

# 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)

# Why Ford plans to sell Rouge Steel and what workers can do

## U.S. out of Panama now!

On October 3, some military leaders in Panama attempted to overthrow General Noriega. Noriega defeated the attempt and executed some of those who initiated it.

U.S. imperialists made absolutely no attempt whatsoever to hide their sympathy for those attempting to overthrow Noriega. U.S. troops assisted the coup leaders by blocking access to sections of Panama City. And the U.S. undoubtedly hired and paid them to make this attempt, as it has done so many times in the past (Cuba, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina)

and continues to do today (Nicaragua, ...).

American workers must fight for the Panamanian people's right to self-determination, for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces in Panama, for the immediate and unconditional return of the Panama Canal to the people of Panama.

American workers are not thieves like American bosses. They have no need for a huge imperialist army to take what doesn't belong to them. — Truth

On Friday, October 13, the Ford Motor Company announced that it reached an agreement to sell Rouge Steel.

Ford Motor Company men say that making steel is no longer part of their "core operation," and there is a certain amount of truth in this statement.

The basic purpose of the Ford Motor Company is not to produce steel, rubber, glass, or even cars. The basic purpose of this company is to make money for its owners, no matter how much it may hurt the workers, their families, and the rest of the society.

Now that Ford Motor Company owners are finding that they cannot make as much money in these industries as they used to, they are withdrawing their investments from these industries.

Ford just decided to use its profits from car production — a \$10 billion cash surplus — to buy up some savings and loan associations. Buying these savings and loan associations is guaranteed money in the pockets of the rich families that own Ford in Bloomfield Hills, Grosse Pointe, and elsewhere. Reagan, Bush, and Republicans and Democrats in Congress decided to "bail out" these savings and loan associations with workers' tax dollars.

The policies of the Ford Motor Company — and of other large private corporations in mining, steel, rubber, glass, vehicle production, etc. — are leading to the *destruction* of basic industry in the United States, including the plant, equipment, and organized workers and their families that are part of that industry.

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If you want equality for the Black people and jobs ...

# Don't vote for Young or Barrow! Don't stay home! Win support for Mazzocchi's call for a labor party!

Many news commentators are now saying that Coleman Young will certainly win in the coming election.

This makes it all the more important for the masses of the Black people and the workers in the Detroit area to prepare to make a political fight against him, for an independent working class alternative to Young and his party.

The *Detroit Free Press* recently published an interview with Young.

One of the most interesting things about this interview was what Coleman Young did *not* say.

That vast majority of Black people who voted for Coleman Young over 15 years ago, and have continued to do so, did so because he, unlike his opponent, promised to fight the racist forces that dominate this city.

Yet Coleman Young did not say a single word about the struggle against these forces, for equality for the Black people.

Is this struggle over? Has everything been accomplished? If so, why doesn't Young talk about this great accomplishment? If not, why doesn't Young talk about what he plans to do to advance the struggle for equality for the Black people?

Young does not say a word about this, because Young, as mayor, has done absolutely nothing to advance the struggle for equality for the masses of Black people. He *used* the masses of Black people and their desire for equality as a battering ram to get a privileged position for himself, his friends, and to slightly enlarge the

Black bourgeoisie and the Black middle class. But the masses of Black people in the Detroit area still live in a *ghetto* that is completely segregated

about were in many cases features of the 70s?

“Young: The economic problems carried over into a near collapse, as you

**“ . . . Coleman Young did not say a single word about the struggle against these forces, for equality for the Black people. Is this struggle over? Has everything been accomplished? If so, why doesn't Young talk about this great accomplishment? If not, why doesn't Young talk about what he plans to do to advance the struggle for equality for the Black people?”**

from the rest of the society. There is still a totally unequal number of Blacks in the worst jobs, the worst homes, and the worst schools. And a totally unequal number in the best of same.

While Young does not say a word about the struggle for equality for the Black people, he does try to offer some explanation for obvious problems:

“Question: Are there parts of (your) record that you are not happy about?”

“Young: Certainly. Most of those parts, I and we had no control of. The collapse of the economy that took place shortly after I took office, the Arab oil boycott and the subsequent disaster that came to this city in particular since it is an automobile manufacturing city, that was a national phenomenon. The consequences of that economic collapse, such as the enforced layoffs of personnel across the board ... There are many regrettable incidents.

“Question: What about the period since 1980? The things that you talked

remember, in 1981, when we had to submit to a three-point program in order to rescue this city from bankruptcy. Problems that begin in one decade carry over into the next decade, sometimes into the following decade.

“Question: Do you foresee a time when we have really recovered from that setback?”

“Young: Not until we have restored the economic base in this city. The key problem of Detroit is jobs and economic base. Jobs by the thousands left this city; the reason that people left primarily is that jobs left ...”

What Young says is a *lie* designed to save himself.

