30 hours work for 40 hours pay, divide work

among all workers;

4. Nationalize industry under workers control;

5. Build a Labor Party; for a Labor Party slate in the 1988 elections; for a Labor Candidate for president, against the Republicans and Democrats.

## The Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference: An Initial Political Struggle

By MARGARET GUTTSHALL

In the last issue of *Truth*, we published the Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference's Central Resolution calling for an open international conference to take up the problems of building the Fourth International and for fundamental political discussion and practical collaboration to prepare this conference.

As we said, this resolution represents an important advance for the working class and its vanguard. More militants and tendencies realize that the crisis of leadership must be resolved on an international scale, that both fundamental political discussion and practical collaboration are essential to this process.

What is most important, this resolution was the result of an initial political struggle against two tendencies that emerged in this conference. These were, in our opinion, a tendency to cut short the process of political clarification that must take place with a hasty political agreement oriented toward fusion and a tendency to openly abandon the construction of Trotskyist parties.

The International Socialist League (ISL), affiliated with the International Workers League (IWL), called for an international conference open only to tendencies that agree with certain criteria, in particular the Third International's first four congresses, the Fourth International's founding congress, permanent revolution, defense of degenerated and deformed workers' states, political revolution and the construction of Trotskyist parties in all countries. The ISL delegate, Harry Turner, argued that while differences with the United Secretariat are irreconcilable, that others have fundamental agreement.

"We believe that there are several organizations attending the Conference, among them the Freedom Socialist Party, the Revolutionary Workers League, The Trotskyist Organization, the Workers Socialist League and the ISL, which do have essential agreement on

program, and even on strategic and organizational methods. We consider their differences, while important, to be largely tactical, and that a process (author's emphasis) of discussion and common work could lead to a principled organizational unity in a democratic centralist party, if not to the resolution of every difference, provided that narrow factional considerations are set aside. We see the international Trotskyist conference, in opening a discussion on the principled programmatic basis on which the Fourth International can be rebuilt, as initiating a similar development among some of its participants." (Letter to Coordinating Committee, Harry Turner, ISL, 11/29/86)

The Trotskyist Organization opposed this line at the conference. We certainly agree that our differences with the United Secretariat are irreconcilable. But it is important to be careful. That does not mean that the United Secretariat is the class enemy, or that it is reformist or Stalinist as Healy, North and now Lambert and Co. suggest. And we also agree that there is something that is drawing organizations like the ISL, the Trotskyist Organization and others together. Indeed our Tenth World Congress came out in favor of the convergence and unity of tendencies breaking with the old, revisionist leaderships, on a basis of Trotskyist principles and continuity.

But we think it is false to conclude from this that the ISL, the Trotskyist Organization, and others now "have essential agreement on program." We certainly hope to achieve it. But it does not yet exist.

We agree that: "The International is first of all a program, and a system of strategic, tactical, and organizational methods which flow from it," as Turner says, quoting Trotsky.

But the program is not simply a document. As Trotsky also said in a polemic with the German Socialist Workers Party (SAP):

"It is not a question of a formal document: a

program is strong only in the case where its text is linked to the experience of a party, to the lessons of its struggles, impregnated in its cadres in their flesh and blood. Nothing of all this in the SAP. The Russian Revolution; certain stages of it; the factional struggle... all these events, which must live in the consciousness of a revolutionary as luminous landmarks on the political road, are for the SAP cadres only confused memories from newspapers, not a revolutionary experience lived through." (See *The Fourth International*, No. 124.)

Understanding program from this point of view, the ISL, the TO and others do not have "essential agreement on program." Our experiences have been quite different, the lessons that we draw from them even more so. The consciousness of our cadres is not the same. We have traveled different roads. In particular, we have been with the International Committee, or a faction that emerged from it, since 1963. The IWL was with the United Secretariat from 1963 until the 1980s. The Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), for example, has been in neither.

In order to arrive at essential agreement on program, it is necessary to draw a balance sheet of the struggle that has been made for the program, define a line and select and train cadres on this basis, in the living movement of the working class and its vanguard, and in a struggle against the revisionist and liquidationist leaderships.

This is why the Fourth International's Tenth World Congress decided to fight for an international conference open to all tendencies that identify with Trotskyism and to fight for the conference to take up both a balance sheet of the struggles of the different tendencies (program) and practical collaboration in the class struggle. And this is why we oppose any attempts to suggest that such fundamental agreement already exists or that it can be arrived at through debate or negotiations over ideas or criteria that do not take up that balance sheet or offer any opportunity to clarify it and test it in the course of practical collaboration in the class struggle.

