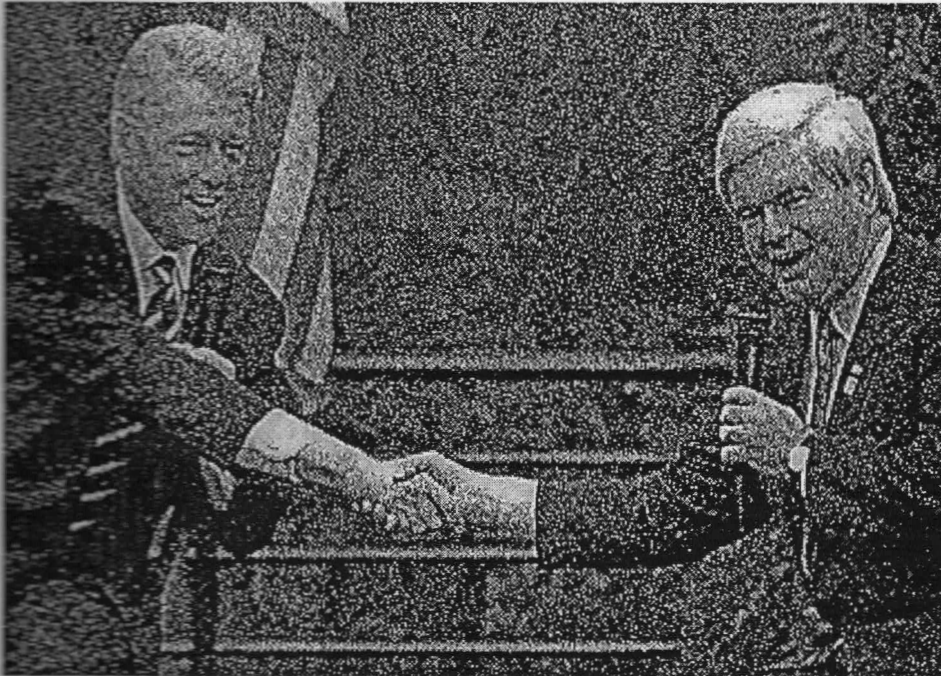


NEW LIFE

A SOCIALIST BULLETIN PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE LABOR PARTY MOVEMENT

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Strikers: yes! Labor party: yes! Dole/Clinton: no!



Unions representing over 1 million workers support the Labor Party!

Labor Party Founding Convention

June 6-9, 1996 Cleveland, Ohio

"The bosses have two parties, now the workers will have one."

Call 810-948-1010, x288 (Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes)

Newspaper workers in the Detroit area have now been on strike for over 10 months. They are suffering. Some have been seriously injured and even permanently disabled by private guards and public police who viciously attack strikers. Marriages are strained. Children are having trouble in school.

But there isn't a single Republican or Democratic Party politician who has done *everything* that he/she could to help these strikers and their families.

A small number of Democrats, like Maryann Mahaffey or John Conyers, have expressed support for the strikers, joined their picketlines, or sat down in front of the *News* or *Free Press* buildings in protest. But even these figures haven't done *everything* that someone in this position could do.

For example, Maryann Mahaffey could use her position on the City Council to fight for laws against using scabs within the city of Detroit, against any form of police interference in strikes, and for confiscating the property of and imprisoning anyone who violates these laws. The owners of the *News* and the *Free Press* would back off or face arrest, imprisonment, and loss of their property. The *News* and the *Free Press* could become public enterprises, run by the unions in the interests of the people of the Detroit area.

This is a small example of the kinds of things that political leaders truly devoted to the strikers could do. Even the best Republicans and Democrats don't even come close.

Strikers have a right to be very demanding of political leaders that they pay to represent them and who live very comfortable lives.

We urge strikers to join the labor party movement. Come to the convention to found the labor party. We need a labor political party made up of strikers and people devoted to them. We need a labor party that is going to use its resources to fight for the rights and needs of strikers.

Strikers — who have sacrificed so much, who have given up a whole way of life, who have put virtually everything that they have on the line — deserve no less. — New Life

Labor and the 1996 elections

The *Detroit Sunday Journal*, the striking newspaper workers' publication, interviewed Richard Trumka, the new Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO. The *Journal* asked: "What's new at the AFL-CIO?" Trumka said, among other things:

"We've got a \$35-million political action program, with full-time organizers in 75 congressional districts or more ... I don't like to talk about Democrats or Republicans. I like to talk about people who support our issues ... I believe in 1996, we can take control of the House of Representatives, and put in a majority of people who will address the issues of working Americans."