He talks about the economy as if it's the weather or a plague of locusts, something that men cannot control. “Jobs” don't just get up and walk away. Real people decide to maintain or eliminate certain jobs.

The fact is that the capitalists have decided that they don't want to keep



investing as much in basic industry, and that they don't want to keep investing as much in the Detroit area, and Coleman Young has done absolutely nothing to stop them. In fact, he's covered for them and catered to their every whim, including their disgusting proposal to start a gambling center in Detroit so that young people could get jobs waiting on these scum.

There is nothing Coleman Young can do about the capitalists, because he is tied lock, stock and barrel to these people. But there is something a working class mayor can and will do. He'll fight for dividing work among all workers, for a program of public works to provide jobs at union wages at the expense of the rich, for nationalizing banks and enterprises that try to withdraw from the Detroit area and for turning them into public utilities under workers control.

Unfortunately, there is no working class candidate for mayor on the ballot in this election. But there can be in the next election. But in order to make this happen, workers have to begin to build their own political party now. This is why we urge workers not only to support the call for a labor party based on the unions by Tony Mazzocchi, Secretary-Treasurer of the OCAW, but also to help build support for this call, and to push Mazzocchi to actually form this party now.—M. Guttsall

### **New Directions Conference**

**October 20, 21, 22.  
St. Louis, Missouri**

**For further information in  
UAW Region 1A:  
Call 272-1455 or 261-6195  
Write Box 9403, Livonia,  
MI 48151**

## **Rouge Steel . . .**

(Continued from front page)

Ford's decision to sell Rouge Steel, and take another step in breaking up the historic Rouge production complex — which was built with workers' tax dollars, by workers and which represents an historic gain in the development of industry in the United States and in the world — shows that workers can no longer leave management of basic industry in the hands of "private entrepreneurs." They may have played a progressive role in the past, but they are no longer doing so.

Now is the time to fight for *workers management of basic industry*.

The working class is the only class capable of managing basic industry because it is the only class that stands to gain from the development of large-scale, centralized industry. The larger and more centralized industry is, the larger and more centralized the working class is, in other words, *the stronger* the working class is. What is more, the working class is the only class that is trained, by the very nature of its work, to work together, and to be disciplined, which makes it superior to all the other classes, which are trained in the spirit of backward, individualistic, dog-eat-dog competition. Workers can use the assistance of scientists, engineers, and technicians to help them manage industry, but they must be totally devoted to the workers and strictly subordinate to them.

In order to fight for workers management of basic industry, workers need *unions without rich bureaucrats and their own political party* based on the unions.

This is why we, socialists, urge workers in the UAW to support the New Directions tendency in the UAW *against* the Administration Caucus in the UAW, whose top leadership wines and dines with the bosses and lives in luxury while the workers and their families suffer. And this is why we urge

workers to support the call for a labor party by Tony Mazzocchi, Secretary-Treasurer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, *against* the heads of the Teamsters, the AFL-CIO, and the UAW (William McCarthy, Kirkland, and Bieber) who work for the Republican and Democratic Parties, which are completely controlled by the bosses.



At the same time, it would be foolish for workers to give New Directions, Tony Mazzocchi, or anyone else, a blank check.

It is necessary to take up an all out fight against the sale of Rouge Steel, and all the other anti-worker decisions that GM, Ford, Chrysler, and others are making. Workers *do* have the power to stop these decisions. They have to use it, and be prepared to break with anyone and everyone who gets in their way.

The first step is for all tendencies in the UAW that are against the sale of Rouge Steel, to organize the largest possible meeting of all workers that oppose the sale in order to discuss what to do, decide what to do, and elect representatives strictly accountable to them to carry out their decisions.

Workers associated with New Directions, Workers Against Concessions, and socialists, should be in the front ranks of this struggle. It is an opportunity to show the extent to which they differ from the rich bureaucrats that now run the UAW and live very comfortably while the workers and their families suffer.—Truth

## More selections from Mazzocchi's statement for a labor party

"4. Why would anyone want to join such a party?

"In our opinion, large numbers of working people are alienated from politics as usual. Since the mid-1960s, workers have been victims of a coordinated corporate assault on their living standards, their working conditions, and their trade union rights. This experience has left millions disillusioned with both the Democratic and the Republican parties.

"We think that a sizeable number of people would willingly pay one or two dollars a month to an independent labor party that both offered a clear alternative to the corporate agenda being pushed by the Democrats and the Republicans, and was sponsored by legitimate trade unions and trade union leaders.

"And this conviction is based on more than simply instinct. We have conducted workshops on labor and politics with hundreds of trade unionists across the United States during the last few years. In each case, a sizeable portion of those attending voted in favor of the trade unions organizing an independent labor party.

