
NEW LIFE

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

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Jobs and living wages for all!

**Inside: Lessons of the
1996 elections; 79 years
of the Russian Revolution**

The national leadership of the Labor Party recently decided to organize a national campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage.

We urge workers and students to support this campaign and work to make it as big and successful as possible.

A campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage is not a total solution to the problems facing youth and workers. We need:

- laws for dividing up all work available among all available to work; a shorter work week without cutting pay so more can work; programs of public works to provide jobs at living wages; a \$10/hour minimum wage with a cost-of-living allowance;

- laws against discrimination against youth, women, and peoples of color;

- a labor government based on an independent mass mobilization to carry out and enforce these laws and crush the resistance of the rich.

Above all, we need socialism — a workers' revolutionary democracy, public and collective ownership of the biggest enterprises, and a planned economy.

A campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage won't bring these things automatically. But it can be a step in this direction.

It can bring together working class and popular forces that think there is something deeply wrong with this society, that a job at a living wage is a right, not a privilege, that this principle should be part of the documents that define the nature of this society. It can pave the way for a fight within the unions for the unions to make a united fight for basic rights for all working people, instead of just concerning themselves with what the boss wants and a small percentage of their own membership. It can help expose all the rich politicians and well-off labor leaders who claim to be on the side of the workers and aren't.

Support the campaign for a constitutional amendment for the right to a job at a living wage! Join the Labor Party!—New Life ☐

Lessons of the 1996 elections ...

Stop labor support to Democrats and Republicans!

The organized labor movement in the United States spent from \$70 million to \$300 million on trying to convince workers to vote in the 1996 elections, in particular, to vote for Democratic Party candidates. Yet the turn out in this election was 49%, the lowest since 1924. The Democratic Party candidate won the presidency; Democrats won some Senate and House races. But the labor movement did *not* succeed in getting a majority in the House and the Senate for the Democratic Party, which was its goal.

The leadership of the labor movement sacrificed a tremendous amount to elect Democrats. It refused to organize a national labor march on Detroit in solidarity with striking newspaper workers. It refused to endorse the Labor Party. It refused to organize a movement against Clinton's decision to abolish the guarantee of funds to poor women and children. It took no stand against the U.S.'s military attacks on Iraq.

It lied about and covered Democratic Party attacks on the working class. In Detroit, where 40% to 60% of children are dependent on public funds, the labor leadership said almost nothing against Clinton's decision to end the guarantee of public funds. Detroit newspaper strikers who wrote to the strikers' paper complaining about Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, leading Democratic Party candidates giving interviews to scab reporters, were told that they couldn't keep on putting ads in the paper complaining about Levin and Stabenow.

These are some of the consequences of labor support to Democrats.

Was it really worth the cost? Why wasn't there a bigger turnout? Why wasn't labor able to get a majority for the Democrats?

First, many of the Democrats don't want to win. It's much better for both parties if neither party has the presidency *and* a majority in the House and the Senate. That way, each can blame the other for the problems.

Many labor leaders will say there wasn't a bigger turnout and there weren't more votes for Democrats because too many workers are lazy and indifferent or Republicans, backward, conservative.

Obviously, there are some workers who are lazy and indifferent, others who are Repub-



Detroiters participate in the October 12 march in defense of immigrants.

licans, backward, conservative. But this isn't the majority of workers and they certainly aren't the fundamental problem.

Many workers don't vote because they don't see *any* candidates that represent them. The AFL-CIO's \$70 million hasn't changed their minds. Some workers are hostile to the union leadership because it's signed so many sell-out contracts. If the union leadership says vote for the Democrats, some workers will do the opposite.

The votes in the 1996 elections suggest that no matter what the labor leadership does, workers are not going to vote for Democrats in large numbers again, as long as leading Democrat Party candidates make so little effort to even pretend to represent workers.

There was a small working class alternative in this election. The Workers World Party was on the ballot in Michigan. The Socialist Workers Party had a candidate on the ballot. A newspaper striker, Doug Young, was on the ballot as an independent. These parties, candidates, and supporters convinced newspaper strikers in Detroit and others who had never voted for working class candidates before to do so, which was very positive.

