

TRUTH

A DETROIT BULLETIN FOR A LABOR PARTY

Edited by the Detroit Trotskyist Committee, supporter of the International League (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International)

For a Workers Leadership in the UAW!

On January 8, over 800 workers and local union leaders opposed to the top UAW leadership's anti-worker, pro-company policies, met in Warren, Michigan.

On January 28, over 300 workers and local union leaders met again to discuss more concrete plans to fight for workers demands against the top UAW leadership, including plans to run for office against this leadership and its puppets in various union locals.

On February 3, Don Douglas, president of UAW Local 594 at the GM Truck and Bus complex in Pontiac, Michigan, and a leader of the current workers opposition in the UAW, announced that he is running for UAW Regional Director against Bob Lent, a candidate associated with UAW president Owen Bieber and his "Administration Caucus."

And on February 12, there will be another meeting in Warren, Michigan open to all UAW members who want to join Douglas in this fight against the top UAW leadership and run for delegates to the coming UAW Convention.

Douglas was a founder of Locals Opposed to Concessions (LOC) and Restore and More (RAM); he has taken a position against "whipsawing" (the practice of forcing workers union locals to compete with each other to increase company profits at the workers expense), against "concessions" (the practice of giving-in to company demands), and in favor of more democracy for the workers in the UAW.

He says, among other things:

"Concessions have not saved jobs and there *has not* been an equality of sacrifice. Worker against worker, plant against plant ... with all liability, obligations and



800 workers against the top UAW leadership. See page 5 for more information.

demands placed on the workers. To *pretend* that workers are not being whipsawed or that the practice is not encouraged by the international union is unrealistic. *This must be stopped.*"

"To support delegates for the 29th Constitutional Convention, committed to the Bieber administration, is an endorsement of their program of corporate appeasement thru the sacrifice of sound union principles ..."

While Douglas and other current leaders of the workers opposition have not always made a consistent struggle for these principles, they are obviously much closer to the workers than Owen Bieber, Bob Lent,

and Co., who are nothing but lackeys for the auto bosses who enrich themselves at the workers expense.

Thus we urge all young people and working people in Detroit, whether they are in the UAW or not, to support Don Douglas against Bob Lent. A more working class, militant and democratic leadership in the UAW, will make it easier for workers to take the offensive against the auto bosses and their puppets in the Detroit city government and throughout the workers movement.

At the same time, it is necessary to fight for a clear, workers program — including decent jobs for all at union wages and democratic rights for Black people and all oppressed people — and for a labor party to fight for political power.

As long as the auto bosses and their puppets in city government and the unions continue to have political power, they are going to use it to rob and oppress the people.

The pages and the editorial board of *Truth* are open to all who want to make a common fight for these goals. — *Truth*.

INSIDE:

A WORKERS CANDIDATE FOR DETROIT MAYOR

SOLIDARITY WITH MIAMI BLACK PEOPLE!

IS DETROIT DIFFERENT FROM MIAMI?

Why not workers candidates for Detroit mayor and city council?

Over 25,000 workers voted for Workers Against Concessions candidates in the last elections, including many workers in Detroit and the Detroit area. And the vast majority of workers did not vote at all in the last elections. This was not because they were ignorant, lazy, or were not interested in the elections, as many upper class snobs of various sorts claim. It was because they didn't support either of the major candidates or parties in the elections, Republicans or Democrats.

While rich union bureaucrats spent thousands of dollars out of workers union dues, to try to convince workers that the Democrats are really more working class than the Republicans, the vast majority of the people were not convinced. The Democrats have had a majority in city and state legislatures, and in the national Congress, for decades. If they were more for the workers, or more for the Black people and other oppressed people, then the workers, the Black people, and others, would not be suffering so much.

What is more, shortly after the elections were over, upsurges broke out in Democratic Party strongholds. Over 800 workers and local union leaders, representing thousands of workers in the Detroit area, met in open opposition to Owen Bieber and the top UAW leadership as a whole, agents of the auto bosses in the UAW and kingpins of the Democratic Party in Detroit. And in Miami, Tampa and Atlanta, all in the South, where the Democratic Party is a majority party, thousands of Black people rose up against racist police, armed with rocks, bottles, and small guns. To date, key Democratic Party leaders, who claim to represent Black people, like Jesse Jackson, Coleman Young, and others, have barely uttered one word of solidarity with these Black people, much less demanded the release of all those who have been imprisoned.

