

TRUTH

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Archer can't save Detroit! Workers can!

Join the labor party movement!



(See article on back page ...)

Black Workers for Justice backs the labor party movement!

We are reprinting an article published by Black Workers for Justice, a group of Black workers and militants centered in the South, supporting the fight for a labor party, and the decision of Labor Party Advocates to push for a convention to found a labor party in 1995.

These workers and militants are also critical of Labor Party Advocates; they argue that it should devote more resources to organizing the South and to reaching out to African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other oppressed peoples, and to unorganized workers.

The decision of members of Black Workers for Justice to support the fight for a convention to found a labor party is an important step forward for the labor party movement. Black people need a big working class party to fight for their interests against the rich whites and their agents among the Black people. And the movement for a labor party needs thousands of Black workers and militants. Black workers have been the backbone of the North American working class for many years, doing the most difficult and painful jobs in almost every workplace where they work. They have also been one of the most far-sighted and militant sections of the North American labor movement, inspiring workers and oppressed peoples in the U.S. and throughout the world with their irreconcilable struggle against oppression. A labor party without thousands of Black workers and militants would not be a very working class party; it would be an expression of the labor aristocracy, of the most comfortable sections of the working class, hence very weak and limited in its ability to achieve a better life for millions of working people of all races and nationalities.

We urge all working people in the Detroit area, especially African Americans, to join Labor Party Advocates and fight for their interests within it.

The Labor Party Advocates (LPA) held an Interim Steering Committee meeting on October 9th in Chicago, Ill. This was the first such meeting to involve a broad par-

ticipation of LPA members in discussing and planning for the future direction of LPA. Eighty-one unionists attended from 28 states. Their union affiliation included UAW, IAM, SEIU, CWA, UMWA, IBEW, CCIU, UTU, San Francisco Labor Council, OCAW and UE.

OCAW and UE are the only national unions on record endorsing the formation of a labor party. A consensus was reached that LPA would hold a convention in 1995 to found a labor party and various committees were established to start the process.

Popular support and resources are needed to give meaning to the proposed convention call, which will be mailed to 65,000 local unions. However, this will require that LPA correct some important weaknesses in its current perspective. Three omissions which came to light during the meeting revolve around 1) the lack of organizing the South; 2) more outreach to African Americans, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Asian American workers, and especially women workers from oppressed nationalities; and 3) a stronger understanding that non-union, unorganized workers are allies and potential union sisters and brothers, rather than enemies.

At the Chicago meeting, LPA leaders admitted the South had been neglected in their organizing plans. This has serious consequences for their third party strategy. To talk about a "new social, economic and political agenda" for working people without establishing the role played by Southern labor in this goal is dangerous. The South has been a base for spreading the corporate right wing agenda. It has also been an area where some of the most progressive political struggles emanating from Black workers have occurred. Witness the Mississippi Freedom Democrats' challenge and the recent role of Black workers' support of Jesse Jackson during the "Super Tuesday" primaries which temporarily halted the conservative Democrats' strategy for monopolizing power.

The possibility exists for a progressive

reshaping of Southern politics - given a stronger labor movement in the South, the backing of a labor party and allied with the movement for Black political power. Thus organizing the South must be on the political agenda and program of Labor Party Advocates.

It should be obvious that any labor party in the U.S. that does not have substantial numbers of Black workers, especially Black women, and workers from other nationalities in both leadership and rank and file will lack legitimacy among the working class. These workers have been among the chief advocates for an independent political party divorced from the Democrats and Republicans. Their inclusion in LPA would provide a wealth of experience, expertise and resources to the debate and organization of a labor party.

There must be a conscious outreach to union caucuses and labor organizations involving Black, Latino and Asian workers. And don't forget what some have called the "Rainbow Unions:" 1199, ACTWU, UFCW, etc., which supported the Jesse Jackson campaign.

The desire of the LPA leadership to ground the movement of independent political action in established unions with an identifiable base is understandable. It must be careful not to neglect the interests of the larger working class, which is currently not represented by unions. The U.S. labor movement is broader than just the trade unions and one would expect that a labor party would also be broader. Otherwise, it continues in the tradition of sections of the AFL-CIO which tend to narrow the vision of labor to just unionized workers.