And our convictions on this question, flow precisely from our program, our experience, in rebuilding and building the Fourth International as a world democratic centralist party, with an international democratic centralist leadership, especially since 1971. In particular, from our experience with Healy who demanded that we agree with his program, his criteria, as a precondition for both discussion and practical collaboration. And from our experience with Lambert who drew up a "program," a set of criteria, in which he equated the United Secretariat and the International Committee, and then proceeded, on this basis, to one unprincipled regroupment after another, first with Lora and the Bolivian POR, then with Moreno and the PST, all the while aiming at Barnes and the SWP. (See *The Fourth International*, No. 127.)

We have seen one disaster after another on the basis of the method of hasty, abstract (and often unprincipled) political agreements and fusions — the United Secretariat, the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, the Parity Committee, not to mention American experiences like the Vanguard Newsletter/Class Struggle League fusion or the Revolutionary Workers League/Socialist League (DC) fusion. On the other hand, we have seen the Fourth International rebuilt, its international leadership, cadres and sections become stronger and play a leading role in the class struggle on the basis of its method of differentiating its line, selecting and training its leadership and cadres in the living movement of the working class, most notably in Spain, Poland, and France, but also in the U.S. and Bolivia.

Healy's and Lambert's lines had and have both a sectarian and an opportunist side. Healy's was sectarian toward others in the International Committee who wanted to rebuild the Fourth International when he broke unilaterally with the International Committee and demanded that everyone recognize him as the continuity of the Fourth International. And his line was opportunist toward various petty bourgeois nationalist tendencies as we have seen too well.

Lambert's line was also sectarian toward



militants and youth who wanted to rebuild the Fourth International and opportunist toward the Bolivian POR, the Argentinian PST and the American SWP, etc.

The IWL's line today — for a conference open only to those who agree with its criteria — also has its sectarian and opportunist side: sectarian toward tendencies in the United Secretariat looking for a way out of this dead end (from which the IWL itself has just broken!); opportunist toward tendencies that claim to oppose the United Secretariat.

But the Fourth International's line is not sectarian. That is why we voted for the Central Resolution even though we did not agree with all of it. We thought the call for an open international conference and preparations committee, for fundamental political debate and practical collaboration was a step forward. We thought it did not go far enough. Comrades accepted the RWL's amendment calling not only for support to the WRP's call for a conference (which we supported) but also for support to the ISL and WRP criteria, except point 7. This was both confused and confusing. It suggests that there is no fundamental disagreement with the method of hasty political accords and leaves the door open to the perspective of fusion on such a fragile basis.

A tendency also emerged in favor of openly abandoning the construction of Trotskyist parties. Spokesmen for the Tendencia Proletaria Insurreccional (TPI, Chile, led by Earl Gilman), the Bolshevik Tendency (BT, originated in Spartacist League), and several "independents," argued repeatedly that all Trotskyists were bankrupt, that they had failed to build parties, had treated people badly, that they had to learn to treat people humanly. The TPI representative even said it was necessary to reexamine Lenin's concept of democratic centralism, that many Trotskyists were nothing but Stalinists in Trotskyist masks, and put forward an amendment to the central resolution to delete references to Trotskyism and Trotskyist parties and substitute "anti-Stalinist, revolutionary."

The WRP, the TO, as well as others, spoke against this "amendment" and the conference

majority voted against it. Further, it adopted a resolution for the next conference and the coordinating committee to be open only to organizations that identify with Trotskyism.

But here again, the struggle has just begun. We think that many participants' views on the Fourth International's continuity leave the door open to the anti-Trotskyist, liquidationist perspectives.

The Socialist Group (SG) of Britain, led by Alan Thornett, and the Workers Social League (WSL), led by Steve Bryant, argue that there are no fundamental differences between Trotskyists, that they should all be in the same organization, that the only reason that they are not is that they are ruled by "bureaucracies," "oligarchies," or "cult leaders," each of which wants its own organization. Alan Thornett said everyone should join the United Secretariat because it has no international line and leadership and is thus the most democratic.

The RWL also said that the Trotskyist movement has "fragmented," that the International Committee did not represent the continuity of the Fourth International any more than the United Secretariat, and calls for the "political regeneration and organizational reconstruction" of the Fourth International.