"In addition, we have begun to administer a political action questionnaire on a local-by-local basis in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), a copy of which is attached. The first returns show even stronger support for an independent labor party (probably because of the results of the recent Presidential elections) than in any of our pre-election educationals. To date, 59% of those polled agreed that "it's time for unions to build a new political party of working people independent of the two major parties."

## OCAW Political Action Questionnaire

*The questionnaire consists of a short note from Tony Mazzocchi and 9 questions. Below we reprint the entire questionnaire.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As Secretary-Treasurer of the OCAW, I am responsible for directing our political action over the next three years.

Like you, I am concerned that the issues facing working people are not being heard in the halls of government. And I am determined to do something about that.

In order to develop the best possible strategy for the OCAW members, I need to find out how you feel about some very basic issues. Enclosed is a brief questionnaire that would greatly help me in that effort. Please take a few minutes to fill it out.

Thank you for your time and concern.

In solidarity,  
Tony Mazzocchi

1. What do you feel are the top three (3) **problems facing working people** today? (Please check only three or write them in below.)

Job Security  Wages  Health and Safety  Organizing  Pension Funds  Health Benefits  Social Security  Environmental Problems  Affordable Housing  Education  Plant Closings  New Technology  Other.

2. In your opinion, what kind of job is the labor movement doing to promote the interests of working people through **political action**? (Please check one of the following.)

A very good job.  A good job.  A poor job.  A very poor job.

3. Which of the following three statements do you **most agree with**? (Please check one.)

"The Democratic Party best represents the interests of working people."

"The Republican Party best represents the interests of working people."

"Neither major political Party best represents the interests of working people."

Comments

4. Do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statement? (Please check one answer).

"Both the Democratic and Republican parties **care more about the interests of big business** than they do about the interests of working people."

Agree?  Disagree?  Not Sure?  
Comments

5. Do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statement? (Please check one answer).

"Unions should **not** get involved in politics."

Agree?  Disagree?  Not Sure?  
Comments

6. Do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statement? (Please check one answer).

"Unions should do all they can to help the **Democratic Party**."

Agree?  Disagree?  Not Sure?  
Comments

7. Do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statement? (Please check one answer).

"Unions should do all they can to help the **Republican Party**."

Agree?  Disagree?  Not Sure?  
Comments

8. Do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statement? (please check one answer).

"The best way for unions to achieve their political goals is to support the efforts of **Reverend Jesse Jackson** to reform the Democratic Party."

Agree?  Disagree?  Not Sure?  
Comments

9. Do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statement?

"It's time for Labor to build a **new political party of working people** independent of the two major parties."

Agree?  Disagree?  Not Sure?  
Comments

## Support for a labor party and Mazzocchi's call

Below we reprint selections from two articles that have appeared in the newspaper, *Socialist Action*, published by the Socialist Action group, a working class Trotskyist organization. Both articles show this organization's support for a labor party.

The first article is from the October issue and is entitled "Dinkins campaign offers no solutions for Blacks and workers." In this article, Chris Bieler of New York City argues that a vote for Dinkins is not in the best interest of Black and working people in New York. Instead, a fight for a labor party is the road forward.

The second article is from the June issue and is entitled, "Labor Notes conference charts 'New Directions.'" In this article, Kevin FitzPatrick says that Mazzocchi's statements in favor of a labor party, contributed to building support for a labor party.

### Dinkins and the labor party

"On Sept. 12, Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins defeated incumbent Edward Koch in the Democratic Party primary for mayor. Given the dominance of the Democratic Party in New York City politics, it is likely that Dinkins will go on to defeat Republican nominee Rudolph Giuliani to become New York's first Black mayor. . . .

"But a Dinkins victory will not make any fundamental difference in the lives of Black people in New York City — any more than the election of Black mayors in Los Angeles, Gary, Philadelphia, Chicago, or Washington, D.C., did. . . .

"But the biggest growth industry in New York City is not luxury condominiums — it is the drug industry. The Manhattan district attorney's office estimates that income from drug sales amounted to \$80 billion last year

alone. (The annual budget of New York City is \$26 billion). The drug

**"A labor party, based on the trade unions ... would be "tough" with ... the real special interests, the banks and corporations, who have bled this city dry. . . ."**

business employs an estimated 300,000 people. . . .

"Koch made a campaign point about the fact that unemployment is at its lowest in New York City in 20 years — under 6 percent. It is a mark of this so-called 'prosperity,' however, that the unemployment rate for Blacks in the ghetto is 49.6 percent.

"It is not as if there is no productive work to be done. It is estimated that it will take \$2.5 billion to repair the city's 2000 neglected and collapsing bridges alone. The bridges, tunnels, water system, subways, and highways are in desperate need of repair. And then there is the need for decent low-cost housing.

"Anyone who attended the recent 400,000-strong Labor Day parade could not fail to be impressed by the power of labor, even if it was used to back Dinkins.