This shows that the time is ripe to fight for a working class slate of candidates for Detroit mayor and city council.

We think that a working class slate's campaign should center on the fight for the unions to break with the Republicans and Democrats, put forward their own candidates, and fight for political power.

But we also know that our point of view on this question is a minority among working class tendencies in Detroit. Thus we do not make agreement with our political view on this question, a pre-condition for a common fight for a working class slate in this election.

There are certain basic working class demands, that almost all working class tendencies can agree on: opposition to concessions; support to the struggles of Black people and other oppressed peoples; opposition to using Michigan troops in Central America and elsewhere; taxes for the rich, not the poor; no support to Republicans or Democrats, etc.

A large, united, working class campaign, on a program of basic demands that most working class tendencies can agree on, will advance the interests of the working class in Detroit, far more than half-a-dozen different campaigns in which each tenden-

cy puts forward its platform or program, *exactly* the way it wants to.

As Marx, or Engels, said, *one* real step forward in the class struggle, is worth a dozen perfect programs.

It is necessary for each tendency in Detroit to put the interests of the Detroit working class as a whole, above the interests of each particular tendency.

Such a united working class campaign in Detroit, will in turn show the way forward for workers in other cities like Chicago, New York, and elsewhere, where the white and the Black bourgeoisies are consciously trying to pit whites and Blacks against each other so that they can continue to hold power and rob the people, white and Black.

For a united, working class slate, for Detroit mayor and city council! — M. Gutshall

25,000 votes for Workers Against Concessions in the last elections . . .

For President:

Communist Party candidates (did not run)0
Workers World Party candidates (listed on ballot as independent)	980
Socialist Workers Party candidates (listed on ballot as independent)	888
Workers League candidates	1,966
Total	3,834

For U.S. Senate:

Socialist Workers Party candidate (listed on ballot as independent)	5,284
Workers Against Concessions Party candidate	10,129
Total	15,413

For U.S. Congress:

Workers Against Concessions Party candidates	9,465
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For Michigan State Legislature:

Workers Against Concessions Party candidates	3,909
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For Michigan State School Board:

Workers Against Concessions Party candidate (Baird)	21,491
Workers Against Concessions Party candidate (Johnson)	27,680

Solidarity with Miami Black people!

On January 16 and 17, Black workers and youth in the Miami districts of Overtown and Liberty City rose up against police brutality and police occupation of their neighborhoods.

The facts

Clement Lloyd, 23, a part-owner of a car wash, was riding his motorcycle with Allen Blanchard, 29, as passenger. They were on their way to a demonstration (60,000 strong) in honor of Martin Luther King's birthday. Police claim they were speeding. Lloyd was shot by Officer William Lozano, killing him instantly. Blanchard was fatally injured.

Immediately an angry crowd gathered and began shouting, "You no good killer!"

The mayor came to speak to the crowd later that evening and was attacked with bottles and rocks.

"Many say that it was a 'riot.' . . . But that is a lie. The Black people of Overtown wanted to stop police brutality and they did it the best they knew how — by fighting the police."

The next day the uprising spread to Liberty City, an adjacent neighborhood. Both Overtown and Liberty City had uprisings in 1980 and 1985 against police murders. Over 400 were arrested, nearly all under 18 years old. The Miami police say "many" had prior arrest records. "We have contended through this situation . . . that the criminal element takes to the streets, takes advantage of the situation to loot and rob . . ." (*Detroit Free Press*, January 21)

Officer Lozano was indicted for manslaughter January 23. Clement Lloyd's father said, "They've only done that to keep the community quiet. But . . . that's not enough." (*Detroit Free Press*, January 25)

Did the people really fight together?

Many say that it was a "riot." The people were just so frustrated that they were out of control. But that is a lie. The Black people of Overtown wanted to stop police brutality and they did it the best they knew

how — by fighting the police.

Was this really an uprising, was this really Black people fighting together against the police? Read the descriptions from the *Detroit Free Press* and judge for yourself.

"Monday's shooting quickly drew a crowd of furious neighbors, and the crowd soon became violent. . . snipers took potshots at police and firemen."

"City officials, including Mayor Suarez, arrived at 7:30 p.m. . . . As he walked toward Northwest 17th Street, bottles exploded around him . . . Reporters and cameramen who tried to follow were hit by bottles . . ."

On January 17 . . .