However, based on what we know about the votes so far, it seems that none of these campaigns was able to turn the tide of working class disinterest and disgust with the elections. Votes for Workers World Party candidates *fell* in comparison with votes for their candidates in the last election. Doug Young got 717 votes. This is certainly a

respectable number of votes given the Young campaign's limited resources and the unions' massive campaign to vote Democratic. But it is obviously much less than the massive turnout for a working class candidate that the situation demands and that Doug and some of his supporters hoped for.

What can be learned from this experience?

If we want to organize workers and the oppressed population to fight for their rights and needs during elections, against the Republicans and the Democrats, we are going to have to go into the unions and fight for the unions to stop all forms of support to Republicans and Democrats and to put forward independent union or independent labor candidates for public office. We are going to have to fight for the Labor Party to take a stand in favor of this and for all working class organizations to make a common fight for this goal. Labor Party slates and/or united independent working class slates would be one way to fight for this goal.

As long as the fight against labor support to Republicans and Democrats, for independent labor and/or working class candidates is confined to a relatively small number of workers and activists, and with each group or tendency working separately, we aren't going to make much progress.

All opponents of labor support to Republicans and Democrats, all partisans of independent labor and/or working class candidates, need to make a common fight for this goal. — M. Guttshall □

Why *New Life* opposes Democrats and Republicans

New Life is a working class, revolutionary, Marxist tendency in the labor movement.

We see that we live in a society that is divided into classes.

All the institutions that exist in this society basically belong to one class or another.

The unions, for example, basically belong to the working class, although many have been dominated by and taken over by tendencies hostile to the working class.

The Republican and Democratic parties on the other hand originated in and continue to belong to the capitalist ruling class.

As long as the classes at the bottom of this society and their institutions, like the working class and its unions, continue to support the classes at the top of this society and their institutions, like the capitalist ruling class and its political parties — whether its by speaking out for them, contributing money to them, or voting for their candidates in elections —, class society is going to continue to exist. The working class is going to continue to be exploited and oppressed.

That many workers continue to vote for the same candidates that the exploiters vote for, shows that many workers still have a slave mentality. All they think they can achieve at the moment is to get the best possible master. They aren't yet focused on getting rid of all masters, and freeing themselves from capitalist slavery once and for all.

But what about Democratic Party politicians like Maryann Mahaffey and John Conyers? They walk picket lines, help sell the Detroit newspaper strikers' paper, speak out against scab paper sellers. This is true, but they also urge workers to vote for the Democratic Party and Democratic Party candidates who have done absolutely nothing for the strike. What they give with one hand, they take away with the other. In fact, this is their role. Bourgeois institutions have always had "working class" elements within them whose specialty is reaching out to workers and getting working class support for bourgeois institutions.

This is why New Life urged workers to vote for the Labor Party by voting for working class parties and candidates on the ballot, like the Workers World Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and Doug Young. We also

urged workers to vote for Ralph Nader; we thought Nader was a member of the Labor Party and was speaking out for the Labor Party. Since that time we have seen major interviews in which he hasn't said a word about being a member of the Labor Party or a word in favor of the Labor Party. So we don't think the working class can promote

The Teamsters' election: For Ron Carey without illusions ...

Teamsters throughout the United States are now campaigning for Ron Carey for president of the union against Jimmy Hoffa, Jr., the candidate of the old leadership of the union, which endorsed the Republican Party and presided over the loss of members and weakening of the union for years.

We urge Teamsters to support, campaign, and vote for Ron Carey for president against Jimmy Hoffa, Jr. Unlike Jimmy Hoffa, Jr. and his colleagues, since Carey was elected president several years ago, Carey has called and organized two major nationwide strikes, one against UPS, the other against major over-the-road carriers. He also spoke against the AFL-CIO endorsing Clinton right away and has not tried to stop Teamsters active in the Labor Party from building support for the Labor Party in the Teamsters' union. Generally speaking, Carey doesn't try to stop rank-and-file Teamsters from having a say-so in their union to the extent that Hoffa, Jr. and his colleagues have.

So we don't agree with those who say that there is no important difference between Hoffa and Carey. We think it's very important for Teamsters to get out and campaign for Carey, vote for Carey, and do everything possible to see that Carey wins this election against Hoffa.

