

TRUTH

A REVOLUTIONARY TROTSKYIST BULLETIN IN DETROIT-FOUNDED 1974

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

NO TO YOUNG AND CONYERS!

A LABOR PARTY, EQUALITY, SOCIALISM!

Vote for
workers candidates
for mayor and city council!
Margaret Guttshall
for city council!



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Editorial

Hostility to Coleman Young and the top leadership of the Democratic Party in Detroit is so great that John Conyers announced that he is running for mayor against Coleman Young. And the most recent polls say that it is quite likely that Conyers will win.

Conyers is part of the left wing of the Democratic Party, with certain ties to members of the Democratic Socialists of America, the Communist Party, and various social protest movements. He and other members of the Democratic Party in Detroit and elsewhere have decided to take this step because they are afraid that if the Democratic Party does not come up with some kind of alternative to Coleman Young that it will completely lose control over the Black workers, the Black people, and all working people in Detroit.

But Conyers will not be able to resolve the problems facing the Black workers, the Black people, or any other working people in Detroit, any more than Coleman Young has been able to do so.

This is because Conyers, just like Coleman Young, is owned, lock, stock and barrel by the Democratic Party, which in turn is owned lock, stock and barrel by the big capitalist corporations that dominate Detroit — GM, Ford, and Chrysler.

These corporations *profit* from the super-exploitation of Black workers, the oppression of the Black people, and the exploitation and oppression of working people of all races and nationalities. They built the Republican and Democratic parties to govern in their interests, they *pay* politicians like

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Coleman Young and John Conyers to work for them, and they need different kinds of politicians to carry out different kinds of tasks at different times. Sometimes they need politicians like Coleman Young, who is now seen by thousands of Black workers and oppressed people in Detroit as nothing but a lackey of the rich, white, racist, bosses. Other times they need politicians like John Conyers, who *seems* to be closer to the Black workers, the Black people, and other working and oppressed people in Detroit.

Thus we urge workers in Detroit *not* to vote for Young, Conyers, or any other capitalist politicians in this election. Vote for a labor party, equality for the Black people and all oppressed peoples, and for socialism. Vote for workers candidates for mayor and city council, especially Margaret Guttshall.

Many workers that we have talked to think that a labor party is a good idea, but not very realistic. But Tony Mazzocchi, Secretary-Treasurer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, has recently called for a labor party, a number of other union leaders have supported him, and hundreds of trade unionists and working class militants gathered at a recent trade union conference in Detroit, sponsored by *Labor Notes*, also expressed support for a labor party.

This shows that a labor party is indeed a realistic proposal. But workers are going to have to fight for Mazzocchi and others to actually carry out their call for a labor party, in opposition to Kirkland, Bieber, Jesse Jackson, and others, who are in favor of undying loyalty to the Democratic Party, a party that was founded by slave-holders and slave-traders, and a party that continues to live off of profits reaped from the exploitation and oppression of the sons and daughters of the slaves.

Voting for working class candidates, and against all the capitalist candidates, in this election, is a good way to show Mazzocchi and others, that workers want a labor party now! It is a good way to push them to pass from talk to action! — Truth

Support Mazzocchi's call for a labor party

Tony Mazzocchi, Secretary-Treasurer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, called for a labor party at the *Labor Notes* conference in Detroit on May 19-21. Several other union officials, and hundreds of trade union and working class militants also expressed support for a labor party at this conference. A few weeks later, Mazzocchi published an abridged version of a text calling for a labor party in the *Guardian*.

Mazzocchi's orientation is very conciliatory and narrow. He's not in favor of challenging union support to the Democrats at this time, he's not in favor of running independent candidates, and he's not calling for a conference or congress of the millions of trade union men and women in the U.S. to found this party. He's just calling for a national committee composed of 20 or 30 people to charter state and local groups.

Nevertheless, Mazzocchi's call has already provoked a hostile response from Bill Fletcher, a leader of a "labor for Jesse Jackson" group in Boston, and from Lewis Grupper, another Jesse Jackson supporter.

Fletcher, who also had a long piece published in the *Guardian*, suggests that a labor party, by its very nature, will not represent the interests of Black workers, or the Black people, and he calls for a "people's party" and for working outside and inside the Democratic Party. Grupper, does not even try to hide his loyalty to the Democratic Party behind a "people's party" and openly attacks the Trotskyists for "fear of getting their hands dirty with any contact with the Democratic Party." (*Guardian*, August

2, 1989, p. 22)

This hostile response shows that supporters of the Democratic Party are *afraid* that Mazzocchi's labor party will get off the ground. They don't want Jesse Jackson and the left wing of the Democratic Party to lose its base among Black workers and other working people.

Neither workers nor Trotskyists can afford to remain neutral in this conflict.

The American working class is the only class that can carry out the liberation of the Black workers and the Black people, because it is the only class that does not profit from their exploitation and oppression. But in order to do this, it has to have its own party. Supporting Mazzocchi's call for a labor party, and pushing him to actually form that party now, can be a step in this direction.

Neither the Democratic Party, nor a "people's party," will ever achieve the liberation of the Black workers or the Black people, because the Democratic Party is a capitalist party that profits from their exploitation and oppression, and because a "people's party" allows representatives of other social classes, like the petty bourgeoisie, which does profit from the super-exploitation of the Black workers and the oppression of the Black people, to have just as much voice in that party as the workers.

This is why we urge all workers and all Trotskyists to support Mazzocchi and his call for a labor party against Jesse Jackson supporters and their call for support to the Democratic Party, and to do everything in their power to push Mazzocchi to form that labor party

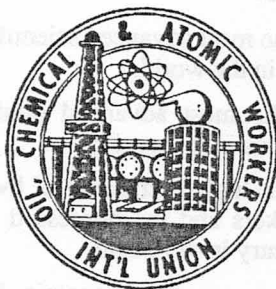
now.

There are many things that can be done:

1. Circulate Mazzocchi's text calling for a labor party. Circulate the OCAW questionnaire on a labor party. Demand that local unions do the same. Demand that they publish the results of the questionnaire.
2. Draw up statements supporting Mazzocchi's call for a labor party and urging him to form a labor party now. Send them to Mazzocchi, the *Guardian*, and other publications.
3. Push for local unions to adopt resolutions supporting Mazzocchi's call for a labor party and urging him to form a labor party now.
4. Circulate petitions among workers along these lines.
5. Organize meetings, classes, and educational conferences along these lines.