Despite these weaknesses, all of which can be rectified, the call by the Labor Party Advocates to move towards a convention represents an advance in the political independence of working people.

The possibility exists for a progressive reshaping of Southern politics - given a stronger labor movement in the South, the backing of a labor party and allied with the movement for Black political power. ■

The struggle against NAFTA has just begun ...

We are reprinting a letter against NAFTA to the Detroit Free Press written by a member of Detroit Labor Party Advocates. A number of union officials have decided to cut funds to Republicans and Democrats who voted for NAFTA. Mexican Indians have risen up against NAFTA with arms in hand. This shows that the struggle against NAFTA has just begun ...

Detroit Free Press
Editorial Department

In your November 18, 1993 editorial "Labor-Democrats: An important coalition needs to be repaired," you stated that the acrimony between them over NAFTA should be left behind, and that unions and the administration should now unite over more important "common concerns." You also stated that "much of labor's anti-NAFTA rhetoric degenerated into us-against-them class warfare."

We maintain that the rift over NAFTA between the Democrats and Labor is not a new one — this is not the first time working class people have been betrayed by the Democratic Party. The Democrats have a history of strike-breaking (last year's railroad strike, for example), union busting (Bill Clinton's appointee Solicitor General Drew Days supported \$52 million in fines against the United Mine Workers) and payouts to the wealthy (a Democratically controlled congress approved bailouts of the S&Ls, Jimmy Carter's administration passed capital gains tax cuts for the rich).

The unity you call for between Labor and Democrats boils down to working people once again allowing politicians to sacrifice our interests to the rich. We have not made this into us-against-them class warfare — the owners and managers of corporations have made it that, by increasing their profits at our expense. Class warfare begins with corporations using Wall Street wheeling and dealing, threats and speed-up to put more and more of us out of work. Then they wonder why no one can afford to buy their products.

We are organizing to form a labor party in this country in 1995 — a party whose membership is working class, and which supports our interests. We're through with

the bait and switch tactics of this two party system. Clearly both the Democratic and Republican parties are on the side of the rich. Working class people are the

majority in this country. We should have at least one party that's on our side. — Kim M. ■

European workers show the way!

Over a year ago, European bosses adopted the "Maastricht" agreement, an agreement like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which established the best possible conditions for the richest owners of European monopolies.

Since that time, many workers have lost their jobs and many small business people have been driven out of business.

In the last months, there has been a wave of struggles against these jobs cuts and other attacks on the working and living conditions of working people.

First there was a wave of strikes and demonstrations in Italy. Then there was a general strike in Belgium, the first general strike in Belgium since World War II. Then Air France airline workers in France went on strike. They organized massive picketlines, erected barricades and fought the police. They forced the bosses to retreat in its plans to layoff thousands of airline workers.

On November 25 in Madrid, Spain, over 1 million workers demonstrated against layoffs, cuts in education, and other at-

tacks on working people. One of the slogans that was chanted was: "Children of workers to the universities!" Demonstrators also called for a general strike, and unions in Spain are now planning a one-day general strike for January 27.

Workers in Europe are not only fighting, they are making gains. *Air France* airline workers forced the bosses not to layoff so many workers.

This is the only way to make progress, to fight.

Workers in the U.S. need to demand that U.S. unions make an all-out fight against layoffs, speedup, and cuts in social services, with meetings, demonstrations, strikes, general strikes, and independent working class candidates for office.

There is an alternative to layoffs, speedup, cuts in social services. Cut the work week without cutting pay. Divide all the work that's available among everyone available to work. If this means cutting the bosses' profits, too bad.—M.G.



Workers demonstrate against the closing of SEAT, an auto factory in Barcelona.

Solidarity with the Mexican peasants' uprising against NAFTA! U.S./Mexican government forces out of Chiapas now!

On Saturday, January 1, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Mexican peasants in Chiapas, near Guatemala, rose up against NAFTA with arms in hand.

They are headed by the Zapatista National Liberation Army, named after Emiliano Zapata, a poor peasant leader of the Mexican revolution in the early 1900s, who led the peasants in a fight for land against the wealthy landowners.

Leaders of the Mexican Indian peasants say that NAFTA "... is a death certificate for the Indian peoples of Mexico, who are dispensable for the government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari."