A labor party, based on the trade unions, would reject the framework of the debate dictated by the Democrats. It would be "tough" with "special interests" all right — the *real* special interests, the banks and corporations, who have bled this city dry. . . ."

### Mazzocchi's call for a labor party

"The 1989 Labor Notes Conference, held in Southfield, Mich., on May 19-21 (with an official registration of 1010), reflected both the developments inside the unions and the thinking of the most progressive elements of the labor movement today. . . .

"One truly new direction for labor would be to head toward a labor party. Here too, the conference revealed some changes. While the Friday night panel revolved around how much labor should support Jesse Jackson, with one speaker flatly opposing a leading role for workers and counterposing a 'people's party' to a labor party, the balance began to shift during the conference.

"The Saturday night speech of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) Secretary-Treasurer Tony Mazzocchi made a contribution. Despite all the murkiness and indecisiveness of his proposals, the idea that a labor party should be considered came through.

"By Sunday afternoon, even Victor Reuther (who, together with his late brother, Walter, helped to scuttle the labor-party movement in the 1930s and 1940s) came out in favor of a labor party. Hundreds of militant unionists left the conference with this new idea firmly planted in their minds."

**Show Mazzocchi's statement and questionnaire to your fellow workers! Push for your unit to support Mazzocchi's call!**

(For copies of this material contact the OCAW, Office of the Secretary-Treasurer, PO Box 2812, Denver, CO 80201 or a Truth distributor.)



## Black working class youth and jobs . . .

(Continued from back page)

However, after the popular insurrection in Detroit in 1967, after the formation of organizations like the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, after the wave of sit-down strikes in the inner-city plants in the early 70s, and the struggles against the racist police force, bankers decided to begin to withdraw their investments in Detroit.

They found that they could make higher profits in other ways (drugs, speculation, real estate, etc.). Even when bankers decided to continue investing in car production, they preferred to make their investments in areas where there is a more oppressed workforce (Mexico, South Korea) or a more docile workforce (the South).

Thus, over the last twenty years or so, bankers and businessmen have been gradually withdrawing their investments from the auto industry and other industries, in Detroit and in the Detroit area.

At the same time, they have continued their racist hiring policies.

For example:

— A white worker that we know was sitting in a McDonald's in the suburbs; a young Black man came up and asked the manager for a job; the manager said that they did not need anyone at that time; the white worker went up to the manager a few minutes later, asked the same question, was asked to fill out an application, and was hired that afternoon.

— Another white skilled worker that we know was listening to his boss while his boss was sorting through applications for a position as a technician; every time his boss came to an application with information that suggested that the applicant was Black (names or addresses that suggested the applicant was Black; membership in a Black student association, etc.), the boss threw the application aside.

What should be done about this?

Obviously, young Blacks from working class families can and will, study hard, work hard, and do everything that they can

to find the best jobs that they can and combat the discrimination against them as individuals.

But it is also necessary to make a *collective, political* struggle for *equality* for the Black people and for emergency measures to provide jobs at the expense of the rich.

For example:

— A fight for all employers to hire more Blacks in all positions until the percentage of Blacks in all positions is equal to or greater than their percentage in the local population.

— A fight to divide work among all workers without cutting pay; cut overtime; cut the workweek; hire more workers at the expense of the rich.

— A fight for a program of public works to provide jobs at union wages at the expense of the rich.

— A fight for nationalization of enterprises that discriminate against Blacks, cut jobs, and/or close plants; turn them into public utilities controlled by workers.

But even a fight for these measures is only a *partial solution* to the problems facing young Black working class men and women looking for decent jobs.

We need socialism.

Socialism is a system in which the workers have their own government, own all of the most important resources of the society (the banks, basic industry, large-scale agriculture, transportation . . .), and organize the production and distribution of basic necessities in accord with the needs of the people. It is a first step 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.

In this society, each and every young man or woman from a working class family, from all races and nationalities, will not only have a decent job. Each and every one will be able to develop to his full potential. They will scale heights that we have not yet even imagined. — Truth.

## Equality for Black and working class women

The U.S. Congress just voted to allow federal funds to be used to pay for abortions if a woman has become pregnant as a result of rape or incest. (Before, they allowed federal funds to be used only if a woman's life was in danger.) And the Florida State Legislature just rejected a whole series of measures restricting the democratic right to abortion.

These decisions are definitely victories for the fight for the democratic rights of women. They are a result of the mass demonstrations in defense of this basic democratic right, and of the threat to break with the Democratic Party made by many of the most militant middle class women at the National Organization of Women (NOW) conference this summer.

It shows that Black and working class women and all oppressed people have everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by *fighting*, by *breaking* with the Democratic Party and forming their own, working class party.

We urge all Black and working class women and their organizations to support and participate in the demonstration for the democratic right to abortion on November 12, in Washington, D.C., initiated by NOW.