"Block by block, a seething crowd of about 200 wrested control from police of a section of Northwest 20th Street in a pitched battle that included rock throwing, car burning and a 15 minute gun battle with a sniper. With each retreat by the police, crowds poured into the street and celebrated."

"As crowds grew into the hundreds along the street towards twilight, passing cars were showered with rocks and bottles."

What did the people accomplish?

They won the indictment of an officer for manslaughter. They showed the police that they will not tolerate murder of Black people. As one youth put it, "The people here want to be heard. We can't go to court, no one listens to us. These people just want some attention. They're saying, 'You can't kill one of us without paying for it.'"

What can we do here in Detroit to support these fighters?

The unions must be mobilized to defend them.

All the workers organizations, the trade unions, and the Black organizations, like the NAACP and others, should demand the immediate release of the 400 arrested and dropping all charges.

The unions in Detroit need to say: We defend Black people fighting for their democratic rights! We defend the Black people of Miami! Free the Miami 400! An Injury to One is An Injury to All! — F.M.

Is Detroit different from Miami?

Shortly after the uprising in Miami against a racist police murder of two Black men, the *Detroit Free Press* published an article by Brian Flanagan that said:

"During the past two decades, the focus of citizen complaints filed against Detroit police officers has evolved from racism and nightsticks to sarcasm and profanity . . ."

Flanagan quotes James Bannon, Executive Deputy Chief of Police in Detroit:

"I don't look at the number of complaints, I look at the content. And what I've noticed is that 15 or 16 years ago, a very large percentage of complaints were of a racial or brutality nature. Today, the vast number are demeanor or attitude complaints." (*Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1989.)

This article is simply one element in a larger media campaign to convince workers and Black people in the Detroit area that Detroit is different from Miami.

Politicians and police brag about having abolished STRESS, a racist hit squad that set-up and assassinated Black people in the name of fighting crime, and about having hired more Black policemen.

And there is no doubt that Detroit politicians and police are not as *openly* racist as they used to be.

But just because they are not as *openly* racist as they used to be, doesn't mean that they are no longer racist.

In 1984, Black police and prosecutors arrested and imprisoned Karen Norman, a young Black woman who killed a man in self-defense after he attempted to rape her, and charged her with murder. She was finally acquitted after months in court, thousands of dollars in legal fees, and a city-wide mobilization to free her. *This never would have happened to an upper class white woman.*

In 1985, Black police murdered Alleane Richardson, an elderly woman who had locked herself out of her apartment, who was trying to get into her apartment with a knife, and who had called the police to ask
Continued on page 4



Karen Norman: a victim of racist Detroit police and prosecutors.

their help. *This never would have happened to an upper class white woman.*

In 1988, people who lived in an apartment complex on the Westside complained that uniformed policemen were robbing them at gunpoint and threatening to arrest them if they reported it. The police department said it would make an investigation; nothing seemed to come of it; then, suddenly, the police announced that they might arrest and charge the residents with making false charges. *This never would happen to upper class white people.*

And these are only some of the better known incidents that we can list off the top of our heads.

In fact, what has happened, has been that Black politicians and police have been selected on the basis of their allegiance to upper class whites and Blacks. And the longer they have been there, the more they have begun to adopt the elitist and racist attitudes of their upper class white predecessors.

Working people in Detroit should fight for the unions to initiate a full-scale investigation into the Detroit police department. All police guilty of using their authority to hurt or oppress the people in any way, should be punished. The current police force, selected and trained on the basis of allegiance to upper class whites and Blacks, should be *dissolved* and *disbanded*. The unions should take the lead in forming large neighborhood patrols or defense guards, made up of ordinary working people, Black and white, with ties to their neighbors. Working people could serve on these patrols on a rotating basis, and be paid to do so, so that no elite, racist force can form, over and above the people and hostile to them. Such patrols will quickly drive the drug dealers out of Detroit. — M.G.

Coalition to Defend Abortion Rights Keeps Clinic Open

The Detroit Coalition to Defend Abortion Rights, composed of various working class and democratic organizations in Detroit, organized a demonstration to defend the right to abortion at the East Gyn Center on Detroit's Eastside on January 21. Over 100 people came, out-numbered anti-abortion rights forces, and prevented them from shutting down the clinic as they have been able to do in other cities. The Coalition organized another demonstration in opposition to anti-abortion rights forces in downtown Detroit on January 22.