Trumka may not like to talk about Democrats or Republicans. But that's what he is talking about. He's talking about using the labor movement's time and money to elect more Democrats. And this doesn't sound very new. It sounds like the same old thing. Labor has been backing Democrats without much protest since the 1950s. Union membership has been falling since the 1950s and wages have been falling since the 1970s.

Poll after poll shows that the majority of people in the U.S. oppose both Republicans and Democrats. They want a third party and third party candidates in the 1996 elections. Thus the position that the U.S. labor movement has taken in the 1996 elections is totally undemocratic and goes against what the majority of people want in these elections.

If the majority of people in the U.S. had lost their heads and were following a racist, fascist demagogue, of course the labor movement would have to take a stand against them, and defend a minority position.

But the majority of the people in the U.S. are not wrong. They aren't following a racist, fascist demagogue. Both the Republicans and Democrats represent a small number of incredibly rich people. They don't represent the interests of the majority in the U.S., still less the interests of the working people.

A certain percentage of labor leaders have begun to see that the labor movement backing Democrats is a waste of time and money. Clinton backed NAFTA; he did little or nothing to pass the bill against replacing strikers; he's been going along with Republicans' attacks on poorer welfare recipients

"... the majority of people in the U.S. oppose both Republicans and Democrats... the position that the labor movement has taken in the 1996 elections is totally undemocratic ..."

and immigrant workers, when he's not leading the charge.

But labor backing Clinton and other Democrats is not just a *waste* of time and money. It's *hurting* the labor movement. By aligning itself with rich, establishment politicians like Clinton, the labor movement makes it look like the labor movement is part of the establishment. It makes it look like the labor movement is part of the problem and not part of the solution. It turns unorganized workers, poorer workers, the lower middle classes, against the labor movement and the unions. It drives them into the arms of anti-union politicians like Buchanan and Perot.

The Million Man March on Washington was a very positive development. It shows that Black people aren't turning back. They are going to take a stand and fight for their rights. But it's also a wake-up call for the labor movement. Why are so many Black people, so many of whom are working people and union members, turning, at least to a certain extent, to politicians like Louis Farrakhan, who, historically, have been very hostile to unions and the organized labor movement?

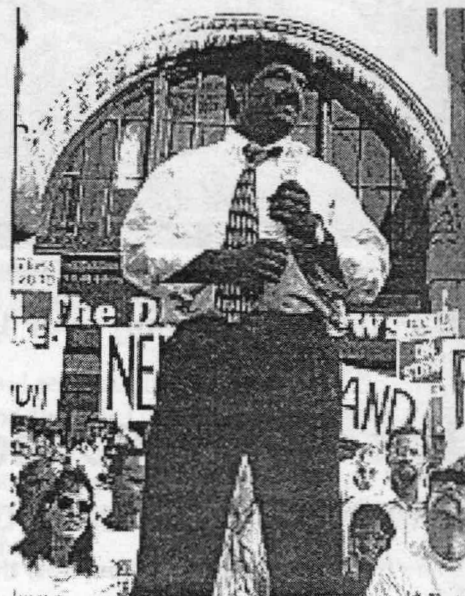
The labor movement is not doing what needs to be done in the interests of Black working people. The labor movement is spending at least \$75 million on the likes of Clinton and other Democrats. How much is it spending on Black working people?

Electing Clinton and other Democrats may improve the lives of a very small number of the most comfortable working people. It will certainly improve the lives of top union leaders because Democrats are more polite to union leaders: they invite them to their offices, take them out to lunch, etc.

But it's not going to improve the lives of the *majority* of working people one single bit, especially young people. They need jobs, a \$10 an hour minimum wage, cheap health insurance, more worker and union control of health and safety on the job, childcare and education for themselves and their children. Clinton and the Democrats are *not* going to bring these things. Under Clinton, when the economy began to expand so much that there began to be pressure for workers' wages to go up, the Federal Reserve Board increased the interest rates so that bosses wouldn't expand any more and hire more workers!

The labor movement has a responsibility to fight for the interests of the *majority* of working people. Labor unions should join the labor party movement, come to the convention to found the labor party. They should also stop all AFL-CIO support to Democrats and Republicans and run independent labor candidates for office in 1996.