For further information about the march, and for transportation from Detroit, call the SE Michigan Coalition for Reproductive rights at 446-5204. — M.G.

# Why isn't the socialist movement growing in the Detroit working class?

In the last issue of *Truth*, we said that a small number of workers voted for our socialist candidate for city council, and for other working class or socialist candidates, including some who had never done so before. We also said that this was a very positive development, but that it did not offset the fall in the number of workers who voted for working class or socialist candidates for mayor.

The number of workers who voted for socialist candidates for mayor is very important. It is a sign of the extent to which the socialist movement has grown, or not grown.

Unfortunately, the results in the Detroit primary elections show:

— the number of people who voted in this election doubled, and in some cases even tripled, over the number who voted in the 1985 election;

— opposition to the most well-known bourgeois candidate, Coleman Young, has grown;

— support for socialist candidates for mayor has not grown, in fact, it has fallen, for the second election in a row.

Why?

We think that the problem is not in the objective conditions, or with the workers, but in the socialist movement itself.

## The socialist movement

The vast majority of tendencies in Detroit that claim to be socialist are not fighting for socialism.

The Communist Party and the Workers World Party have a policy of supporting capitalist candidates like Coleman Young or John Conyers. Labor Notes and Solidarity (some of whose members claim to be Trotskyists or to represent the Fourth International) did not support any working class or socialist candidates in the election.

These are probably the largest groups in Detroit that claim to be socialist, thus it is not surprising that support for socialist candidates, or for socialism, is not growing in the Detroit working class.

## Votes for Working Class or Socialist Candidates for Detroit Mayor and City Council

<b>1977</b>	For city council: . . . . . 0
For mayor:	<b>1989</b>
Tracy Hawkins	Shanta Driver
(Socialist Workers Party) . . . . . 932	(Revolutionary Workers League) . 157
For city council: . . . . . ?	John Powers
<b>1981</b>	(Socialist Workers Party) . . . . . 422
For mayor:	Helen Halyard
Phil Shannon	(Workers League) . . . . . 112
(Socialist Workers Party) . . . . . 1561	Total . . . . . 691
David Heff.	For city council:
(Trotskyist Organization) . . . . . 1361	John Riehl
Total . . . . . 2922	(Revolutionary Workers League) 3147
For city council: . . . . . ?	Judy Wraight
<b>1985</b>	(Revolutionary Workers League) 2694
Kibwe Diarra	Kathie Fitzgerald
(Socialist Workers Party) . . . . . 152	(Socialist Workers Party) . . . . . 9828
Barbara Putnam	Margaret Guttshall
(Trotskyist Organization) . . . . . 597	(Trotskyist Committee) . . . . . 2215
Helen Halyard	D'Artagnan Collier (Workers League)
(Workers League) . . . . . 420	. . . . . 2071
Total . . . . . 1169	

The Workers League, the Revolutionary Workers League, and the Socialist Workers Party did run candidates. Unfortunately, they placed little or no emphasis on the fight for equality for the Black people or for socialism.

These questions are very important. The most working class sections of the working class in Detroit are Black. They have been waging a tenacious struggle for equality for the Black people for many years, and they are not going to listen to any political tendency that does not prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that it is on their side. They also are not going to vote for a socialist candidate unless they are at least open to socialism. And they are not going to be open to socialism if socialists do not fight for socialism.

The Workers League's platform actually suggested that the struggle for equality for the Black people was divisive; it mentions socialism in passing but it does not explain what it is in terms that workers can appreciate. Worst of all, they did not even use their election campaign to build support for their official platform. They used it to build support for their slanders against the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and other

working class tendencies (that the SWP is run by police agents, that Mark Curtis is a rapist, etc.). Thus we urged workers not to give any support in any way to any of their candidates.

The Revolutionary Workers League's platform called for support to various democratic demands, and we urged workers to support these candidates against the capitalist candidates. However, like the Workers League, they placed little emphasis on the fight for equality for the Black people and they only mentioned socialism in passing. Worst of all, they included a number of extremely thoughtless and irresponsible demands in their platform, that could easily be used to discredit socialists in the eyes of serious workers, like: "Abolish individual income, property and other taxes," "Legalize drugs," "nonmoralistic sex education," "Abolish all sodomy and other anti-lesbian/gay laws," among which the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) includes laws against sex between adults and minors.

The Socialist Workers Party's platform also calls for support to various democratic demands, and we urged workers to support

their candidates against the capitalist candidates. However, like the Workers League and the Revolutionary Workers League, it only mentions the fight for equality for the Black people in passing, and it does not even mention the fight for socialism. A worker reading this platform will get the impression that socialism is really nothing but some democratic reforms of capitalism.