At the same time, we have to say that we don't think that Carey represents a total solution to the problems facing Teamsters. Carey has *not* taken a public stand in favor of the kind of mass action necessary to stop production and distribution of the scab newspapers in Detroit. Nor has he taken a public stand in favor of rank-and-file democratic control over the strike. Some of Carey's co-thinkers and co-workers have been some of the most vocal opponents of these things, like Eddie Burke. Carey's co-thinkers and co-workers have developed the line of argument that one big mass action aimed at stopping production and distribution isn't going to be enough. So instead of one (or more!) mass actions aimed at stopping production/distribution, they promoted a series

of relatively small, relatively isolated actions that have barely stopped production/distribution at all.

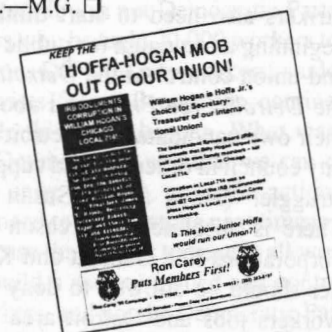
They say that 2,000 strikers can't discuss and decide strike strategy, that this has to be discussed and decided by small groups of professional organizers who then give orders to strikers. But they confuse strategy and tactics. Discussing and deciding strategy is discussing and deciding whether to rely on the courts, the boycott of advertisers, non-violent civil disobedience, and/or mass action aimed at stopping production/distribution. Once the fundamental strategy is decided, then you talk about the tactics, the details. 2,000 strikers are quite capable of deciding on strategy. There is no reason to be clandestine about strategy. Being clandestine about strategy is being undemocratic.

Being clandestine about tactics, details, may be necessary at times. But even here it is necessary to err on the side of rank-and-file democratic control. Carey's co-thinkers and co-workers were also involved in "reorganizing strike headquarters." This consisted of getting rid of rank-and-file strikers and strike supporters and replacing them with various AFL-CIO officials who knew little or nothing about the strike or Detroit.

Workers and activists campaigning for Carey should be frank about his strengths and limitations. Embellishing Carey, pretending he's something he's not, won't aid the working class.—M.G. □

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Mass action to stop scab papers!

The Action Coalition of Strikers and Supporters (ACOSS) and Friends of Labor, two groups of rank-and-file newspaper workers and supporters, organized a "Halloween Party" and picketing at the gates of the scab plant in downtown Detroit, on Thursday, October 31.

Unfortunately, there were only about 150-300 pickets there. The Detroit police, under the authority of Mayor Dennis Archer, were able to break up the picket lines and escort the scab delivery trucks to safety relatively easily. The police attacked the picket lines at least twice, and cleared a path for scab delivery trucks. When it came time for the scab delivery trucks to leave the plant, the Detroit police sent at least 50 gang squad cards who parked their cars in a way that blocked the street, preventing pickets from moving from one gate to another. They also put on riot gear and began marching up and down the street in formation, chanting "hup, hup" and brandishing clubs.

The Detroit police escort of the scab delivery trucks shows, once again, that Detroit newspaper strikers are not just up against the owners of Gannett and Knight-Ridder and their private armed forces. They are also up against the Archer administration and public armed forces.

The only way to overcome these forces and their power (undoubtedly backed by the owners of GM, Ford, and Chrysler!), and force Gannett and Knight-Ridder to negotiate, is with a massive mobilization of the entire labor movement. We need a mass labor march on Detroit aimed at stopping production/distribution of the scab papers and/or a citywide, statewide, or nationwide solidarity strike for one or more days, as many strikers and supporters have said many times.

Strikers also need to start thinking about beginning a campaign for public ownership and union control of the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* and about running their own candidates for Detroit mayor and city council in order to build support for this struggle. (How about Susan Watson?) There is absolutely no reason why giant corporations like Gannett and Knight-Ridder should be allowed to deny newspaper workers jobs and Detroit area residents a decent daily publication for over a year. Detroit area law allows representatives of



717 votes for Doug Young!

Doug Young, a newspaper striker, member of the Labor Party, and independent working class candidate for Michigan State Representative in Shelby Township got 717 votes. The Republican got about 22,000, the Democrat about 14,000, the Libertarian about 770.

Some of Doug's supporters are disappointed that Doug didn't get more votes. They thought he was a good candidate, he did a good job, and more workers and union members should have gotten out and voted for him. We agree and we think this disappointment is understandable.