Is it too late to do this? No. Even a write-in campaign for Sweeney or Trumka would be better than campaigning for Clinton. A write-in campaign for Sweeney or Trumka would inspire workers and labor activists throughout the country. It would revitalize the labor movement and prepare it for the struggles ahead. Campaigning for Clinton is going to divide and wear out the labor movement.—M. Guttshall



Richard Trumka speaking in Detroit.

More on the labor party platform

In this issue, we are printing the "Principles for a labor party program: discussion draft" presented to the LPA Executive Committee meeting in March.

We think this document represents an important step forward for the labor party movement. The principles expressed in this document obviously express the interests of the working class and the organized labor movement far more than the "principles" of the Republicans and Democrats. Working people and labor activists should support the new labor party and principles like these against the Republicans and Democrats.

However, we also think that there are some important problems in this draft that need to be corrected.

1. Programs and platforms. We don't think the labor party can adopt a full *program* at this time. By program, we mean a common understanding of events and tasks.

There are many different views and tendencies within the labor party movement. Some think that the problems facing the working class can be resolved by relatively gradually and peacefully reforming the capitalist system. Others think that a democratic revolution is necessary, like the American Revolution and the Civil War. Still others think that a working class and socialist revolution — in which workers establish their own government, takeover the banks and basic industries, and develop a planned economy — is necessary. If the labor party were to attempt to adopt a relatively full program at this time, it would necessarily lead to debate and possibly splits on these and other fundamental issues.

But different tendencies of the labor party movement should be able to reach agreement on a basic *platform of working class demands*. In this way the new labor party will be able to lead the masses of working people in a common fight against the employers and acquire the experience and solidarity necessary to take up debates on fundamental issues in a way that strengthens the working class and its party.

2. A party and platform based on working class struggles. The current draft of the "Principles for a labor party program" has a lot of interesting ideas in it — a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to a job at a living wage, an Income Stability



French workers organize the fight for a 35 hour week with no cut in pay.

Fund, etc. But it's not sufficiently based on the working class struggles that have been taking place and sometimes doesn't put forward clear enough measures on how to carry forward these struggles.

For example, in Detroit, the struggle that has been taking place for many years against layoffs, plantclosings, downsizing. We think the only way to carry forward this struggle is to fight for a shorter work week without cutting pay in union contracts and by law so that more can work. The current draft talks against downsizing, but it suggests that the solution to this problem is a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to a job at a living wage, expanding the public sector, and an Income Stability Fund that maintains the wages of laid-off workers who can't find work at comparable wages. One might think that the labor party movement thinks downsizing is OK as long as workers find other jobs and maintain comparable incomes. But this doesn't deal with the pain and suffering caused by layoffs and plantclosings, by being forced to look for different jobs, by breaking up concentrations of workers who have been working together for years, by the destruction of whole sections and branches of industry, by the consequent speed up and terrible working conditions for those left in the "downsized" enterprise. If the bosses say there isn't enough work, fine. But cut hours without cutting pay so that everyone can continue working. Let the bosses pay for the problems that they themselves create.

Other struggles that have been important have been the struggles in solidarity with Staley, Caterpillar, and Detroit newspaper workers, for a national labor march on Detroit, for a one-day national solidarity strike, for mass picketing to shutdown scab opera-

tions, and for *independent working class and labor candidates* for public office, like Jackie Stump, Dave Watts, or the Workers World Party in Michigan. The movement for independent working class and labor candidates may still be a very small movement, but it is an important movement. All polls show that the majority of U.S. residents want to see a third party and third party candidates in the 1996 elections. The Workers World Party's candidate for Michigan governor got more votes in the last election than any working class candidate for governor in the entire history of the state of Michigan. The labor party should take a clear stand in support of these struggles.

3. How to get from here to there. Again, there are many interesting and appealing ideas in the current draft. But it doesn't say much about how we are going to get from here to there. How are we going to acquire these things?

The new labor party should at least call for meetings, demonstrations, strikes, general strikes, sit-downs, and independent working class and labor election campaigns to advance these struggles.

While there are laws that are going to make it difficult for the new labor party to run its own candidates for office at first, because it has been financed at least in part by union dues, there is no reason why the new labor party shouldn't be able to *advocate* that the unions run their own candidates for office. It can also take whatever steps may be necessary to put itself in a position to run its own candidates to fight for this goal, offering to withdraw its candidates in cases where the larger labor movement puts forward *independent* labor candidates that are more representative.