In addition to the political problems in their platforms on the questions of equality for the Black people and socialism, these tendencies refused to do anything to build the largest possible struggle for working class and socialist candidates against the capitalist candidates in these elections. Each and everyone of them took the position that workers should vote only for their candidates, and not for any other socialist candidates, even though the only candidates running against each other were the ones for mayor. Workers could vote for one candidate for mayor, and nine candidates for city council.

Is it any wonder that there has been little or no growth in support for working class and socialist candidates for mayor, when there are three different working class or socialist candidates, when none of them puts any emphasis on the fight for equality for the Black people and for socialism, and when none of them makes any effort to try to unite with other working class or socialist forces against the capitalists?

### A different policy

We think that the results in the Detroit elections show the need for working class, socialist, Trotskyist forces to make a common fight for equality for the Black people and for socialism. The fact that a small number of Black workers and students voted for our socialist candidate who had never done so before, shows that even a tiny group such as our own can change what workers think and do. A common fight would have a much bigger impact.

But even if all working class, socialist, Trotskyist tendencies made a common fight for equality for the Black people and for socialism its influence in the working class in Detroit would probably still be limited.

The biggest obstacle to the fight for the equality for the Black people and for socialism is the Democratic Party.

Very few people are fooled by the Republican Party. But lots of people are still fooled by the Democratic Party. And it is everywhere, in the unions, in the Black organizations, in the Palestinian organizations, in the Latin American organizations, in the women's organizations, in the strikes, in the demonstrations, in the churches. And it has all sorts of people who work for it, from Coleman Young, to labor organizers, to activists of all sorts, to preachers.

The Democratic Party is the worst drug that the racist American capitalists peddle. It lulls the Black working people in Detroit to sleep, makes them think they can trust the Democratic Party to look after them, makes them think they can't look after themselves, makes them think there is nothing they can do.

And the Democratic Party is a very slick dope peddler. It hires white racists to peddle its dope to white racists. It hires Black civil rights activists to peddle its dope to

## East German people: fleeing socialism . . . or Stalinism?

In the last few weeks, thousands of people have been fleeing East Germany. In October, the 40th anniversary of the foundation of East Germany, there were demonstrations throughout East Germany against the current government, demanding democratic rights and radical changes in East Germany.

The big name capitalist newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations all say that the East German people are "fleeing socialism" or that they are rebelling against socialism, that they want to live in Western capitalist countries because these countries are better, and that this exodus from East Germany and this rebellion in East Germany proves that socialism has failed.

This is a lie.

After World War II, U.S., British, and French imperialists and the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow, occupied Germany. In order to insure their domination of Europe, and of Germany, they divided Germany. The imperialists took the western section and the Stalinists took the eastern section. Germany is an oppressed nation of Europe (similar to the Black people of South Africa, Nicaragua, Ireland, Palestine, Poland or the Basque people of Spain.)

German workers on both sides of the Berlin wall have protested and struggled against the division of Germany more than once. There was a particularly powerful uprising of East German workers against the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1953 that was crushed by Stalinist guns and tanks.

The capitalists do not own basic industry in East Germany. But there is a privileged bureaucracy there that organizes production in the interests of selling goods in Western capitalist countries or in the inter-

ests of serving the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow. For example, when Soviet troops occupied East Germany, they dismantled whole factories and took them back to the USSR. Thus East German workers work very hard, and are very poor. The East Germany bureaucracy lives well and mixes with capitalist businessmen and politicians in the West and Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow.

Unfortunately, there is no clear political alternative to the capitalists and to the Stalinist bureaucracy in East Germany. East German people hear stories and see pictures about rich capitalist countries; they don't hear the stories or see the pictures of the poor capitalist countries. Some are obviously suffering under the illusion that capitalist methods will help them solve their problems.

— M. Guttshall

We urge workers in the capitalist countries and in the bureaucratized workers states to support the struggles of the East German workers and the oppressed population against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

At the same time, it is necessary to fight for a clear, *working class* alternative to the Stalinist bureaucracy. This means a fight for the unification of Germany, for workers democracy, and for socialism without rich bureaucrats.

The Fourth International, world party of the socialist revolution, is the only party that can lead this fight. Now more than ever it is urgent to rebuild the Fourth International, by deepening its roots in the working class and by unifying working class Trotskyist forces that remain loyal to its principles on a principled basis. Without this, there is no way out, for workers in East Germany, West Germany, or any country. —

M. Guttshall

— M. Guttshall



A new feature in Truth . . .

# Black Socialists

Black socialists. African-American socialists. If you look around today, it seems like there aren't very many in the U.S.

But there have been many in the history of the United States. Men and women who joined the socialist movement because socialism offered the only road out for the oppressed Black masses. In fact, socialism has had a very important influence on the struggle of the Black people.