For copies of Mazzocchi's text and the OCAW questionnaire, contact the OCAW (P.O. Box 2812, Denver, Colorado 80201) or contact the Trotskyist Committee (313-831-0593).—M.G.

OCAW Political Action Questionnaire



from the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer
P.O. Box 2812
Denver, Colorado 80201

January 1989

All out for the rights of the Black people — August 26

The NAACP is calling for a national demonstration in Washington on August 26 against the Supreme Court's decision giving white males the right to sue enterprises with affirmative action programs for Blacks and women for so-called "reverse discrimination."

We urge workers of all races and nationalities and their organizations, especially the unions, to support this demonstration.

There is no such thing as "reverse discrimination." After over 100 years of struggle Blacks are still discriminated against, there is still no equality for the Black people.

A recent study showed that the average income for Blacks is still much lower than it is for whites and both the infant mortality rates and the adult mortality rates are much higher.

There are two possible explanations for this fact.

Either Blacks are still discriminated against, or Blacks are inferior, incapable of doing what whites do. The first is the truth, the second is a racist lie.

The fight for equality for Black people is just as important for white workers as it is for Black workers and the Black people as a whole.

As long as Black workers are super-exploited and the Black people are oppressed, all working people will be exploited and oppressed.

The more and more that there is real equality for Black people, the more and more it will be possible to draw out the class differences that exist in all races and nationalities, the more and more it will be possible to unite workers of all

racess and nationalities against the capitalist class and its petty bourgeois supporters, win the support of the oppressed population, and overthrow this parasitic, exploitative class.

The capitalists are the enemy, not the Blacks. To blame the Blacks for unemployment and crime, rather than the capitalists, to attack the Blacks rather than the capitalists, is a cowardly act, appropriate to a lackey of the capitalists, but not to a worker, or to the sons and daughters of workers.

This is why we urge workers of all races and nationalities to support this march on Washington for the democratic rights of the Black people.

Five buses will be leaving the NAACP office on August 25 at 7 am. They will be returning Saturday evening after the march. Tickets will be \$21. Riders will have to make their own sleeping arrangements in Washington. The buses will be filled on a first come, first serve basis.

The UAW also claims to endorse the march, but so far neither the national, regional, nor local union offices in Detroit have made any concrete plans to actually send buses for this march. Regions 1, 1a, and 1b all sent buses for the last march in Washington for the rights of Black people, on August 26 in 1988. Workers should insist that they do this again, and more. Ask your local executive board to endorse the march and arrange transportation. Contact your regional headquarters and ask them to do the same.

For further information, contact the Trotskyist Committee at 831-0593. — F.M.

What is socialism?

Today, with the workers revolution in China, with the continuing movement of the workers in Poland, with the strikes of the miners and other workers in the USSR, the question being asked is, "what is socialism?" Does socialism exist in the USSR or anywhere on this planet?

"Soviet forms of property with the most modern achievements of American technique transplanted into all branches of economic life — that would indeed be the first stage of socialism."

"Socialism is a structure of planned production to the end of the best satisfaction of human needs: otherwise it does not deserve the name of socialism."

"The task of socialism is to create a classless society based upon solidarity and the harmonious satisfaction of all needs . . ."

(The Revolution Betrayed, Leon Trotsky, 1937)

What do these statements mean?

The first says: once the workers have established their complete political control over the nation, once all the property of the capitalist class has been placed in the hands of this workers state, once there is centralized planning and production based on the needs of the people ("soviet forms of property"), and this is coupled with the most advanced labor productivity in the world ("the most modern achievement of American technique"), this economic system would be the first stage of socialism.

The last two statements say what a planned, organized rational system of production could accomplish. The satisfaction of all the human needs of the

workers and all oppressed peoples. If this doesn't happen, then it isn't socialism. And, that socialism prepares us for communism, that is, a society without classes based upon solidarity between all humans and the satisfaction of all their needs.

"Socialism is a structure of planned production to the end of the best satisfaction of human needs: otherwise it does not deserve the name of socialism."

— Leon Trotsky

Socialism means the end of all want and misery in the working class. The workers, their families and all oppressed people will have:

enough food to eat;

decent housing;

complete and competent medical care;

child care, good schools, parks and museums;

security in their old age;

the elimination of crime and drugs;

safe and healthy jobs that guarantee a standard of living that workers today only dream about.

These are the minimum requirements for socialism. So, to the question — "does socialism exist anywhere on this planet?" —, the answer is obvious. Socialism does not exist anywhere on

this planet.

Socialism is a more advanced society than the one that dominates the world today, capitalism. Capitalism is based on private ownership of the socialized means of production. Thus, it stifles the growth of these socialized means of production. Capitalism has no way to take society forward. It has taken us as far as it can, and, in fact, it has begun to drag us backward. It is incapable of organizing and planning the production of the goods and services of society in a rational way. It offers only the anarchy and chaos of the market.

Is socialism a dream for hundreds of years from now or a program that could be, under the right circumstances, started today?

It could indeed be started today in many parts of the world, but especially in the

United States. Why?

Out of all the countries on this planet, the United States is the country with the economic foundations most advanced.

It has:

- 1) the most advanced scientific technology in the world;
- 2) the most advanced productive apparatus in the world;
- 3) the highest standard of living for the workers and the oppressed out of any country in the world.

These are the economic foundations necessary for the establishment of socialism. What is lacking are the political necessities: a working class party, a workers government.

But it is important to understand that the objective, scientific basis for socialism

in the United States already exists. And that, contrary to the current thinking, these advances do not stop the development of socialism, but make it all the more likely, all the more possible.

The most advanced scientific technology, created by capitalism, today lies unused because of capitalism, that is, private property and private profits. As long as there is private property and profits, scientific advances can never be utilized fully by the society as a whole. Look at how much was promised by the development of the computer and by space exploration and how little these things have actually improved the daily lives of people. Or how, in spite of the fact that the basic technology exists to stop pollution, the capitalists are incapable of developing this technology to end all pollution.