(Continued on page 6)

Principles of a labor party program:

Presented by Adolph Reed and Howard Botwinick at the LPA Executive Committee Meeting, March 23-24, 1996.

A call for economic justice

1. A constitutional right to a job at a livable wage.

We want to work. We need to work. In a modern economy, we must work to feed, clothe and house ourselves and our families. But there are not enough decent jobs to go around. Nearly one out of four Americans is either unemployed, working part-time but wants to work full-time, or is working full-time at poverty wages. And this is not our fault; it stems from a conscious corporate attack on Americans' living standards and at least twenty years of government policies that have encouraged and supported it.

After WWII, Congress, recognizing the need to generate jobs for all, passed the Full Employment Act. Thirty years later, when the post-war boom collapsed, the jobs program again was acknowledged in the Humphrey-Hawkins legislation. However, Corporate America, through its army of pliable politicians, has made a mockery of those pieces of legislation. Today again, we need full and decent employment for all. This time, however, we must push beyond the reach of the corporate giants. We need to instill the right to a livelihood into the heart of our constitution through an amendment that states clearly that each person willing and able to work shall be assured the right to a job at a livable wage. The official "poverty level" is now \$14,000 a year for a family of four. We therefore propose that \$10 an hour (\$20,000 a year), indexed to inflation in the future, is a reasonable benchmark for a truly livable wage.

Since the Great Depression, the public sector has played a vital role helping to fill the employment gap that the private sector has repeatedly failed to bridge. As the last twenty years of cuts in public spending have painfully shown, there is much socially useful and necessary work that only government can be relied on to do. A responsible and accountable government would train and employ people to tend to pressing common needs such as environmental protection, building and staffing public schools, and rebuilding mass transit systems and inner cities. In sharp contrast to Democratic



Caterpillar workers mass picketing to stop scabs.

and Republican proposals for "welfare reform," we also demand that such jobs should not be treated as contingent or make-work, or as a cheaper alternative to unionized labor. Let us be very clear. We are calling for permanent, unionized employment in a revitalized public sector that focuses, as government should, on meeting public needs.

2. An income stability fund to end downward mobility for working people

Tens of millions of workers are being downsized. Middle-income jobs are being ripped out of the economy. As the Four Horsemen of the Workplace (automation, downsizing, globalization and the shift to temporary workers) destroy full-time jobs, millions of us are being forced to accept jobs at outrageously reduced wages and under demanding, brutal and unsafe conditions — while corporate wealth increases wildly. Supposedly in the name of modernizing the economy, American workers are experiencing steadily declining wages and benefits even as productivity increases. We are losing a substantial portion of our incomes through no fault of our own. We must put an end to this downward spiral by forcing corporations to subsidize the wages of those dislocated workers who find jobs at lower wages.

We propose replacing unemployment insurance with an Income Stability Fund to provide full wage subsidies for dislocated workers. Financed by those corporations that are doing the downsizing, these subsidies would make up the difference between the wages of the destroyed job and wages of the new job. (The subsidy could be capped at \$25,000 per year, with a maximum total income of \$50,000, which would prevent the fund from being used up by highly-paid,

downwardly mobile corporate executives. Coupled with a guaranteed job at approximately \$20,000 per year, the \$25,000 subsidized cap for laid off workers would mean everyone earning less than \$45,000 — about \$21.50 per hour — would lose no income due to a layoff.)

3. Free higher education for all

Open access to education is a basic foundation of a democratic society. We propose that each of us be able to go to school as far as our abilities can carry us. Such schooling would extend throughout our lifetimes and provide us with the ability to upgrade our skills and knowledge and to explore our interests. Like the GI bill of rights, tuition should be free, and each citizen would receive a minimum livable wage for attending. In effect, school for adults would be the equivalent of work.

4. Basic human benefits for all

Every citizen needs a package of benefits to survive in the modern world. Everyone needs health care, paid vacations, paid family leave and affordable day-care. We propose that such benefits should apply to all working people regardless of whether they work part-time or full-time. Such benefits should include the following:

*a minimum of 20 paid vacation days, in addition to federal holidays.

*national health insurance provided by a single-payer national system that eliminates the obscene profiteering of the health insurance industry.

*up to six months family leave for child birth and caring for ill relatives at full pay, with gradually reduced pay for up to another

discussion draft

six months.