Instead of supporting or joining this action to keep this clinic open, the Michigan National Organization of Women (NOW), a bourgeois women's rights organization, issued a public statement denouncing the action (See statement below). It suggests that the Coalition to Defend Abortion Rights is responsible for the confrontations at the clinics and refers to the anti-abortion rights forces, that are trying to physically prevent women from using these clinics, as "non-violent." It red-baits the coalition because various communist and socialist organizations are part of it. And it advises clinics that are targets of anti-abortion rights forces, and their so-called "Operation Rescue," to basically close down.

We urge all working class and democratic

organizations to defend the Coalition to Defend Abortion Rights against the NOW leadership's sectarian and factional tactics. Partisans of the democratic right to abortion should defend *all* actions in defense of this right, in conflicts with anti-abortion rights forces, whether they agree with the particular *tactics* involved or not.

At the same time, it is necessary to turn toward mobilizing local unions to defend the democratic right to abortion. It is not possible to rely on a small band of fighters to defend this right, no matter how devoted they may be. Still less is it possible to rely on the bourgeois NOW leadership, which is obviously far more interested in preserving its status and its manicures, than it is in preserving the democratic right to abortion.

The best way to do this is to fight for union support and delegations to actions to keep the clinics open, and to the April 9 march on Washington in defense of the democratic right to abortion. — M.G.

Coalition to Defend Abortion Rights
P.O. Box 1092 Trolley Station
Detroit, MI 48231

Excerpts from NOW's Statement

National Organization for Women
Michigan Conference

...

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 21, 1989

MICHIGAN NOW DENOUNCES
VIOLENCE AT ABORTION CLINICS

DETROIT: The Michigan Conference of the National Organization for Women (NOW) joined with other pro-choice and feminist organizations in the state today in denouncing the actions of the Committee to Defend Abortion Rights.

The Committee is composed of a coalition

of groups, such as the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, the Revolutionary Socialist League and the Revolutionary Workers League ...

The Committee to Defend Abortion Rights intends to counter the efforts of Operation Rescue through direct confrontation to prevent Operation Rescue participants from blocking entrances to Detroit-area abortion clinics this morning ...

The confrontational tactics of the Committee to Defend Abortion Rights ... are deplorable, and we are appalled by their actions ...

They are obscuring the issue and betraying the Michigan women ...

More on the workers opposition in the UAW . . .

Over 800 workers and local union leaders from many different union locals in the Detroit area, opposed to the top UAW leadership's pro-company, anti-worker policies, met in Warren, Michigan on January 8.

Local union leaders who have opposed the top UAW leadership's policies in the past, particularly its policy of making "concessions" to the auto-companies (giving-in to the auto companies' demands) — including Don Douglas (UAW Local 594), Pete Kelly (UAW Local 160), Wendy Thompson (UAW Local 235), Sally Bier (UAW Local 2500), and Bill Parker (UAW Local 1700) — called the meeting.

Jerry Tucker, an opposition leader associated with "New Directions," an opposition movement in the UAW in the St. Louis, Missouri area, and Victor Reuther, a founding member of the UAW, spoke. Tucker described how "New Directions" emerged, how the top UAW leadership tried to intimidate its supporters and stole an election from them, how they took the top UAW leadership to court, how the court ordered a new election, and how Tucker eventually won that election (he is now a one-man minority on the UAW's 23-man International Executive Board; all other members on the International Executive Board are associated with the so-called "Administration Caucus"). Reuther described his conflicts with the current UAW leadership and his view that they are violating the founding principles of the UAW.

While Tucker and Reuther took up most of the time, the organizers also allotted time for rank-and-file workers to speak from the floor.

One worker after another described the terrible things that have happened to the workers and to their union locals since the UAW leadership adopted a policy of making "concessions" to the auto bosses.

"My neighbor isn't working at all, and I'm working 70 hours a week," said one worker. "People in my neighborhood can't afford to pay for their homes or send their kids to school," said another. "Older workers who are disabled, who can't do certain kinds of work, aren't protected by the union contract anymore; they're being fired and they're losing their pensions." "Union committeemen don't represent the workers anymore, they represent management," said many workers. "Where are the union representatives when you need them," shouted one worker. "In bed with management," responded several workers. "In Florida!" or "In Las Vegas!" said others.

Many of these same workers and union leaders met again in Dearborn, Michigan on January

28. One of the organizers explained that there had not been enough time at the previous meeting for workers to speak from the floor, so they decided to call another meeting and continue the discussion.