Under the best of circumstances, new technologies are developed only for their profit. There can never be a serious investment in technology that might advance the entire society or the entire world under capitalism today. For example, the technology exists for decent medical care for everyone in the U.S., but since this is not profitable for any given capitalist, medical care in the U.S. for the average person is worse than in many other industrial countries. Agriculture in the United States is the most advanced in the world. Yet, because it is not profitable to export this technology, the rest of the world starves.

And what is worse, under American imperialism, scientific advances are often developed solely for the purposes of destruction and war — the atomic bomb, napalm, Agent Orange. This is the state to which the American inventive genius has sunk.

U.S. capitalism had developed the most advanced productive apparatus in the world. But, today, for every factory built, the capitalists close two, even though America desperately needs new housing, new roads, a rebuilt railroad system, etc. U.S. farmers are paid not to grow crops while many in the United States go hungry and huge numbers of Africans and Indians die from a lack of food each

year.

Once the inventive genius of capitalist America, arising from the independent spirit of the people and the incalculable wealth of the land, brought the world everything from the method for blood transfusions to the electric light. Today, it brings only stagnation and suffering.

The wealth of America came from the wealth of an unconquered land, the super-exploitation of Black people under slavery, unprecedented advances in technology, and the exploitation of the American workers. After World War II, in addition to the continued exploitation of Black workers and the working class as a whole, American imperialism extracted wealth from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

But, American workers have fought American capitalists to get some of this wealth, and in so doing, created the highest standard of living for any working class in the world.

The American working class, since its inception over a hundred years ago, has refused to be treated like second-class citizens. It has fought for — and won — higher wages, better working conditions for itself. So today, American workers

still enjoy the over-all highest standard of living, more control over their working conditions, relatively long hours of leisure, good food, good schools for their children, and so on. These have been steps on the road toward socialism.

In order for American workers to go forward, in order for American workers to maintain the standard of living they have earned, in order for American workers to carry out their responsibilities to all workers and oppressed on this planet, it is necessary to reject the dying capitalism of the American ruling class and embrace socialism. The system that has brought such wealth, today, threatens to destroy it.

It is necessary to reject the sterile thinking that says that "market economics," "free enterprise," and other capitalist methods can solve the problems that these very methods have created.

Only socialism can open the future for the human race. And socialism is what the American working class will inevitably embrace as its own. — Fred Michaels

A letter to the striking miners

July 17, 1989

Dear fellow workers,

I send my sincere solidarity to you in your war against Pittston Coal Co.

I think we need a fighting labor party in this country. With a labor party we can defeat the rich capitalists who rule us, and we can establish workers power and build socialism.

We should look to Poland and the fighting workers there for inspiration.

When all of us unite, we can do anything!

I'm a janitor at an ice cream plant in Detroit.

Power to you all,

Steve Kovar

The crisis of Trotskyism and the way out . . .

Nearly ten years have passed since Trotskyists in the Socialist Workers Party formed opposition tendencies to fight for their principles against the Barnes leadership of the Socialist Workers Party. And over five years have passed since Trotskyists were expelled from the Socialist Workers Party, a very negative development that has seriously aggravated the crisis of Trotskyism in the United States.

There have been a number of attempts to build a Trotskyist alternative to the Socialist Workers Party, but very little progress has been made in this direction. Socialist Action, Spark, the Internationalist Workers Party and others, including our own Trotskyist Committee in Detroit, have won a very small number of young people to Trotskyism, largely students from middle class backgrounds, and this is good.

But there has been very little progress in winning young workers to Trotskyism, especially young Black workers, and in deepening the Trotskyists' roots in the most proletarian sectors of the working class. And none of the tendencies that has emerged in the crisis, has emerged as *the* Trotskyist organization, as *the* Trotskyist alternative to the Socialist Workers Party, with authority over all the Trotskyists on a national level.

This is largely because the American working class has made very little political progress in the last few years. Trotskyists are, above all, working class, thus their progress is totally dependent on the progress of their class.

Workers hostility, especially Black workers and industrial workers hostility, to the *top* leadership of the Democratic Party and to the *top* leadership of the trade unions and their policies is growing. This was or is manifest in the Jackson campaign, in the high rate of abstentions in the presidential elections, in the formation of the Harold Washington party in Chicago, in the Conyers campaign in Detroit, in the formation of New Directions in the UAW, in the support for Tony Mazzocchi's call for a labor party at the *Labor Notes* conference in Detroit, in the Eastern and Pittston strikes, and, in a different way, in the Black students' struggles, and in the growing interest in and sympathy for various Black nationalist tendencies.

However, the vast majority of workers are still in favor of capitalism. They still see socialism, at best, as utopian, at worst, as a dictatorship against the working class. In other words, the

bourgeoisie has still succeeded in channeling the workers hostility into bourgeois or petty bourgeois political alternatives (like the Jackson campaign, the Harold Washington party, or the Conyers campaign), and in confining it to the level of actions on specific questions that do not offer an alternative to the fundamental problems of the society as a whole (for example, New Directions, strikes, student struggles, etc.)

This is the sense in which we say that the American working class has made very little political progress in the last few years. The objective conditions necessary for socialism are more advanced in the United States than they are in any other country. But the subjective conditions, the consciousness or thinking of the American working class, is still very backward.

What can Trotskyists do about this situation? What can they do to help the American working class as a whole advance toward socialism, and, in this way, create the conditions in which the Trotskyists can progress, deepen their roots in the working class, resolve the crisis of Trotskyism, build the Trotskyist party, and lead the American working class to power?

Trotskyists have tried a number of things in an effort to come to grips with this problem. They have tried waiting, they have tried focusing on recruiting individuals, they have tried participating in and building various actions and movements in an effort to gain experience and authority, they have tried fighting for transitional demands that point toward socialism.

Each of these things may have had, and may have, a certain place in resolving this problem.

But none of them, separately or together, has resolved the problem.

We think that, in order to begin to resolve this problem, Trotskyist tendencies have to join forces and enter into a common political fight for socialism in the working class oriented toward building a working class socialist milieu in the largest possible way.

In order for Trotskyism to grow, it has to have fertile soil.

The Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party have completely abandoned the struggle for socialism in the American working class.

The Communist Party says that socialism is a

system in which the working class shares power with other classes, in which there is a mixed economy, and in which the working class still suffers from want and misery.

The Socialist Workers Party identifies socialism with Cuba and its election platform now contains nothing but democratic demands (30 for 40, affirmative action, and cancel the Third World debt).

As important as the overthrow of the imperialists in Cuba may be, as important as the establishment of a workers state in Cuba may be (albeit deformed, degenerated, or whatever), what exists today in Cuba is not socialism.

To say that Cuba is socialist is to say that socialism is *sharing* want and misery, not abolishing want and misery.

The problem with the Socialist Workers Party's policy of "talking socialism" to the workers, and its policy of making "socialist propaganda" in election campaigns, was that it was *not* "talking socialism," and it was *not* making "socialist propaganda." And it was not participating in workers struggles and offering them any way to advance toward socialism.

It is absolutely essential for Trotskyists to enter into a common fight for socialism in the working class in the largest possible way, not only in opposition to capitalism, but also in opposition to these petty bourgeois brands of socialism, that are not socialism at all, that contribute to turning the American working class against socialism.

What does it mean to enter into a common political fight for socialism in the working class?

First, it is necessary to develop propaganda for socialism oriented toward workers, it is necessary to distribute it in the largest possible way, and it is necessary to make it clear that this represents a joint effort on the part of the different Trotskyist tendencies.

There isn't enough propaganda for socialism oriented toward workers, what there is, is not distributed widely, and even the effect of this propaganda is undermined by the fact that it is usually done by one Trotskyist tendency alone. The lack of collaboration between Trotskyists in these efforts undermines their authority in the working class.

Speaking in one voice on this question, in op-

position to the capitalists, and in opposition to the petty bourgeois socialists, will significantly increase the Trotskyists' influence and authority in the working class.

Propaganda for socialism, oriented toward workers, is absolutely essential to help the American working class advance toward socialism. Without this, nothing is possible. But, in our opinion, this alone will not resolve the problem.

In order to help the American working class advance toward socialism, in order to create a working class socialist milieu in the American working class, in the largest possible way, in which the Trotskyists will be able to grow, it is necessary to help the American working class build its own political party. As long as the masses of American workers are dominated by the Republican and Democratic Parties, as long as there is no *large, working class* alternative to these parties, socialism and Trotskyism will remain on the fringes of the American working class.

And the only way that we see to make concrete progress, *at this time*, toward building an independent working class party, is with Tony Mazzocchi, his call for a labor party, and his supporters.

Thus we urge Trotskyists to enter into a common fight to:

- build support for Mazzocchi's call for a labor party;
- push Mazzocchi to carry out the plans that he has outlined to form a labor party now.

Mazzocchi's actual text, calling for a labor party, is very conciliatory toward the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie and toward the Democratic Party and its agents in the unions, and his conception of the labor party is very narrow. For example, he is not in favor of challenging union support to the Democratic Party at this time, he is not in favor of running candidates against the Republican and Democratic parties, and he calls for the formation of the party, not through a large, open, union conference or congress, but through the formation of a national committee that charters state and local committees. This is obviously aimed at keeping the party from getting out of control.

Mazzocchi also seems to call for a labor party as an alternative to strikes or demonstrations, rather than as a necessary part of such struggles.

His orientation shows that he is very much influenced by the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the labor aristocracy, and the labor bureaucracy. He represents the interests of a certain sector of the labor aristocracy, the labor bureaucracy, and the pro-labor petty bourgeois intelligentsia, not the interests of the most

proletarian sectors of the working class as the Trotskyists do.

Thus it would be a serious mistake to *embellish* Tony Mazzocchi in any way, or to *rely* on Tony Mazzocchi to *lead* the fight to form a labor party now. It would be a serious mistake to suggest that forming such a party would, in itself, resolve the fundamental problems of the American working class, or that it would be a Trotskyist party.

However, there is an obvious *class* and *political* difference between Tony Mazzocchi, and Lane Kirkland or Owen Bieber, who represent *nothing* but the interests of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement, and its oldest and most dangerous party, the Democratic Party.

Thus it is in the interests of the working class and the Trotskyists to *support* Tony Mazzocchi and his call for a labor party, *against* Kirkland, Bieber, Jesse Jackson, and others, and their call for undying loyalty to the Democratic Party. And it is in the interests of the working class and the Trotskyists to do everything in their power to push Mazzocchi and others to carry out their plans to form a labor party now.

Even a conciliatory, narrow labor party, heavily influenced by the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the labor aristocracy, is better than no labor party at all.

The fact that Mazzocchi is circulating questionnaires about a labor party, the fact that he called for a labor party at the *Labor Notes* conference and received so much support for it, the fact that he published an abridged version of his text in the *Guardian*, are all a result of the pressure of the working class for a political alternative to the Republican and Democratic parties, pressure that takes many different forms, including the formation of New Directions and the Eastern and Pittston strikes.

It is in the interests of the working class and the Trotskyists to *maximize* the pressure on the Tony Mazzochis, to force them to go as far as possible in actually forming a labor party now.

Obviously, if any one of the Trotskyist tendencies, all the Trotskyist tendencies put together, or some or all of the Trotskyists in alliance with other more working class tendencies, had the authority and the roots necessary to lead the formation of a labor party now, we would do it. And it would be a much better party. But, unfortunately, that's not the case.

Tony Mazzocchi and those around him are the only ones with the authority and roots, *at this time*, to lead the formation of a labor party, *at this time*.

Thus, it is in the interests of the working class and the Trotskyists, to support Mazzocchi's call for a labor party, and do everything in their power to force him to actually carry out his

plans now.

There is absolutely no guarantee that if Trotskyists make this fight that they will be successful, that they will actually succeed in forcing Mazzocchi to form a labor party now, or even if they are successful in pushing Mazzocchi to form a labor party now, that this party will go in a positive direction, that it won't die on the vine.

But whatever the outcome of this struggle at this time, fighting for Mazzocchi to actually carry out his plans, will help the Trotskyists gain more authority and roots in the working class; it will help them gain the experience and the cadres necessary to carry this struggle forward.