But there is another way to look at the situation. This is the first time in many, many years that a group of workers and working class activists has run any kind of independent working class candidate in Shelby Township. Shelby Township is quite far away from where most working class activists in the Detroit area live. It wasn't until the very last minute that the newspaper strikers'

No treats for strikers, only tricks

About 150 newspaper strikers and supporters celebrated Halloween by picketing at the *Free Press* riverfront plant. Many picketers were dressed in costumes. Some as your typical Halloween ghouls and ghosts, and some in more struggle-related dress like the ghosts of locked-out Staley workers and terrifying corporate bosses.

As the holiday-inspired picketers walked the line, the Detroit cops began to mass across the street. When the first truck arrived, the line tightened up. The truck escorted by cops pushed into the crowd. Cops began pushing and shoving people back using clubs until people were up against the fence with no place to go. It took a few minutes but the truck entered the plant.

When the second truck arrived, the police moved

the public to seize private property and use it for public purposes when it is in the best interests of the public. Certainly this is the case with the *News* and the *Free Press*. Why shouldn't we seize this property and turn these enterprises into public utilities under union control? In any event, the threat of doing this will certainly encourage the owners to come to the bargaining table.

Unfortunately, all the major tendencies in the leadership of the striking unions and in the labor movement as a whole, including the forces around Hoffa, Sweeney and (Continued on page 5)

publication and the striking unions gave any kind of support to Doug at all. Given this, we think Doug did very well. 717 votes for a newspaper striker and independent working class candidate like Doug Young — even if we say that a certain percentage of these votes are accidental and meaningless — shows that there are several hundred potential members of the Labor Party in Shelby Township. If we can recruit some of the workers who voted for Doug to the Labor Party, if we can form a Labor Party group in Shelby Township and build more support for the Labor Party in Shelby Township, the next time an election comes around, these figures are going to change.

Doug's campaign shows that there are workers who are very capable of speaking out for the working class and running in elections. Workers need to take advantage of elections to speak out for themselves and stop leaving this arena to upper class enemies of the working class. □

quickly. As they pressed the crowd, they were yelling at people, grabbing people and pushing them down to the ground. They used the clubs to push people and they sprayed pepper gas into the crowd. When they had people once again up against the fence, the truck moved in through the gate.

Later in the evening the cops cleared the area and used squad cars to escort 6 more trucks out of the plant. During the clash, one cop was dragged away by other officers for losing her cool and spraying the crowd with pepper gas. The EMS was called in to treat two women for the gas attack.

At one point, five cops rushed into the crowd and arrested a woman for asserting the right to freedom of speech! — Tim James □

(Continued from page 4)

Trumka, and Carey, seem to be very hostile to the fight for mass action aimed at stopping production and distribution of the scab papers.

They put forward all sorts of arguments against it and they are ever-changing. We'll never get enough people; the strikers themselves don't want to do anything; we'll never get anyone else. Even if we do succeed in organizing a really big action, it won't do any good. The owners will just print the paper somewhere else and/or start up again the next day. It's against the law. Leaders and members will be arrested and imprisoned. Unions will be fined. Leaders and members may even be attacked by the National Guard.

What they don't see, or don't want anyone to see, is that this strike is just one battle in a class war. Sooner or later the labor movement is going to have to organize and mobilize itself in a massive way against the employers, or it is going to be pushed back further and further until daily life is nothing but poverty and misery. The past 50 years, in which many working people in the U.S. have been able to live relatively comfortable lives without fighting in a massive way, is the exception rather than the rule on this planet. For decades, even centuries, in almost every country, working people have had to fight, even with arms, to get enough to eat and a roof. Now conditions in the U.S. are becoming more as they are in other countries. They are going to stay this way until workers take over all the property that is rightfully theirs and use these resources to produce and distribute what people need.

Sooner or later workers and their unions are going to have to organize a massive mobilization against the employers. Why wait? Why not start now? The longer we wait, the more working people will be hurt.

What can strikers and supporters do to build more support for mass action aimed at stopping production and distribution? First, they need to make a common fight. All partisans of mass action to stop production and distribution need to get together, map out plans, and coordinate their efforts. Second, they need to systematically answer all the arguments put forward by the leadership against mass action.

The more strikers fight for mass action to stop production and distribution, the more difficult it will be for forces that are prepared to totally sell-out the struggle.—M.G.

20,000 DC marchers declare: No human being is illegal!