*low-cost, subsidized day care for all who need it.

Almost all the advanced industrial nations already provide such basic human benefits. However, these benefits are now being ratcheted down to the far lower standards being set in the United States. It is time to end this race to the bottom and bring our quality of life up to those European standards.

(Special attention must be paid to the new structure of the health care system and the enormous profiteering by the corporations involved in the new wave of HMO-type networks. The Labor Party should commit itself to placing national limits on corporate domination, control and profits within such structures, in addition to calling for single-payer financing.)

5. Shorter work time

In order to create more jobs and to create more leisure time to enjoy life, we need to reduce the number of hours we work. As it is, we work longer hours than any other workforce in the world. We therefore propose to:

*shorten the work week to 35 hours with double-time and time-off compensation for overtime (one hour off for every two hours worked) in order to discourage employers from using overtime as a way to cutback on the number of workers.

*mandate one-year, paid leave for every seven years worked. Such as system of sabbaticals would allow more workers to enter into existing jobs.

*encourage shorter work careers by providing early retirement after 30 years of work.

(This would create more work opportunities for younger workers entering the workforce.)

6. Justice in international trade

Corporate America and its fleet of politicians claims free trade is good for us. We are all supposed to benefit from an open, international economy. We agree up to a point. One of the most important ingredients of genuinely fair trade is protection of the rights of all workers. We refuse to accept the idea of "free" trade that pits us



Striking miners defy Taft-Hartley - 1979.

against industries that pollute their workers and the ecosystem. We reject the idea of "free" trade that has our work sub-contracted by Corporate America to areas of the world where labor is essentially "unfree." Contrary to the corporate free trade agenda, we believe in trading freely with all trading partners who adhere to basic, minimum labor, health, safety and environmental standards. We also strongly reject narrowly nationalist solutions to trade that scapegoat our fellow workers in other countries.

Therefore we propose that seriously restrictive tariffs be placed on all goods produced in workplaces where such minimum standards are not met and in countries that do not, as a minimum, support the International Labor Organization's Conventions governing the rights of labor. Because our government's foreign and military policies have often undermined the position of all workers by propping up dictatorial, anti-labor regimes, we further propose that the United States government condition all future military and foreign aid on the above-mentioned ILO Conventions. To begin the process of establishing a just global economy, we call for an international labor commission to establish, in concert with other labor parties, governments and movements, reasonable and effective minimal standards for a Global Social Charter.

7. The end to corporate welfare as we know it

Our welfare system is a disgrace. The disgrace starts at the top. Today, much of Corporate America is living on welfare in the form of tax breaks and direct government subsidies. State's governments dole out billions in "incentives" to lure businesses from other states or to keep theirs from going. The federal government doles out even more as corporations pour millions into the campaign coffers of both parties. This Labor Party opposes all forms of wel-

fare for corporations and the rich. We support an end to corporate tax breaks and subsidies that have seriously undermined the progressive intent of our tax system. We further support the re-establishment of strong national standards for labor rights and the environment so that corporations can no longer force our states and cities into a brutal competition for jobs at any cost. It's time to end the war between the states that leads only to a domestic race to the bottom.

To divert us from the estimated two hundred billion dollar-a-year corporate welfare rip-off, the two parties aim their fire at the poor on low-income welfare (which amounts to less than one-third of what corporations take from the treasury). Our constitutional amendment guaranteeing each person the right to a job at a decent living wage, coupled with free education, plus the provision for basic human needs, will truly end the demeaning and stigmatized low-income welfare as we know it. That's what we call welfare reform.

8. Getting the wealthy to pay their share

The best-kept secret in America is the staggering amount of wealth that has been pumped up into the hands of a tiny elite. From 1983 to 1989 alone, the top one-half percent (.5%) of all families increased their wealth by over 1.45 trillion dollars. At the same time the national debt increased by 1.49 trillion dollars. What a coincidence. The combination of massive tax breaks for the rich, corporate welfare and the full-scale corporate attack on working people and their unions led to this enormous redistribution of wealth from the bottom to the top. Never has so much money drifted into the hands of so few people. Now Corporate America wants us to pay back the debt that they created. Even worse, they and the politicians who work for them, are cynically using their carefully constructed deficits as an excuse to roll back all of the social programs and protective legislation that the labor movement has fought for since the late 1800s. We say no. Not now, not ever.