It is especially important for Trotskyists to make a fight among Black workers, and the Black people as a whole, to support Mazzocchi's call for a labor party and to push Mazzocchi to carry out his plans.

The *Guardian*, the semi-Stalinist publication from New York that published a Mazzocchi text calling for a labor party, has already published an attack on this text by Bill Fletcher, Jesse Jackson's "labor organizer" in Boston and an ex-Maoist.

Fletcher opposes Mazzocchi's call for a labor party, and calls for a "people's party" instead. He argues:

"That a third party should be based within the working class should be beyond debate. But this does not make such a party a 'labor party' as such. Instead, we should conceive of a new party as a partnership. Yes, the working class of all races/nationalities should be the base of such a party, but the national movements — as independent movements — should be seen as part of the party's central core. The national movements should not be visualized as guests to be invited to dinner after the meal is prepared and all the places are set. Rather, the national movements should be in on *creating the menu and the guest list itself*."

He also says:

"The building of local Rainbow Coalitions or Rainbow-type organizations which develop progressive candidates and candidacies, as well as promote a mass, progressive program, can help to prepare the groundwork for a successful third party ... Such efforts should combine work within the Democratic Party with efforts outside it ..."

Fletcher is obviously suggesting that Mazzocchi's labor party will be racist, that Blacks will have no real voice in this party, and he is obviously trying to turn Black workers and other Black people against Mazzocchi and his labor party from the very beginning. He does this in the name of a non-existent people's

party, in the name of working inside the very existent Rainbow Coalition, which is nothing but a front group for the Democratic Party, and in the name of working outside and inside the very existent Democratic Party. This party not only does not invite Blacks to plan the menu, the guest list, or invite them to dinner. This party has lived off profits reaped from the super-exploitation of Black labor — first Black slave labor and now Black wage labor.

One of the reasons that we are for a labor party is that the American working class is the only class that can achieve the liberation of the Black people, because it is the only class that has not profited from the super-exploitation of the Black workers and the oppression of the Black people as a whole. But in order to do this it has to have its own party, a party that belongs very clearly to it, and not to any other class. A labor party can be such a party. A "people's party" will never be such a party.

Moreover, Black workers, which constitute the overwhelming majority of the Black people, can dominate a labor party. They will never be able to dominate a "people's party," because in a "people's party," petty bourgeois politicians that represent other social classes will have just as much and more say than Black workers.

It is essential for Trotskyist partisans of a labor party to make a fight for a labor party among Black workers and other Black people as a way to advance the fight for the liberation of the Black people. If not, partisans of a labor party like Tony Mazzocchi, that have a more aristocratic, trade unionist orientation, and enemies of a labor party, like Bill Fletcher, that have a petty bourgeois democratic orientation, will wind up isolating a labor party from Black workers, and it will never really get off the ground, because Black workers constitute the most political, militant and dynamic section of the American working class.

This in turn will make it very difficult for the Trotskyists to advance.

Some Trotskyists associated with Socialist Action, Spark, the Internationalist Workers Party, and others, seem to think that a common fight along these lines, or other lines, is not possible. They point to previous experiences between Socialist Action and Spark, or previous experiences between Socialist Action and the Trotskyist Organization. We don't know much about the Socialist Action's and Spark's experiences with each other. So we can't speak about that. But we do know about the experiences of Socialist Action and the Trotskyist Organization.

The problem with the efforts to bring together Socialist Action and the Trotskyist Organization was that the political basis upon which the Trotskyist Organization was joining Socialist Action was not clear and agreed upon by all

parties concerned. Socialist Action's Political Committee and National Committee had one understanding, members of the Trotskyist Organization that politically broke with the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (today, the Detroit branch of Socialist Action) had another understanding, and members of the Trotskyist Organization that remained in political agreement with the International League (today the Trotskyist Committee of Detroit) had yet another understanding. And these political differences are expressed in the different texts that each adopted.* Thus it was possible for elements that opposed this process of political clarification aimed at unifying distinct Trotskyist tendencies and enlarging the Trotskyist movement to temporarily disrupt this process and exclude those who remained in political agreement with the International League from Socialist Action.

But the disruption was only temporary. The class struggle is already bringing these tendencies together again.

Since the *Labor Notes* conference, anyone who wishes to do so, can see that:

— Jesse Jackson's representatives have attacked Mazzocchi's call;

— the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party have been silent;

— Diane Feeley, of the Fourth Internationalist Caucus and Solidarity, and associated with the Mandel tendency in the United Secretariat has taken a "neutral" position; she only mentions Mazzocchi's call for a labor party in passing, and says: "But the existing bureaucratic unions are not willing or able to launch a class-based political party ..." (in *International Viewpoint*)

— Socialist Action, Spark, and the Trotskyist Committee are the only ones that we have seen that have published anything saying anything positive about Mazzocchi's call for a labor party.

They have also attached a certain amount of importance to the struggle for equality for Black people and other oppressed peoples and they have tried to draw out the working class and socialist character of the struggles taking place in China and elsewhere and the importance of socialism for American workers.

This shows that a certain basis exists for Trotskyists, at the very least, to explore the possibility of speaking with one voice on the questions of socialism, a labor party, and equality.

There are many things that can be done. They can meet, draw up a common declaration, plan common actions, common educationals, a common conference to discuss and map out plans. This in turn can pave the way for resolving the crisis of Trotskyism and unifying true

Trotskyist forces on a principled basis in a single party.

The crisis of Trotskyism is not going to be resolved in one fell swoop. Tendencies will come together, separate, and come together again on firmer foundations. But it will be resolved. — Margaret Guttschall

*Note: These texts are available from the Trotskyist Committee.

Notes . . .

Nicaragua Under Attack on 10th Anniversary of Revolution

The 10th anniversary of the Nicaraguan Revolution finds the Nicaraguan people living under the worst conditions since the revolution. Nicaragua has slipped below Haiti as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. This has been due chiefly to the attacks by US imperialism on the country, along with sabotage by the capitalists in Nicaragua most closely tied to it. The absence of any mobilizations in the U.S. in support of the Nicaraguan Revolution is an indication of the complete abandonment of the Nicaraguan Revolution by the left-wing Democrats and the impotence of the left-wing radicals who have relied on them so long to no avail. There must be support for Nicaragua from the American workers: an demand for reparations to be paid to Nicaragua, a cancellation of its debt.