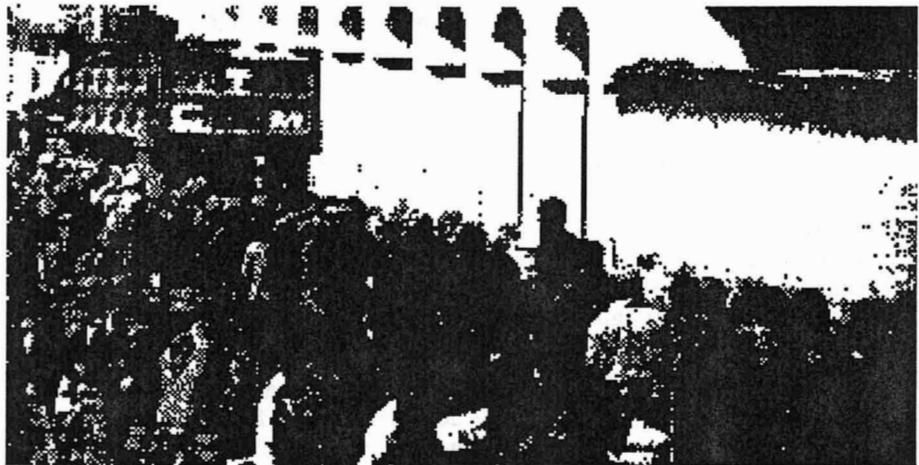
NAFTA will allow giant U.S. agricultural monopolies to import corn into Mexico without any duties, and, in this way, destroy Indian peasants who make their living by raising and selling corn, but who obviously won't be able to compete with giant U.S. monopolies.

Indian peasant leaders also say that NAFTA will encourage finance men to continue to steal their land, cut down their trees and sell them as lumber, and use their lands for grazing. In short, continue to steal and destroy Indian lands and peoples.

On Monday, January 3, U.S. ambassador to Mexico, James Jones, sent a delegation to Mexico to allegedly "assess the uprising and the safety of U.S. citizens in the area."

On Wednesday, January 5, the Mexican government launched a massive slaughter against the Indian peasant uprising, sending thousands of heavily armed troops sweeping through Chiapas, and planes dropping bombs and shooting rockets. Churchmen say that at least 400 are dead.

The demands of the Indian peasants — against NAFTA and for land — are totally



Mayan Indians form an army to fight NAFTA.

justified. Why should whole groups of peoples and their way of life be wiped out so that the billionaire owners of U.S. agricultural monopolies can make even more money?

The methods of the Indian peasants are also totally justified. People have a right to *defend themselves, by any means necessary*, when their lives are threatened, whether it is by immediate, direct violence against their persons, or by the economic violence of giant U.S. monopolies, which is even more cruel, since it slowly *starves people to death*.

The Mexican government would never have initiated this slaughter against the Indian peasant uprising without the approval of Clinton and the U.S. government, and without the assistance of U.S. advisors. It is impossible to push the responsibility for this atrocity simply onto the Mexican government. Clinton and all the big money supporters of NAFTA have blood on their hands.

We urge working people in Detroit and throughout the U.S. to support the struggle of the Mexican Indian peasants against NAFTA!

Demand that the U.S. and Mexican governments stop the slaughter of the Mexican Indian peasants and their Zapatista National Liberation Army now!

Demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and Mexican government forces from Chiapas now!

Repeal NAFTA!

We need a plan for production and trade that benefits the *people* of the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and other countries, and not U.S. billionaires and their lackeys.

All working class organizations should take up this struggle, initiate and support actions to fight for these demands.

An injury to one, is an injury to all!

Support Mexican peasants against NAFTA!

Members of the Labor Party Movement in Detroit

Note: This article in solidarity with the Mexican Indians was originally published and distributed as a leaflet at the Thorn Apple Valley meatpacking plant in Detroit.

Appeal from the Tuzla Logistic Center in Zagreb ...

Workers in the U.S. have lots of problems — job cuts, wage cuts, dangerous working conditions, racist and sexist violence. They have very little money and very little time. Why should they take a small amount of that money and donate it to Workers Aid to Bosnia? There are lots of worthy causes to donate to — Mexican Indians, Cuba, Somalia, Black South Africa, Palestine. Why should U.S. workers set aside a contribution for workers and oppressed people in Bosnia?