Who were these Black socialists? Some of them are famous people: W.E.B. DuBois, A. Philip Randolph, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright. Others not so famous: R.T. Sims, the African Blood Brotherhood, Lucy Parsons, C.L.R. James, Claude McKay, Clarence Owen, Hubert Harrison, Larry Stewart. Some of them are people who later rejected socialism, who made peace with capitalism. A few remained socialists their entire lives.

Among Blacks, as among whites, there were more Black socialists in the 1920s and 1930s than any time before or since. The struggle for socialism throughout the world reached its highest point in the Russian Revolution of 1917 which overthrew the czar and created the Soviet Union. This revolution and the radical working class movements inspired many Blacks to become socialists. They joined the Socialist Party; they joined the Communist Party. They ran as Socialist candidates. They organized Black workers to join unions and refused to accept the racism of white workers.

They traveled to Russia to learn what the first workers revolution had accomplished. They worked together with socialists from around the world to try and spread the workers revolution. They worked with European and

American socialists to try to resolve the problems of the oppressed countries of Africa, Asia, and South

countries. These disappointments drove away many socialists.

But, for young Black working people today, it is important to know that many Black people became socialists. They fought the racists, the Ku Klux



A. Philip Randolph, one of the editors of *The Messenger*.



Chandler Owen, one of the editors of *The Messenger*.



W.E.B. DuBois, an early socialist, and a founder of the NAACP.



Hubert Harrison, an early socialist organizer in Harlem.

America.

While they were socialists they were self-sacrificing, principled fighters for the Black people, for socialism.

And, just as among whites, most of them turned their backs on socialism because of the delay in the world socialist revolution.

This delay was chiefly caused by Stalin's rise to power in the Soviet Union. Stalin, representing a middle class bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and giving in to pressures of the world capitalist class, sought to undermine the rule of the working class in the Soviet Union. The bureaucracy that supported Stalin weakened revolutions throughout Europe and the colonial

Klan, the U.S. government, and the capitalists in the name of socialism. They tried to convince Black people to embrace socialism as the solution to the oppression of the Black masses. The Black socialists made, in this, the most progressive of all movements, a unique and powerful contribution. A contribution that is being buried by those who have made their peace with the dying capitalist society that we live in.

In studying and learning about these people, all of us can learn from those that came before them why American capitalism will never free the Black people. And why a fight for socialism can free the Black people.

(Continued on next page)

## An Early Socialist — R. T. Sims

A little-known fact is that among the strongest supporters of the anti-slavery movement before the Civil War were the German socialists in America. These immigrants became socialists in Germany. Their socialist principles placed them in the forefront of the struggle against slavery.

They organized some of the first socialist organizations in America. One of the cities where these German socialists exerted the most influence was Milwaukee, Wisconsin. So, it is not surprising that one of the first Black socialists is from Milwaukee.

R.T. Sims was a Black man, a member of the Brotherhood of Painters and Decorator's Union Local 184. He was a member of the Socialist Labor Party in 1895.

At that time there were no large unions in the factories of America. Socialists and working class radicals wanted to create these unions in order to build strong working class organizations that could fight for socialism. They formed the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905. One of the national organizers of the IWW was R. T. Sims.

The influence of these early Black socialists was strong and can be seen in the following story.

In 1910 there was an independent union of the lumber workers of Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. It had 35,000 members, about one-half of whom were Black. The union decided to join with the IWW. At the convention to carry through these decision, the IWW delegates noticed that there were no Black workers in the meeting. The white workers told them that the Blacks were meeting at a separate location because Louisiana law forbid Blacks and whites meeting together. Big Bill Haywood, a leader of the IWW, said to the convention:

"You are meeting in convention to discuss the conditions under which you labor. This can't be done intelligently by passing resolutions here and then sending them out to another room for the Black men to act upon. Why not be sensible about this and call the Negroes into this convention? If it is against the law, this is one time when the law should be broken."

This was done and a delegation of Black and white lumber workers were elected to the IWW convention.

R.T. Sims and T. J. Pree, another Black socialist, along with many Black workers, founded the National Brotherhood Workers of America in 1919. It was to be an all-Black union to organize Black workers. The backbone of the organization was the Black dock workers of Newport News, Portsmouth and Norfolk, Virginia. It was open to all Black workers. It said:

"The Negroes of the National Brotherhood Workers of America are now organized and intend to keep on organizing the members of the race in the Cotton Fields and every branch of industry for the purpose of securing to the Negroes those rights that justly belong to them. . . . If you are not with us, you are against us, white or Black. . . . We stand uncompromisingly for the complete emancipation of the 'working class' from 'class conditions,' which is the only means of salvation for the Negro. How long are we to wait for justice at the white man's hand?"

For its short-lived existence (the Brotherhood disappeared in 1921), its official publication was *The Messenger*, the socialist magazine edited by A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, two Black socialists in Harlem. And, at that time, the magazine was branded by the United States government, as "the most dangerous Negro publication in America." In the next issue we will look at "The Messenger" and its editors. — F. Michaels

## Gorbachev's *glasnost* means strikes are banned in basic industries

Gorbachev and the current government in the USSR just announced a ban on strikes in the coal, gas, chemical, metal and power industries. This ban is supposed to remain in effect until a law outlawing strikes that endanger health and lives is passed.