Larry Davis

Larry Davis (now known as Adam Abdul-Hakeem) has been brutally beaten by prison guards in New York City jails. He had been sentenced to jail for a weapons charge resulting from his shoot out with police. That trial was one of the most famous in New York City. Although he is Black and killed New York Police in a shoot-out, he was acquitted because he acted in self-defense. The police wanted to kill him because he had, when he became an adult, quit the drug racket that the police were involved in, took drug money from them, and exposed the connections between the police and the drug dealers. We demand that he be released from prison to save his life. For more information write to: Adam Abdul-Hakeem Save Our Youth Coalition, c/o New Alliance, 2032 Fifth Ave., New York, NY.

Farrakhan speech attacked

Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, was nearly prevented from speaking to students at the University of Maryland March 29 after he was invited by Black students there. The university demanded \$14,000 in security fees, scheduled the speech in the oldest, most dilapidated building on campus, and surrounded the lecture with local and state police in full riot gear, with paddy wagons and dogs.

(Continued on page 10)

Candidates debate on Detroit's eastside

On Thursday, July 27, "We Care," an organization in the 7 Mile and Van Dyke area, a neighborhood in which there are a large number of Chrysler workers, held a public meeting at UAW Local 1700 hall, at which all the candidates for mayor and city council were invited to speak.

Many of the candidates for mayor and city council came to the meeting, each was allowed to speak for two minutes, and each was allowed to speak in the order that he had signed in for the meeting (ie., the first who signed in spoke first, the second who signed in spoke second, etc.)

Several working class candidates were present, including representatives of John Powers and Kathie Fitzgerald of the Socialist Workers Party, Shanta Driver, of the Fighting Workers Slate and the Revolutionary Workers League, Helen Halyard and D'Artagnan Collier of the Workers League, and Margaret Guttshall of the Trotskyist Committee.

There were also a small number of workers from the neighborhood at the meeting.

All in all, there were about 150 to 250 people at the meeting.

The hostility to Coleman Young and the current city administration was clear. Politicians who attacked Coleman Young and called for more money for jobs and schools got the greatest amount of applause, including working class candidates who said that they were socialists.

It was also clear that the capitalist candidates that were running for mayor and city council, had absolutely no solutions to the problems facing working people in Detroit.

At the end of the meeting, candidates who were willing to answer questions from members of the audience, were asked to line up at the front of the room. The coordinator picked questions submitted from members of the audience out of a hat. She asked candidates who wanted to answer a particular question to raise their hands. The first candidate to raise his hand answered first, the second to raise his hand answered second, etc.

It was rather obvious which candidates were capitalist candidates and which can-

didates were working class candidates, because the capitalist candidates were all dressed up in suits and ties and most of the working class candidates were not. In almost all cases the working class candidates were the first ones to raise their hands and the only ones who had any thing to say.

The bankruptcy of the capitalist candidates and the superiority of the working class candidates was especially obvious when one of the questions was: Where would you get the money to finance the Detroit school system?

All the working class candidates said things about taxing the rich and cutting public officials salaries. Not one capitalist candidate had one word to say about what to do about this critical problem in front of the Detroit working class and its children.

Unfortunately, even the working class candidates for mayor did not center their remarks on what steps the working class has to take to achieve its demands.

The representative of John Powers of the Socialist Workers Party, talked largely about supporting the Eastern Airlines workers strike.

Shanta Driver of the Fighting Workers Slate and the Revolutionary Workers League talked largely about fighting for jobs and other popular working class demands, and put forward a very confused, and confusing, call for "Black power" and "workers power."

Helen Halyard of the Workers League called for a labor party and socialism, but she did so in a very sectarian fashion, making no effort to really *explain* the importance of the fight for a labor party, and basically saying that the labor party must be socialist from the very beginning. (Why not call for a socialist labor party, or a Trotskyist party?)

Margaret Guttshall centered her remarks on the importance of the fight for a labor party, especially for Black workers and the Black people as a whole in Detroit, and on the fight for socialism as a realistic solution to the problems facing the masses of American workers.

While she was not the most popular candidate at the meeting, she did receive some

important support for her remarks.

After she spoke, some white workers approached her and asked her why she was so concerned about Blacks, and said: "What about poor whites?"

Margaret argued that the fight for equality for Black people was important for all working people in the U.S., that no one could be free as long as the Black people were oppressed, that this divided the working class, and allowed the capitalists to maintain their power.

Later, one of these workers evidently put the same question in the jar from which the coordinator was drawing questions. Margaret responded to the question in the same way. While most of the audience was silent, a small number of young Black workers clapped and shouted in agreement. Then, a very demagogic Black politician got up and said that he was interested in all people, that he wanted to put an end to busing and "reverse discrimination" and received a larger amount of applause from certain whites and Blacks in the audience.

The weakness of the working class organizations on this question was manifest. The representative of John Powers of the SWP had left, Shanta Driver of the Fighting Workers Slate and the Revolutionary Workers League had also left, and Helen Halyard of the Workers League was the only one left.

She spoke and said that she was not concerned about color, that she was only concerned about class, and did not say a word to defend the democratic rights of the Black workers and the Black people as a whole, against a petty bourgeois, demagogic Black politician, who pandered to the prejudices of white petty bourgeois and white workers, who think that the problems in Detroit are because of the Blacks, and who attacked the gains of the Black workers and the Black people, by saying that he wanted to end busing and "reverse discrimination," statements that are basically nothing but code words for saying it's time to put Blacks back in their place.

Halyard's remarks show what an aristocratic organization the Workers League

is, how much it is influenced by the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the labor aristocracy.

This meeting showed the importance of a common fight for a labor party, equality for the Black people and all oppressed peoples, and for socialism, in this election.

It's not too late to make this fight. Even at this late date, a common statement in favor of these goals, in favor of a vote for working class candidates on this basis, will have a positive impact on the outcome of this election. It will give workers a clear, united, working class alternative to vote for. — M.G.