Instead, we need to reclaim what is rightfully ours through a just and simplified tax system. Rather than taxing the middle- and low-income working people to pay for corporate welfare, we need to affirm the principle of a progressive tax system that con-

Discussion draft ...

centrates the burden on those most capable of paying it. Rich individuals and corporations are able to amass wealth in part because of laws and public policies that assist them — for instance, direct and indirect subsidies, government contracts, use of public infrastructure. Progressive taxation not only is a way to ensure that they compensate the society for the benefits they receive from it, it also does the important democratic work of limiting great concentrations of wealth and its corrupting effects.

In his first six years in office, Ronald Reagan, with the collaboration of the Democratic majorities in Congress, destroyed most of the progressivity in our tax system by reducing the top tax rate from 70% down to an incredible 28%. Meanwhile, the total tax burden (state and federal) for the bottom fifth income earners increased by 16%. It is high time to restore those progressive tax rates on the super-rich and drastically reduce our dependence on regressive property and sales taxes that hit working people hardest. Following the lead of many European countries, we must also institute a wealth tax on the super-rich — say those individuals who have amassed over \$1 million in net worth (assets minus debts). A small tax on such wealth (in addition to a progressive income tax) would allow the nation to reclaim some of the wealth taken by the super-rich over the last two decades and provide an income base for free education, health care and jobs. We are all willing to pay our share to build a just economy, provided that the super-rich pay their fair share. (Over the next year we will set up a Labor Party Tax Reform Commission to work out the details.)

9. The right to a union

The only way to gain enough power to fight Corporate America is to allow working people to form unions. But right now, the playing field is badly tilted against working people. Fairness requires the Bill of Rights in the Constitution to be extended to the workplace. We should have the right to free speech and the right to assemble at work. We should be able to organize without fear of dismissal. No replacement workers of any kind should take our jobs when we are on strike. Scabbing should be made illegal, and the Taft-Hartley Act must be repealed. In short, we need to remove all the obstacles that make it difficult if not impossible for working people to organize their own un-

ions. Specifically, we call for the following: (Need to get someone to write this section).

10. An environmentally just transition

Corporate America is also shattering the fragile balance between humans and nature. Today, the largest corporations are by far the largest polluters. The Labor Party realizes that major changes in what is produced and how it is produced will have to take place in order to protect public health and the natural environment. We also realize that the needed changes in production may cause dislocation for workers in environmentally sensitive industries. We support the idea of a just transition from toxic to non-toxic production provided that the dislocated workers suffer no net-loss of income during the transformation. One group of workers should not have to sacrifice their livelihoods in order that all of us may benefit. Our proposals for guaranteed jobs and to end downward mobility are way out of the jobs-versus-the environment debacle. In the meantime, we need a specialized transition fund that compensates displaced workers

Subscribe to New Life!

New Life is fighting to build the labor party. It is also fighting to build support for independent working class policies and for socialism within the labor party.

Founding the labor party is going to be a big step forward. But it isn't going to solve all problems. The labor party is going to have to be *independent*. It's going to have to develop independent working class policies. It's going to have to figure out what is in the interests of the working class and the labor movement and what is not. Eventually, it's going to have to fight for socialism.

These problems aren't going to be resolved automatically. It's going to take a conscious and organized effort on the part of the most thoughtful and consistent working class fighters.

Already some trade union tendencies are entering into the labor party who want the labor party to endorse Democrats. Instead of making the labor party into a vehicle in which rank-and-file workers can express their interests and speak their minds, they want to turn it into one more institution that

and their communities for jobs lost due to environmental transition. Such a transition should be financed by taxes targeted on polluted industries.

11. Genuine equality of opportunity

We recognize that an integral element of economic justice is the guarantee of equal access to the society's benefits for all its members. Just as we oppose suppression of the rights of working people internationally, we also oppose all practices that suppress the rights and opportunities of American workers through discrimination or scapegoating.

Therefore, within our program that makes a firm commitment to decent jobs for all working people, we support vigorous enforcement of existing anti-discrimination legislation. This includes affirmative action, which was developed historically as a policy of last resort when reliance on the "good faith" efforts of employers to break down entrenched patterns of racial and gender segregation had repeatedly and unequivocally failed.

supports the same parties that have been in power for the last century.

We need your support to fight these tendencies, to build an independent labor party with independent working class policies and to build support for socialism within this party. Subscribe to *New Life*!