Workers in the USSR have already reacted against this strike ban.

"Yuri Boldyrev, a leader of the Donetsk miner's strike committee, said: 'They have made a mistake. There will still be strikes. The reaction here will be negative. It shows that when they signed the agreements with us in the summer, they were hypocrites.'" (*Workers Press*, No. 186, October 7, 1989.) A thousand Ukrainian miners evidently responded by striking to demand a cut in production and other demands.

Gorbachev's ban on strikes shows what "perestroika" and "glasnost" really mean: openness for the Western capitalists, petty bourgeois intellectuals, and their Stalinist lackeys, not for the workers.

The International League (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International) has been saying this since Gorbachev first initiated "perestroika" and "glasnost" in 1986-87.

Now is the time to make an all out fight for a clear, working class alternative to Gorbachev's policies, for: independence for oppressed nationalities, including the right to separation; for workers democracy, including freedom for soviet political parties; for socialism without rich bureaucrats, for a revision of the planned economy in the interests of the producers and consumers, no to privatization. — 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.

## What would you like to see in coming issues of *Truth*?

### Meeting

Sunday, November 5, 1 p.m.

Call 831-0593 for exact location.

### In the next issue of *Truth*:

Black working class youth and the schools

More on equality for Black and working class women

More on Black socialists

The destruction of basic industry and what workers can do

## Building the Trotskyist Committee

We sold 15 copies of *Truth* to workers at the Ford Rouge plant and to workers and students at Wayne County Community College.

Workers were especially interested in what we had to say about the struggle for equality for Black people and Coleman Young. They were surprised that we said: "If you are for equality ... say no to Young *and* Barrow!" Some asked us why we spent so much time talking about Black people. They thought it was important that Blacks were not the only ones are oppressed. They thought we might be "liberal do-gooders" who pretend to be for Blacks, then drop the question when times get rough. We explained that we think that no one can be free as long as the Black people are oppressed, that it's a question that concerns everyone. They were also especially interested in our fight to build support for Mazzocchi's call for a labor party. Some thought that a labor party is impossible, that the unions are too degenerate and corrupt to form a labor party. Others thought that a labor party was indeed possible, that the working class is a class that is superior to the other classes, and that a party based on the working class would not necessarily be corrupt and unprincipled like other political parties.

In order to develop our ties with workers who read *Truth*, we have decided to publish *Truth* more frequently and to try to get more input from workers who read *Truth* into *Truth*. We plan to organize regular meetings to plan *Truth* that workers can attend.

This will help workers learn more about our struggle. It will give them an opportunity to decide whether they want to join the fight for socialism, the Fourth International, and the Trotskyist Committee. — M.G.

## Subscribe!

Please send me:

Further information

One-year subscription to *Truth* (10 issues/\$5.00)

One-year subscription to *Fourth International* (10 issues/\$12)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to M. Guttshall,  
P.O. Box 441283, Detroit, MI 48244-1283.



## What are we fighting for?

- Equality for the Black people and all oppressed peoples.
- Emergency measures to provide jobs, wages, homes and schools at the expense of the rich.
- Unions without rich bureaucrats.
- A labor party based on the unions.
- Socialism: a system where the workers have their own government, own the most important resources, and organize production and distribution of goods to fully satisfy human needs, rather than to make profits; a step toward a classless, communist society, where there is no top and no bottom, no rich and no poor, just people working together for the common good.

# TRUTH

P.O. BOX 441283, DETROIT, MI 48244-1283; (313) 831-0593

## Why is it so hard for young Black working class men and women to find decent jobs?

If you come from a rich white family, or even a rich Black family, it's not very hard to find a decent job. Mom or Dad just calls somebody who calls somebody, etc.

But if you come from a working class family, especially a Black working class family, it is very hard.

Why?

Some say young Black men and women from working class families are lazy and do not want to work. Others say that young Black working class people do not have the skills that they need to get jobs, like being able to write a resume or go through an interview. Still others say that these young Blacks do not have the skills that they need to do various jobs, like being able to read well, add well, type, or other skills. Still others say that many young Blacks do not have the transportation that they need to get to the decent jobs, a car or a decent bus system.

But none of these things is really true.

The truth is there are very few jobs available in Detroit or in the Detroit area. Those that are available pay little more than the minimum wage. And even for these jobs, many employers would rather hire someone that he thinks will be more docile than a young Black working class man or woman.

In the 1960s, a young Black man could go to a personnel office at a car plant in the morning, and be working in the afternoon, and make enough money to support himself and a few other people pretty well.

(Continued on page 6)