At this meeting, the workers' demands became clearer and clearer. One after another said:

- No more concessions to the bosses; no more job cuts, wage cuts, cuts in working conditions or union rights; every job lost, every cent lost, every work rule lost, every union right lost, is a concession; an injury to one is an injury to all.
- No more whipsawing; no more pitting workers from one local against workers from another local.
- No more appointed union representatives; direct election of all union representatives; no more goons from "Solidarity House" terrorizing our people in our work places or union locals.
- A new leadership in the UAW that represents the workers, not the bosses. Delegates at the UAW Convention in California in June to fight for these things.

Almost every single worker who spoke, and many local union leaders, expressed tremendous *hostility* to the auto bosses and their servants in the top UAW leadership. Speeches calling for militant tactics, like the sit-down strikes of the 30s, received big applause. And a call to stop all support to the Republicans and Democrats and build a labor party also received a lot of applause, even though it was presented in a very sectarian manner.

Unfortunately, the meeting did not make concrete plans to fight the job cuts, and other forms



Don Douglas, opposition candidate for Director, Region 1.
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of "concessions" taking place right now. (For example: GM plans to layoff 100 workers at the Reatta Craft Centre in Lansing, Michigan; it plans to close the Framingham, Massachusetts plant; militants at the Chrysler Jefferson Avenue plant report that Chrysler is still laying off workers there; it plans to close the Jeep plant in Toledo, Ohio; Blue Cross & Blue Shield is trying to force 600 workers at the downtown Detroit office center to transfer to Southfield ...; and these layoffs are just the beginning; the auto bosses are planning a *recession* in 1990.)

And some of the leaders of the opposition, particularly Jerry Tucker, were far more *conciliatory* toward the auto bosses and their servants in the top UAW leadership, than the workers were. Tucker did not, in his speeches at these meetings, take a clear position in support of the workers' demands against concessions and for a new leadership; he simply called for "discussion" in the union and for the leadership to be more "accountable."

Nevertheless, public union meetings, in which workers can say what they think without being shouted down or beaten up by union goons, are certainly a big step forward. And so is the decision for workers who are against concessions, or who are for more democracy in the UAW, to run for positions as delegates to the UAW Convention, against candidates associated with the top leadership, the "Administration Caucus."

Thus we urge all workers in Detroit, whether they are in the UAW or not, to support New Directions, New Beginnings (as the opposition is known in the Detroit area), and other groups against concessions, and their candidates, against the top leadership of the UAW, the "Administration Caucus," and its candidates.

At the same time, it is necessary to fight for the unions to initiate an all-out fight against *all* job cuts, for decent jobs for all at union wages, and for a labor party based on the unions to fight for political power.

The working class is the only class that will provide decent jobs for all at union wages, because it is the only class that stands to gain from doing this. The rich bosses, union bureaucrats, and certain sections of the middle classes, obviously *profit* from the workers' unemployment, poverty and misery.

But in order to do this, it's not enough to have unions, even very working class, militant, democratic unions. The workers have to have their own political party, to fight for political power, to crush the resistance of the rich bosses and their servants in the workers movement.—M.G.

Why can't racist institutions in America be reformed?

— During the last weeks of January, thousands of Black people in Miami rose up against racist police who murdered two Black men. Those who rose up were armed with nothing but rocks, bottles, and small guns, like the young Palestinians who rose up against the racist Zionist state on the other side of the world, just a year ago.

— A few days later, the U.S. Supreme Court, announced that it was no longer necessary to set aside a certain number of contracts for Black businesses.

— At the same time, the city of Atlanta mobilized thousands of police and National Guardsmen to protect racist white skin-heads marching in opposition to the Martin Luther King holiday.

These developments present a dramatic picture of the motor force of the struggle for the liberation of the Black people on the one hand — heroic, self-sacrificing, poor Black youth and workers — and the main obstacles to the liberation of the Black people on the other — the rich, racist institutions that dominate American life, like the Supreme Court, the local governments, the police, the National Guard, etc.

There have been dozens of struggles for the democratic rights of the Black people in America against these racist institutions: the *Civil War* in the 1860s, which was one of the bloodiest wars in human history; the *trade union movement* in the 1930s and 40s; the *Civil Rights movement* in the 1950s and early 60s; the *popular insurrections* in Detroit and other urban centers in the late 1960s. And it's obvious that certain gains have been made.