The workers and oppressed people in Bosnia are struggling against the same enemies that workers and oppressed people throughout the world are struggling against — the rich owners of the banks and monopolies in the U.S. and Europe and the privileged bureaucracies in the old USSR and Eastern Europe. They are fighting for their right to have their own nation, to live in dignity and peace. But the ruling powers throughout the world — in the U.S., Europe, the old USSR, Serbia — are conspiring to divide and crush them. The U.S.-UN so-called peace plan for Bosnia calls for dividing it along ethnic lines and occupying it.

What makes the situation even worse for the people of Bosnia, is that all sorts of people who call themselves socialists, but who are tied to various privileged bureaucracies, have either joined this conspiracy or are covering for it; they are silent about Bosnia or say that the struggle of the Bosnian people doesn't deserve the support of workers and oppressed throughout the world.

So many traditional sources of support have been cut off to the people of Bosnia. It is especially important for workers to set aside something — even if it is small — for Workers Aid to Bosnia. Here is what some of the people of Bosnia have to say themselves ...

To all people who are against the genocide taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the people of Tuzla issue the following appeal for help ...

Tuzla is the largest town in north-eastern Bosnia, having 19 communes where about 1 million people live. A settlement has existed in this area since the Roman empire, when it was named Salines. . . .

During this rich history the region, thanks to

natural resources — especially deposits of salt and coal — was under the rule of diverse civilizations and cultures which left deep traces on the development and shaping of the town.

The basic resources of this region are salt and coal, upon which chemical and power-generating industries have been based. . . .

However, Tuzla is not only a town of salt and coal. Tuzla is a town of science. Over 15,000 students and pupils are educated at the seven colleges, higher schools, and 15 secondary schools. . . .

Tuzla is firstly a down of industrious, good-hearted people. Until the outbreak of the war the town had about 110,000 inhabitants. Now because of the war the number has been increased by 60,000 refugees and displaced persons, who found a warm welcome in the town.

In spite of the aggressors' heavy shelling and severe damage to the historical part of the town, the vital objects and industrial zone have been saved. This, we are convinced, will provide for a fast and extensive economic and cultural development of the town if the war ceases soon.

Tuzla is a multi-ethnic town where Muslims, Serbs and Croats live and fight together against ethnic cleansing and partition. If you come to Tuzla you can hear church bells and the Mujezin's call to prayer at the same time. Thus, it is not surprising that there is a lot of mixed marriages.

Tuzla has managed to maintain its unity despite all the barbarous efforts to divide Bosnia thanks to the composition of its population, which is reflected in its government.

Today war is raging. Tuzla is blockaded completely: it is without telephone communication with the rest of the world, and without open roads, and TV signals reach it with difficulty. The electricity is rationed — three hours on, 15 off. The lack of water is still more urgent, the local transport doesn't run because of a lack of petrol, and the stocks of foodstuffs have been exhausted.

Tuzla's people have converted all green areas within the town to vegetable gardens, but the storage of flour, sugar and oil cannot be substituted. The hospitals were shelled many times

so that the children's hospital can no longer be used. Medicines reach Tuzla thanks to the organization 'Medecines Sans Frontieres', but in quantities not sufficient to meet demand. Medical supplies and equipment are needed.

The UN High Commission for Refugees manages to bring some foodstuffs but they are aimed for refugees, not for Tuzla's people. The Tuzla region needs about 640 tons of food per day, but in August only 120 tons were delivered. The schools have opened for this school-year, but how long this will last nobody knows. Tuzla airport, where large aircraft can land, is still closed by the UN.

International Workers Aid organized a convoy of aid to go to Tuzla. There were many obstacles during its journey. It overcame many of them but when the convoy organizers, in collaboration with the Tuzla Logistic Center, tried to open the northern route to Tuzla, its way was blocked by the UN.

The so-called 'northern corridor' is the most natural and shortest way to approach Tuzla, but UNPROFOR refused to escort the convoy and, in fact, applied pressure to the Croatian government to prevent it from crossing the border. It had to return to Zagreb. A new convoy for Tuzla must be organized as soon as possible, but this time returning with an enormous number of lorries. This is now possible if all the organizations that have supported the first convoy organize to add lorries and aid.