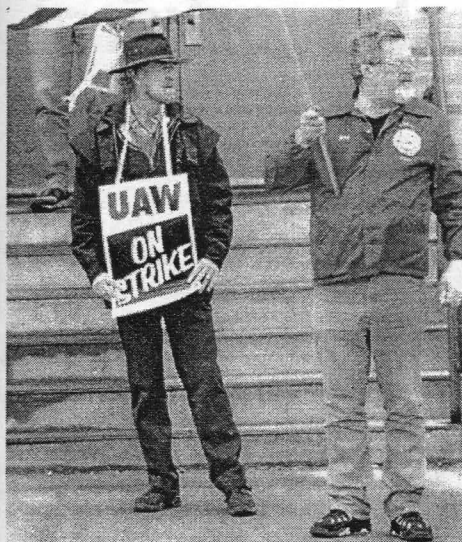
More on the labor party program ...

(Continued from page 3)

Until the labor party starts to actively fight AFL-CIO support to Democrats and to offer an alternative to this, it's not going to acquire the size and strength that it is going to need to make the big and urgent changes that need to be made.

These are some of the changes that we think need to be made in the document that sums up what the labor party is going to stand and fight for. We urge readers to study the current draft and think about what they think it should say.—M.G.

Notes



Dayton

3,000 UAW members at two GM brake plants in Dayton, Ohio struck for 17 days, and caused GM plants across the country to close. They forced GM to resolve some long-standing health and safety problems. Many of the most militant workers thought that the strike should have been expanded and extended in order to force GM to stop moving production to non-union plants.

Los Angeles

The Academy Awards missed the boat completely this year. The best short feature was the video taping by a TV helicopter crew of Riverside cops beating undocumented workers. The best actor was the Riverside cop spokesperson who said that they had made a big mistake. Who exactly did they think was in that helicopter, anyway?

The message the Riverside cops sent is clear. If you are an undocumented worker, do exactly as we say in Riverside. We may lose in court, but you may lose your life. The same as Caterpillar, Bridgestone-Firestone or any big company that gets fined for violating OSHA laws or NLRB decisions. They

pay the fine because it's just the "cost of doing business." Same for the Riverside cops.

Workers in the U.S. need to demand severe punishment for the cops that did the beating. A complete independent investigation by workers through their organizations, especially the Farmworkers' unions. It should include seizing police records to determine how much the higher officers participated in the action and its preparation.

Mostly though, all workers need to draw the conclusion: workers will never be safe from the police. Professional law enforcement is as outmoded as gun-slinging sheriffs. We need armed workers' defense guards in our communities. As part of each person's contribution to society, they spend some time each week with their sisters and brothers, watching over their neighborhood. Workers defense guards are an important part of the fight for a workers' government.

Cuba

Cuban military forces shot down two planes flown by gusanos out of Miami, Florida. The planes crossed into Cuban air space and were asked several times to identify themselves, the customary means of beginning non-threatening communication. Instead, the gusanos, thinking they were Top Gun pilots, ignored the requests for information and the warnings.

Clinton was looking for a way to look tough, and he found it in beating up on Cuba, once again. He supported the latest anti-Cuban bill passed by the Congress, the Burton-Helms Act. Senator Jesse Helms, a right-wing loud mouth funded by the rich from across the country, and Bill Clinton agree on this one. The lesson here: Democrats and Republicans are the same when it comes to Cuba.

The Cuban Communist Party prefers Democrats to Republicans, in part because so many of its big name supporters in the U.S. are tied to certain Democrats. These ties hurt Cuba and help the rich and Jesse Helms. All

of those who want to force the U.S. to lift its blockade should support the Labor Party Convention. Even if it does not take a formal position in defense of Cuba, this party's presence, and the weight it gives to the workers' struggle against the rich, will help Cuba more than all the Democratic Party "friends" of Cuba put together.

China

What's up in the Far East? The U.S. sends its fleets to patrol the China coast near Taiwan. The Chinese government engages in military maneuvers near Taiwan during the first election in many years. North Korea appears to need foodstuffs. Are we in the U.S. getting any of the truth about what's going on?

Very little. Workers and peasants in China are fighting against their own government more and more with strikes and demonstrations. The Chinese leadership is in crisis. The big bourgeois powers of Europe, U.S. and Japan fear, with complete justification, the discontented millions, or more precisely, billions, of Asia. At the same time, they are lured by the profits they can make in China, especially if the Chinese government continues to support foreign investment and suppress the people.