The WRP's representative, Chris Bailey, said that the Fourth International had degenerated, that it had failed to come to grips with post-war developments, that it had to be regenerated, beginning with theoretical clarification.

To date we have not heard a political response to our balance sheet of the crisis of the Fourth International and the struggle to rebuild it, particularly the struggle against Healy and Lambert in 1971-72, the foundation of the International League/Rebuilder of the Fourth International, and the International Fourth Open Conference Rebuilding the Fourth International in 1976. Comrades have only said that our assessment that this struggle represents the most important element of the continuity — not the only, but the most

important — is arrogant.

But this question, which is a fundamental question of the principles, program and continuity of the Fourth International, can and will be clarified in a common fight to prepare the international conference.

The Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference in San Francisco and the Central Resolution it adopted were an important step in this preparation, in an initial political struggle to clarify these questions. Again we urge all tendencies that identify with Trotskyism to join this struggle.

**Build the Fourth International!  
Pledge to the International's Fund!**

As our readers know, the Fourth International's Tenth World Congress decided to fight for an open international conference, an internationalist workers' forum, as a framework in which to begin to clarify Trotskyist principles and continuity and, on this basis, to begin to bring together and unite tendencies breaking from the old revisionist and liquidationist leaderships of the Fourth International.

The Fourth International is the only organization waging an international struggle on the basis of this line. And this line is a result of the experience that we have already had in rebuilding the Fourth International's international center, a struggle that we carried forward when all other tendencies abandoned it in 1971 and 1972. The strength of this line and the organization that we have built on the basis of it have already been demonstrated in the class struggle in Spain, Poland, France, the U.S. and Bolivia and will be more so in the future.

We ask all readers to support this struggle by pledging one day's pay a month to the International's Fund. Funds are urgently needed to finance the international center, its meetings, *Fourth International*, delegations to different countries, etc. We need your support to build the Fourth International! Make a pledge today!

## The Death of Nahuel Moreno

The International Secretariat of the Fourth International has just received news of the death of Nahuel Moreno, leader of the International Workers League and of the Argentine MAS, which occurred in Buenos Aires on January 24. The name of Nahuel Moreno is well known in the international working class vanguard and, in the first place, in the Latin American vanguard, of which he was one of the most outstanding figures in the post-World War II period.

As a militant from the first stages of Trotskyism in Argentina, his name is already part of the history of the Fourth International. A member of the International Committee, whose continuity our movement claims as its own, our respective paths diverged from 1963 on. But in spite of the political disagreements that separated us in the difficult struggle for the Fourth International, we want to express our most sincere condolences to his family and friends, as well as to all the comrades of the IWL. Together with workers and revolutionary militants in every country, our party bows its head before the memory of Nahuel Moreno, saluting in him the example of a workers leader, who throughout his life accompanied his class in all its struggles and in all its vicissitudes.

Paris

January 26, 1987

Gerard Laffont for the International Secretariat of the Fourth International

The Secretariat of the Trotskyist Organization would like to take this first opportunity to express in print our sympathy to the militants of the International Workers League, particularly to the members of the International Socialist League and the Internationalist Workers Party in the United States, on the death of their comrade and leader, Nahuel Moreno.

February 27, 1987

## Condemn the Attack and Arrest of Phil Penn

### Statement of the Trotskyist Organization

The Trotskyist Organization USA condemns in the strongest terms the jailing of Phil Penn - respected British trade union militant and member of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

The primary responsibility for this attack must be laid at the door of the Healy-Torrance group in Great Britain, publishers of the newspaper "News Line". It is they who initiated the physical assault on Phil Penn and they who were the only police witnesses against him. And, even worse, as a political organization that claims to represent the working class, their use of the police and the courts against the WRP emboldens the bourgeoisie's police hounds and thereby opens up every worker to further attacks.

In addition, workers must know that the Healy-Torrance group has carried out such attacks and campaigns of slander against its political opponents in other working class organizations so as to constitute a systematic method of operation in violation of all traditions of workers democracy.

All working class political organizations, unionists, and members of the labor movement have a stake in condemning this attack on Phil Penn and the WRP, and coming to their defense against the gangsterous and reactionary methods of Healy's organization.

Secretariat of the Trotskyist Organization  
USA/Fraternal section/Fourth International  
February 21, 1987