Margaret Guttshall's speech

My name is Margaret Guttshall. Thank you for inviting me to speak here. I am running for city council in order to fight for a labor party, equality for the Black people and all oppressed peoples, and for socialism. I am especially interested in building support for the call for a labor party by Tony Mazzocchi, Secretary Treasurer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union.

Forming a labor party now is particularly important for Black workers and all Black people. The situation in Detroit shows that capitalists, even Black capitalist politicians like Coleman Young, are incapable of achieving equality for Black people. The American working class is the only class that can carry out the liberation of the Black people, because it is the only class that does not profit from their exploitation and oppression.

But in order to do this it has to have its own party. Supporting Tony Mazzocchi's call for a labor party, and pushing him to form this party now, can be a step in this direction.

Some of you may think that socialism may be a good idea, but very unrealistic. But I think that the workers revolutions that are developing in China, Poland, and the USSR against the privileged bureaucrats that dominate these countries, show that socialism is not only realistic, but also on the agenda. We need to fight for socialism in the United States, against the rich, privileged, and racist capitalists that run this country.

I ask all of you who share these goals to vote for me and for other working class candidates on September 12, such as John Powers of the Socialist Workers Party or Shanta Driver of the Fighting Workers Slate and the Revolutionary Workers League. Thank you.

Notes (continued)

Soviet Miners Strike

Over 150,000 coal miners of the Siberian coalfields of the Soviet Union went on strike on July 11. They were joined within the week by miners in the Ukraine and also miners from the Central Asian region of Karaganda. We support the demands of the miners in their letter to the Soviet government: "that the population in Siberia and the Far East should be supplied with food in accordance with dietitian's norms, that privileges to officials should be abolished, and that a new national constitution be published for discussion immediately and adopted not later than Nov. 7, 1990. . ."

At the same time as the strikes, there were struggles by oppressed Georgians who seized guns and automatic rifles and fought police. Gorbachev claims to support the miners, but he wants to bring capitalist methods into the mines and encourage the further development of a pro-capitalist layer of managers, entrepreneurs. Thus, Gorbachev wants to dismantle the centralized planning, nationalized property and the monopoly of foreign trade which constitute the foundations for the development of socialism. The U.S. applauds Gorbachev's response because it too wants to bring capitalism into the USSR.

The program of the Fourth International says: "A revision of planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers' cooperative should control and quality and price of products." With this program, it is possible to support the working class demands and attack those policies influenced by or in the direct interest of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie.

Free Gene Pepi!

Gene Pepi, a candidate of the Peace and Freedom Party for California State Assembly seat near San Francisco, and a supporter of the Internationalist Workers Party (IWP), has been charged with six felonies, all stemming from an allegation that he did not live where he was registered to vote. A defense committee has been formed demanding that all the charges be dropped. The committee's efforts are supported by Socialist Action, the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Socialist League. The Trotskyist Committee endorses the committee and its work. It can be reached at Gene Pepi Defense Committee, 3309 1/2 Mission Street, #223, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Poland

Comrades of the International League recently visited Poland in order to re-establish contacts with supporters of our Polish newspaper, Walka Klas, and make new contacts among the growing working class opposition in Solidarity, in favor of socialism, and deeply interested in Trotskyism.

Meetings were held with militants and leaders of the PPS, Polish Socialist Party, the party with the most support in the working class that is pledged to socialism and against the Stalinist bureaucracy. As well meetings were held with supporters of the United Secretariat group in Poland, and opposition groups in Solidarity and in the official trade unions.

China

The repression by the Chinese bureaucracy continues against the workers and students who fought against their corruption, their privileges and in defense of the conquests of the Chinese Revolution. This repression must be stopped!

In an act of solidarity with the Chinese workers and students, and in an effort to assist them in building a Trotskyist party in China, a delegation of militants of

Socialist Action just returned from a ten-day trip to China. In a report given by Nat Weinstein in Chicago, he confirmed the working class character of the Chinese revolution, the defense of the true gains of the Chinese revolution (the destruction of the warlords, the nationalization of the means of production, the monopoly on foreign trade), and that what precipitated the revolution were the pro-capitalist policies of the bureaucracy.

Changes in Our Platform

In April, we published a platform for workers, their organizations, and their candidates, to fight for in the Detroit elections, and we initiated a fight for a united workers slate for Detroit mayor and city council.

Since then, we have had an opportunity to discuss our draft platform with workers who read *Truth* and with our comrades in the International League (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International).

As a result of these discussions, we have decided to make some changes in our draft platform. We have decided to:

1. Strengthen the point on the labor party by making it more concrete, by adding steps that workers can take to push Tony Mazzocchi, and other union leaders for a labor party, to form a labor party now.
2. Strengthen the point on equality for Black people and other oppressed peoples by making it more concrete.
3. Add a point for socialism.

We have been socialists for many years, and we have been involved in writing platforms for election campaigns for many years.

But this is the first time that we have decided to include a point in favor of socialism in our platform for our election campaign. (See back page.)

Why have we decided to make this change?

We are still in favor of the largest possible fight for a labor party, and the largest possible fight for equality for Black people and other oppressed peoples. And we are still against making agreement with the fight for socialism, a precondition for a common fight for a labor party or for equality. Fights for a labor party and for equality for Black people and other oppressed can be important steps toward socialism.

But it is also clear that workers are not going to reach socialist consciousness and organization simply spontaneously in the course of the struggle. Nor even simply by fighting for transitional demands that point toward socialism, like nationalization of the banks or basic industries without compensation and under workers control. Revolutionary propaganda against capitalism and in favor of socialism is a necessary part of the struggle for workers to reach socialist consciousness and organization.

This revolutionary propaganda for socialism is becoming especially important at this time for a number of reasons:

— The economic, social, and political crisis in the United States and elsewhere, and the workers revolutions developing in Poland, China, and the USSR are making workers in the U.S. more and more interested in socialism.

— Bush, and the American capitalist class as a whole are trying to stop this development by using all the resources at their disposal to intensify their propaganda blaming the crises in Poland, China, and the USSR on socialism.

— The privileged bureaucrats in Poland, China and the USSR and their supporters in the various Communist Parties are intensifying their collaboration with the capitalists in attacking the socialist consciousness and organization of the workers.