Yet banks, corporations, landlords, schools, hospitals, storekeepers, government officials, police and others, still discriminate against Black people. Black workers are still super-exploited and the Black population as a whole is still oppressed. They are still abused. And there is a growing number of upper class whites, middle class whites, and aristocratic white workers, who are growing more and more openly hostile to Black people. Racist white gangs are forming.

Racist institutions

The fact that people have fought for so long for the democratic rights of Black people in America, the fact that these racist institutions have not fundamentally change, the fact that they continue to spread their poison throughout the society, shows that *the racist character of the institutions that dominate American life — the banks, corporations, parties, governments, police, etc. — is not simply an aspect or a feature of these institutions.* The racist character of

these institutions is a *fundamental and integral part* of the nature of these institutions.

It's like weeds. You can keep cutting them back, hoping they won't destroy the rest of the plants. But they keep coming back, and pretty soon you realize that you have to *completely* kill the weeds, or they are going to take over the garden and kill all the other plants.

The fact of the matter is that the basic institutions in American life — the banks, corporations, parties, governments, police, etc. — *profit* from the super-exploitation of Black workers and the oppression of the Black people as a whole.

They *profit* in two senses.

They make a tremendous amount of money off of Black workers and the oppressed Black people as a whole. Bankers and businessmen drew on the tremendous profits reaped from slave labor and slave trading in the South, to industrialize the North. They continue to reap tremendous profits today from Black laborers, who often do the most difficult jobs for the lowest pay.

And they profit in another sense. The divisions in the working class, and in the oppressed population as a whole, that result from the super-exploitation of Black workers and the oppression of the Black people as a whole, allow the rich, largely white, American ruling class, to continue to rule.

The threat to the ruling class

Thus it has always been precisely when the struggles of Black and white workers begin to come together, when the struggles of the Black and white oppressed population as a whole, begin to come together, that the American ruling class gets most frightened.

Martin Luther King was assassinated when he began to address striking garbage workers in Mississippi. Malcolm X was assassinated when he began to conclude that the struggle of the Black people in the United States was part of the struggle of exploited and oppressed people the world over, and that they would have to unite with other exploited and oppressed people if they wanted to win. Fred Hampton, who had once been a member of the Trotskyist youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance, who advocated an orientation toward the working class, and who became a leader of the Black Panther Party in Chicago, was brutally assassinated by Richard J. Daley and the Chicago police.

Thus the only way to win freedom for Black people — the only way to win real democratic rights for Black people, including the right to self-determination, the right to establish their

own nation on American soil if they choose to do so — is to destroy these racist institutions.



A Miami youth throwing rocks at a car full of reporters.

Replace them with different institutions, based on different forces and different principles.

The working class

The working class is the only class that can do this, because it is the only class that stands to gain from doing so.

The capitalist class obviously profits from the exploitation and oppression of Black people. And so do large sections of the middle classes. In fact, it is the super-exploitation of Black labor in the United States, and labor in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, that allows the capitalist class in the United States to maintain a huge, parasitic middle class, that is completely dependent on the capitalist class, that does absolutely nothing but sit around and push papers, while Black and white laborers sweat and produce the gourmet food, the designer clothes, the fancy cars, furniture, electronic gadgets, etc., that is so important to certain sections of the useless, parasitic American middle class.

While a certain portion of the working class — the aristocracy of labor and the labor bureaucracy — profits from the super-exploitation and oppression of Black people, the vast majority of working people do not. They suffer from the divisions in the working class that this creates. They suffer from their isolation from the Black population. And they suffer from a society full of hatred and violence.

But in order to destroy these institutions and create new ones, the working class has to have its own political party.

If the masses of American workers have not fought much on the side of the Black people and other oppressed people, it is not because they are *inherently* racist as a class or people. It is because they are still under the political and practical influence of the racist American bourgeoisie, its political parties (the Republicans and Democrats), and its lackeys in the labor movement. They spread racist poison in the working class. For example, it was the UAW bureaucracy, during the last election, that passed out thousands of leaflets, telling workers not to vote for Bush, because he would let the Japanese take over the U.S.

American workers have to have their own party, to free themselves from this influence. They have to separate themselves — politically, practically and physically; ideologically and organically — from the corrupt, racist and degenerate American bourgeoisie.

And in order for American workers to take political power with their own party, they have to support the struggles of other oppressed peoples against this racist state, and they have to have a program to resolve the fundamental problems before the society.