The barriers that blocked the last convoy must be broken down if the Tuzla people are not to starve this winter. This can only be done if all the people ... who are against ethnic cleansing now act to open the route into Tuzla.

If Tuzla is allowed to starve then the division of Bosnia and ethnic cleansing will be an accomplished fact, and the responsibility will rest upon all those who now refuse to come to our aid.

Truth

We sold 20 copies of the last issue of *Truth* to workers at a meatpacking plant and at meetings of Labor Party Advocates. We also passed out a leaflet in solidarity with Jacobson's workers who lost their jobs and a leaflet in solidarity with Mexican peasants. This issue of *Truth* doesn't include articles on socialism and rebuilding the Fourth International, as we usually do. Readers will find more articles on these questions in coming issues.—M.G.

Truth is published by the Trotskyist Committee of Detroit. The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit is named after Leon Trotsky, a leader of the first successful workers socialist revolution and a founder of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution. The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit is associated with one of the international tendencies of the Fourth International, the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. Editors: M. Gutshall and J. Marlowe

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Archer can't save Detroit! Workers can!

In the last few weeks, the media has been full of stories about how the new mayor of Detroit, Dennis Archer, is going to change Detroit.

He's going to bring more business to Detroit, hence, more jobs, they say.

Some people — even many people — are going so far as to say that the fundamental problem with Detroit was the old mayor, Coleman Young. They say that Coleman Young was too rude to rich whites, that this is why rich whites don't want to invest any money in Detroit. Dennis Archer, on the other hand, is polite to rich whites; he knows how to get rich whites to invest their money in Detroit.

This propaganda is comforting. It suggests that things are going to get better in Detroit soon; it suggests that the people don't have to do much to make this happen, except wait for Dennis Archer to do his stuff, and be polite to rich whites themselves.

But this propaganda isn't true.

Workers who watch television, listen to the radio, or read newspapers, can see and hear that jobs, wages, and social services are being cut throughout the world. Workers and oppressed peoples throughout the world are rising up against these attacks on their working and living conditions — most recently in Mexico and Europe.

The economic system in which we are now living has outlived its usefulness. Those who own the wealth in this society are no longer capable of increasing jobs, wages, social services, and their own profits, which allow them to live in luxury. Thus they have no choice but to cut jobs, wages, and social services, or watch their profits fall. And, this, they are not willing to do. Like drug addicts, they have become accustomed to a certain way of living, and they'll fight to the death to retain it.

This is why conditions in Detroit, and *all* working class cities, especially Black and Latin cities, have been getting worse and worse in the last years, while conditions in Bloomfield Hills, Birmingham, Grosse Pointe, etc., have remained quite comfortable.

What should workers and oppressed people in the

Detroit area do about this? Be polite to the rich whites in Bloomfield Hills?

This won't work.

Thousands of slaves learned this decades ago. They worked devotedly and loyally for their owners; their owners promised to free them when they died. When the slavemaster died and his will was read, the devoted and loyal slave found that the slavemaster had decided to give all his property, including the slave, to some relative, or even to sell the slave for cash.

No. Politeness is not the solution.

The only thing that workers and oppressed peoples in the Detroit area can do is to join the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples in the U.S. and throughout the world for decent jobs, wages, social services, parties and governments that represent the interests of the working majority, not the rich, parasitic minority.

But how can we do this? We don't know anything about organizing big struggles, meetings, demonstrations, strikes, independent working class election campaigns, etc., etc. This is what many young people and workers say.

Join Labor Party Advocates. Labor Party Advocates is open to all young people and working people who want an independent working class political organization. Labor Party Advocates is a *school* in which young people and working people can learn about the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples in the U.S. and throughout the world. They can develop ties with others who want to fight. They can learn how to do all the things that need to be done to organize big struggles — from writing and distributing literature, to organizing meetings, demonstrations, strikes, etc.

Most of all, they can learn how to build a big working class organization, and fight for power, against the rich, who want the people of Detroit to be nothing but servile slaves, and aim to destroy anyone who refuses.

Archer can't save the people of Detroit, but the workers can. Learn how to do this. Join the labor party movement. ■