This is why we have decided to make propaganda for socialism an essential part of our election campaign. We urge all working class, socialist groups, especially Trotskyist groups like Socialist Action, Spark, and others, to join in a common fight for the goals outlined in this platform.—M.G.

What is the Trotskyist Committee?

The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit, Supporter of the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, is a revolutionary workers group in Detroit.

The Trotskyist Committee calls itself "Trotskyist" because of Leon Trotsky and his comrades. They continued the struggle for the socialist revolution after Stalin betrayed it, founded the Fourth International to lead this struggle, and devoted their lives to this cause.

The Trotskyist Committee is open to young workers, women workers, and all workers and militants who are for:

- equality and the right to self-determination for the Black people and all oppressed peoples;
- the workers against the bosses and their agents in the unions;
- the socialist revolution;
- the Fourth International;
- the struggle of the International League for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The International League is for rebuilding the Fourth International. This means rooting Trotskyism in the working class, winning fresh working class forces to the revolutionary workers cause, and uniting truly working class, revolutionary Trotskyist forces on a principled basis.

The Trotskyist Committee welcomes all who share these goals, are prepared to accept its decisions, contribute financially to its work, and take part in its work on a regular basis.

The Trotskyist Committee concentrates its work on developing and spreading revolutionary propaganda, educating workers as revolutionaries, and on recruiting workers, and militants from other social classes truly devoted to the working class, to the revolutionary workers cause.

As Leon Trotsky said: "... in the final analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided upon American soil."

And, "I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International, go forward!"

Thus we urge young workers, women workers, and all workers and militants in the Detroit area, to seriously consider joining the Trotskyist Committee and devoting yourselves to this struggle. There is a place for each and every one of you, in this struggle.

Revolutionary Educational Class

What is socialism?

(Including a presentation by Fred Michaels and discussion)

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Building the Trotskyist Committee

In the last few weeks we have collected nearly 800 signatures to put our candidate for city council on the ballot. We have also sold eight copies of *Truth* at the Ford Rouge plant, to Wayne County Community College students, at the candidates rally on the Eastside, and to militants attending a Socialist Action meeting in Chicago. The decrease in sales of *Truth* and *The Fourth International* is not a result of a decrease in interest in our struggle. On the contrary. It is a result of the fact that we have had to devote an unusual amount of time to collecting signatures to put our candidate on the ballot and to resolving some technical problems with *Truth* and *The Fourth International*.

We also had an opportunity to discuss our platform further with readers of *Truth*. One discussion with a young Black worker was particularly interesting. It showed how much some young Black workers want the Black people to have their own nation, and how important it is for revolutionary socialists to defend this right. It also showed how certain Black nationalist groups call for the right to self-determination for the Black people, but do not put forward any way that this can actually be achieved.

The working class is the class that has the power to liberate the Black people. But precisely because it is the working class, it will not stop with the liberation of the Black people, it will liberate the working class as well, in other words, it will begin to build socialism.

We urge young workers who share these goals, to join the Trotskyist Committee. — M.G.

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TRUTH

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A Labor Party, Equality, Socialism! A working class and socialist platform

1. For a labor party now!

- Support Tony Mazzocchi's (Secretary-Treasurer; Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union) call for a labor party; urge all union locals to adopt resolutions supporting Mazzocchi's call and urging Mazzocchi to form a labor party now.
- Vote for working class candidates for all offices.
- For a one-day national work stoppage in solidarity with Eastern and Pittston workers and against all union-busting and anti-labor laws.
- For emergency measures to combat layoffs, plant-closings, union-busting, unemployment, and poverty now, including: (1) Nationalize, without compensation, all enterprises engaged in layoffs, plant-closings, and union-busting; reorganize them as public utilities under workers control. (2) Cut public officials' salaries to the level of union workers wages; cut tax breaks for the rich; cut funds to the police and the military; nationalize banks and combine them into a single state bank under workers control. (3) Increase the minimum wage; cost-of-living allowances for all workers; cut overtime; cut the work-week without cutting pay; a program of public works and services to provide needed services and jobs for unemployed workers at union wages.

2. Equality for the Black people and all oppressed peoples.

- Defend and extend affirmative action programs.
- Full economic, social and political equality for the Black people; for the right of the Black people to self-determination, to establish their own nation

on American soil, if they chose to do so.

- Workers defense guards to protect the Black people; no confidence in the racist police or courts; for swift and merciless punishment of all participants in racist crimes.
- Abolish all restrictions on immigration and citizenship. Cancel all debts to U.S. banks from oppressed nations. Stop U.S. aid to reactionary forces in Central America, Southern Africa, and to the State of Israel. Money for the Nicaraguan people, not the contras.
- For economic, social, and political equality for women.

3. For socialism.

- No to private ownership of the basic resources of the society; no to the capitalists' exploitation of the workers labor.
- For a workers government; for the destruction of the capitalists power; for taking over the banks, basic industry, transportation and large-scale agriculture; for centralized planning of the production and distribution of basic necessities in accord with the needs of the people.
- Decent jobs, wages, homes, childcare, schools, and medical care for all working people.
- Toward a classless, communist society, in which there is no top and no bottom, no rich and no poor, just people working together for the common good.
- Defend the gains of the socialist revolution in the USSR, Eastern Europe, China and Cuba; keep the U.S. out; oust the privileged bureaucrats.

Workers candidates for mayor and city council

For Mayor:

John Powers, UAW Local 174, Socialist Workers Party
Shanta Driver, SEIU, Local 79, Revolutionary Workers League
(Vote for one)

For City Council:

Margaret Guttshall, Trotskyist Committee
Kathie Fitzgerald, Machinists Local 141, Socialist Workers Party
John Riehl, AFSCME Local 207, Revolutionary Workers League
Judy Wright, UAW Local 600, Revolutionary Workers League
(Vote for all)

Note: The Workers League is also running candidates for mayor and city council, Helen Halyard and D'-Artagnan Collier. But we urge workers *not* to vote for these candidates because they have been using their election campaigns to build support for the capitalist police and the capitalist courts against other working class militants and their organizations, like Mark Curtis and the Socialist Workers Party.



Shanta Driver



John Powers