As revolutionary socialists or Trotskyists, we obviously think this program must be a revolutionary socialist program, including: the complete destruction of the capitalist state; the establishment of a workers state (the workers and oppressed people in arms); the nationalization or expropriation of the banks, basic industry and large-scale agriculture; centralized planning of production and distribution of basic goods as a first step toward socialism or communism, toward a classless, communist society, in which there is no top and no bottom, no oppressor and no oppressed, just people working together for the common good, and where each individual can develop to his full potential. And many workers in the U.S. and elsewhere, agree with us on this.

But the vast majority of American workers have to have their own political party, they have to begin to fight for political power, in order to be able to discuss, debate and test, different programs.

We urge all partisans of democratic rights for Black people, not only to continue an intransigent struggle for these rights by every means possible and necessary, including propaganda, meetings, demonstrations, strikes, etc., but also to join us in the fight to build a workers party or labor party based on the organized power of the American working class, the unions.

Building such a party will *not* guarantee the liberation of the Black people. It may be necessary to form committees, commissions, or caucuses, within this party. But it will be the next big step toward the liberation of the Black people. — M. Gutshall; F. Michaels.

Rebuild the Revolutionary Trotskyist Party!

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) recently printed an article concerning the lessons of the 1988 elections and the tasks of revolutionaries in the American working class, by Doug Jenness, in *The Militant*, No. 45, November 18, 1988.

Jenness correctly opposes support not only to the Republican and Democratic Parties in general, but also to Jesse Jackson and the so-called Rainbow Coalition.

However, he says:

"Our orientation has to be to mobilize around demands to fight for protection against the ravages of the economic and social crisis. Demands such as a shorter workweek to provide jobs for all, affirmative action quotas aimed at achieving real equality, and cancellation of the Third World debt can unite our forces at home and internationally ...

"And this defensive struggle organized around immediate and democratic demands will inevitably pass over to a struggle by working people to remove capitalist political rule and establish our own power — a government of the workers and farmers ..."

Jenness does not say one word about building a working class or revolutionary party.

This is not a working class, revolutionary line.

A "defensive struggle organized around immediate and democratic demands" will *not* "inevitably pass over to a struggle by working people to remove capitalist political rule and establish ... a government of the workers and farmers."

While the objective situation certainly impels workers in this direction, the imperialist bourgeoisie, the labor aristocracy, and the labor bureaucracy, constantly make propaganda against it, and repeatedly organize political maneuvers against it, like the Jesse Jackson campaign.

Thus a workers revolutionary party is necessary to bring working class, revolutionary and socialist consciousness to the American working class and to prepare it and organize it to fight for political power. Marx and Engels were for the construction of such a party. Lenin dedicated his life to it, and it was the existence of such a party that made the first successful workers socialist revolution possible. Trotsky continued this struggle after Lenin died and in opposition to Stalin and his supporters who took over and destroyed first the Russian workers party, known as the Bolshevik Party, then the workers Communist International.

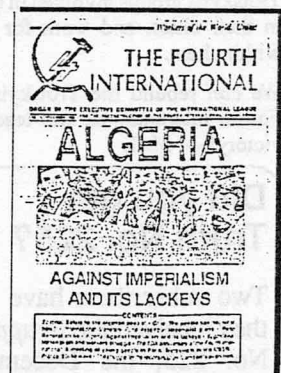
In order to build such a party it is necessary to fight for a working class and revolutionary

program. This program includes immediate and democratic demands, but it cannot be reduced to them. It also includes *transitional* demands, like the sliding scale of wages and hours, workers control of the banks and basic industry, workers management of the banks and financial institutions into one state bank, nationalization of certain corporations or industries, workers defense guards, workers militias, a workers government, and others. This program is summed up in the program that the SWP presented to the Fourth International's founding conference, that the Fourth International adopted as its founding program and which is known as "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International; The Mobilization of the Masses around Transitional Demands to Prepare the Conquest of Power," or, simply "The Transitional Program."

And it is necessary to develop proper tactics. Thus it was that Lenin, because the American working class had never had its own party, proposed to American revolutionaries to fight for a workers party or labor party, when he first met the American revolutionary Louis Fraina. And Trotsky, after working with the American revolutionaries in the SWP for several years, also drew the same conclusion, and proposed to them to fight for a labor party based on the unions, as a tactic, as a way to build a workers revolutionary party, in a massive struggle for the political independence of the American working class.