For the same reason, the U.S. and Japan fear the disastrous rice crop in North Korea. The dictator Kim Il Sung is dead, and his son does not rule with the same authority as his father. There are elections in South Korea. The South Korean people are fighting the corruption of the government by the rich, who are all tied to the U.S. In the past, strong movements developed in the South for unity with the North.

There are similar but less dramatic developments in India and the Malaysian peninsula. There are important stirrings among the Japanese workers, too, including demonstrations to get the U.S. out of Okinawa.

U.S. workers must take the side of the peoples of the Far East, join with them to say: U.S. troops and fleets out of Asia!

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New Life is a socialist bulletin published in the interests of the labor party movement. New Life is a supporter of International Workers Unity, a tendency of the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution, founded by Leon Trotsky and his co-thinkers. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of New Life. These are expressed in editorials. Editorial Board: Margaret Guttshall, Tim James, Kim Morgan, Fred Russo.

No more Staleys or Caterpillars! National strike like the French workers!

On Sunday, April 14, there will be a rally in solidarity with striking newspaper workers with AFL-CIO leaders Sweeney, Trumka and Linda Chavez-Thompson. There may even be a march from the rally to the *News* or *Free Press* building. There are also rumors that Sweeney and Trumka are going to announce that there will be a national labor march on the anniversary of the first day of the strike, July 13.

Rallies and marches are good; striking workers and their supporters should certainly participate in them and work to make them as big and successful as possible.

But the new national leadership of the AFL-CIO and the local leadership of the striking unions still haven't taken a stand in favor of the kinds of actions necessary to win this strike, much less begun to organize for them. We need:

- a national labor march on Detroit *now*, not in July, and with mass picketing aimed at shutting down these scab operations;
- a one-day national solidarity strike, with mass picketing aimed at shutting them down;
- weekly union meetings of all striking workers in which striking workers have the opportunity to democratically discuss and vote on how they want to run the strike.

The French workers' November-December strike showed that these are the kinds of actions that can force the bosses to back down.

First the French railroad workers walked out. Then the bus, subway, gas, electric workers, teachers and students. They shut-down the entire transportation system, met in their workplaces every day, and voted on what to do. After 22 days they forced French corporations and the French government to retreat, to withdraw much of their plan to shutdown sections of the French railroad, reduce railroad workers' benefits, and dismantle other aspects of the French social security system. Transportation workers in Marseilles, who stayed on strike after others had returned to work, even forced their bosses to make part-time workers full-time and to abolish a two-tiered wage system.

Some U.S. union leaders say that it's not



possible to organize a strike in the U.S. like the one in France, that U.S. unions aren't large enough or that U.S. corporations and laws are too powerful. But look at the railroad workers, the Teamsters, other transportation workers, the UAW, etc., etc. Can anyone honestly say that these unions are not capable of shutting this country down?

Others say that it's possible, but it's not legal, that union leaders will be arrested and their assets seized. Is the U.S. government really going to try to arrest *all* the union leaders and seize *all* their assets at this time?

No more excuses. Striking workers and their supporters need to fight for all the union leaderships — national and local — to do everything necessary now. Striking workers must replace union leaders who refuse to do everything necessary. We need a victory celebration on July 13!

LPA young workers and students

Labor Party Advocates' founding convention is scheduled for June 6-9. In preparation for this, the young workers' and students' organizing committee held a meeting to draw up proposals for the platform that deal with the concerns and needs of young people. Other discussions included fundraising to send young workers to the convention as delegates and delegate elections.

The committee discussed the need for the labor party to fight for jobs with good pay, universal healthcare for all and expanding civil rights for women and homosexuals. After long debate over proposals for the platform, the committee agreed to have people go home and think about ideas and come to the next meeting with them.

The cost of the convention is around \$300

per person. So the committee has decided to work on having fundraisers so the largest possible number of young workers can participate in the convention. Ideas from parties to having speakers at coffee houses were put forth.

With the delegate elections coming up, the committee stressed the importance of having young workers and students elected as delegates. The only way for youth to have a voice on the floor of the convention is by young people being elected as delegates. The committee urged everyone to come to the Labor Party Advocates' election and to reach out to other young LPAers to come out and vote. As well, the committee felt that it was still important to recruit. If the labor party is to represent youth, then young people must be part of it.—Tim James