The SWP leadership's balance sheet of the elections and its current orientation shows that it has (Continued on page 8)

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abandoned the fight for the workers revolutionary party, for political power, and for the working class tactics developed to advance this struggle like the fight for a workers party or labor party based on the unions.

It opposes support to capitalist parties and candidates like the Democrats and Jesse Jackson, but it has no alternative to offer to the masses of workers and oppressed people but a tiny sect, which is what the SWP has become. And the masses of working people want a big party; they aren't interested in tiny sects. In this sense, the SWP turns its back on the masses of workers and adapts to the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie.

Working class Trotskyist forces that remain true to basic Trotskyist principles and tactics, have a responsibility to make a common fight against this orientation, to fight for an alternative, not only for the masses of working people but also for working class militants in the SWP that continue to have ties to its Trotskyist past.

This means a fight for: a working class and revolutionary line in the class struggle; winning fresh working class forces; the largest possible Trotskyist unity on this basis; a Trotskyist congress to form a new, truly national, Trotskyist organization, as a step toward rebuilding the Trotskyist party in the U.S. and the Fourth International as a whole.

We urge young people and workers in the Detroit area who favor this struggle, to join the Detroit Trotskyist Committee. Young people and workers in other cities should join Trotskyist groups involved in the working class in their cities, and work for this perspective within them.

We can rebuild the Trotskyist party and the Fourth International, and lead the workers to victory! — M.G.

Did you get Truth No. 225?

Two subscribers have told us that they received the *wrapper* for Truth No. 225, the December-January issue, but they did not receive Truth itself. If this happened to you, please let us know. We will send you another copy. — M.G.

The changes in Truth . . .

Regular readers have already noticed that those of us who edit *Truth* — American supporters of the International League (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International) — have made a number of changes with this issue of *Truth*.

And you have probably already realized that we are trying to make *Truth* more attractive and interesting to young workers and all working people in Detroit.

We would like to explain some of the specific changes in more detail.

We call *Truth*: "A Bulletin for a Labor Party," rather than, "A Bulletin for Socialism and Trotskyism." We think this sums up our most immediate basic political goal — political power for the masses of working people — in a way that is *clearer* to most working people in Detroit. It also makes it clearer that we are for building a *party*, not just for spreading good ideas. We've dropped the flags that say, "4th International," and the slogan, "Workers of the World, Unite!," because they distract from the main point that we want to make, that this is a bulletin for a labor party.

We call *Truth*: "A Detroit Bulletin for a Labor Party." We want to make it clear that this is a Detroit publication. We are concentrating on building a Trotskyist workers group in Detroit, and on unity, on a principled basis, with other Trotskyist groups and tendencies in Detroit and elsewhere, as a step toward building a truly national Trotskyist organization. We do not pretend to be a national tendency or organization, and we do not pretend that a truly national organization can be built without a struggle to unify, on a principled basis, the different Trotskyist groups and tendencies with roots in the working class in different cities.

We call ourselves: "The Detroit Trotskyist Committee, supporter of the International League (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International)." We represent a distinct Trotskyist tendency in Detroit, and in other countries. We are working to build that ten-

dency because we think that it has made the *most consistent* struggle for working class, revolutionary and Trotskyist principles.

We are working to concentrate articles on developments in the class struggle in Detroit and our orientation and line in the class struggle in Detroit, even when it means not taking up other developments in the U.S. and elsewhere. In order to change workers thinking, you have to take up the problems that they face every day. We have *The Fourth International* in English every month, to supplement our work.

We are urging workers, militants, and representatives of working class tendencies that are for a labor party, and against support to the Republican and Democratic parties and their candidates, to work with us on *Truth*, to join our editorial board. We want a way to work with others who are for a labor party on a regular basis, to be able to make the largest possible fight for a labor party. We are confident that in the course of this struggle that many will come to see the importance of the struggle to rebuild the Trotskyist party in the U.S. and the Fourth International as a whole. The Trotskyists are the only ones fighting for the political independence of the American working class, for a political party to lead the workers to power.

At the same time, we say that *Truth* is edited by the Detroit Trotskyist Committee. We want to make it clear that we continue to assume responsibility for what it says.

If you would like to know more about the history of *Truth*, which has been published since September 1974, let us know.

We ask readers to support our efforts by giving us their comments and criticisms on *Truth*, by getting supporting subscriptions to *Truth* and to *The Fourth International*, and, of course, by joining the editorial board. — M.G.

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