On October 12th, 20,000 immigrants and their supporters converged on the nation's capital to protest attacks on immigrant rights. There were immigrants from many different countries, including Haiti, Vietnam and Bangladesh, but the vast majority of the marchers were Latino. Many demonstrators carried signs in Spanish such as "Migra no, Raza sí!" condemning the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) — known as "la migra" — which has recently raided workplaces across the coun-



try and deported immigrant workers.

The demonstration was organized by a coalition of immigrant and Latino groups, called Coordinadora '96. Its official demands were carried on bilingual banners at the beginning of the march: human and constitutional rights for all; equal opportunities and affirmative action; free education for all; preserve and expand public health services; create citizen police review boards; reform labor laws; raise the minimum wage to \$7 per hour; extend government amnesty for undocumented workers. The most popular statement on thousands of signs proclaimed "No human being is illegal." Others called for an end to U.S. military support of the Mexican government against the Zapatistas, repeal of the recent legislation denying welfare to immigrants and an end to police brutality. Flyers were circulated by a group from New York asking everyone to wear black on October 22nd for a national day of protest against police brutality.

Workers of the world, unite!

The greatest significance of the demonstration was that it brought together Latino workers from all over North and South America in common struggle. The most frequent chant of the marchers was, "La Raza unida jamás será vencida," — "Latinos united will never be defeated." The huge size of the demonstration gave everyone a feeling of strength — and many an appreciation for the power of workers organized in mass action. There were so many people that

it was possible to watch the march go by for over an hour and still not see the beginning or the end.

It was also invigorating to see thousands of young people joined in political action. So much of the time the media and older people accuse young people of being apathetic and uninvolved. But here was a crowd that was dominated by youth — young workers and students who had traveled hundreds (and thousands) of miles in cramped buses to

show their strength — to demand that all of us be treated equally.

An opportunity wasted

Unfortunately, this mass of dedicated protesters was delivered to a rally in the Ellipse (across the street from the White House) where speakers attempted to channel the energy of the crowd into support for the Democratic Party. Union leaders (including Linda Chavez-Thompson of the AFL-CIO) and Democratic Party politicians all concluded that the power of this group was in voting for Democrats in the November election. The fact that it was a Democratic president who signed legislation denying welfare to poor immigrants, allowing massive increases in border patrol police, and stripping political refugees of their rights for asylum, was ignored. Given this betrayal, it's not surprising that the majority of the crowd dissipated within an hour.

Once again, the strength of workers was wasted. It was not Democratic Party politicians who brought 20,000 workers to Washington, DC — it was workers, students and activists from all over the continent who made this event happen. What was shown on October 12th was that we can organize and unite in large, powerful actions. What we need to demonstrate next time is how we can use that power to benefit all workers — to build a society owned and controlled by workers, and not the Democratic Party lackeys of the rich. —K. Morgan □

Global Conflict

Argentina

Workers in Argentina staged a 36-hour general strike September 26-27 against the Menem government's plans to privatize state industry, increase the work day from 8 to 12 hours, and change other progressive laws. This is the second general strike in a month and the largest mobilization in many years. An estimated 80-90% of the workers participated. By the end of the strike, even Menem described it as "relatively successful."

The Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (MST), fraternal organization of New Life in International Workers Unity, a tendency of the Fourth International, had a contingent of 1300 workers in the demonstration in Buenos Aires. The MST is demanding: "No to the flexibilization! (That is the name given to the changes in labor law.) Continue the general strike until the government falls and the plans are stopped! For an emergency economic plan for the workers! Suspend payment of the foreign debt! CGT [main union federation] call a Congress of the Ranks of the CGT."

Germany

Over 400,000 metal workers went on a one-day strike October 1 to force their employers to keep their present contracts. The Kohl government passed a law that allowed companies to reduce sick pay from 100% of wages to 80%. Some of the biggest companies in Germany tried to implement the law immediately, breaking their contracts with the unions. After fruitless negotiations, union leaders called the strike. Daimler-Benz and other major auto companies then announced that they would not introduce the cuts immediately, but the strikes went ahead. The action occurred on the 40th anniversary of the strikes that won these gains.

Canada

Hundreds of thousands went on strike and demonstrated in Toronto, Canada's biggest city and financial capital, on October 26-27 to protest the Ontario government's attacks on workers and social legislation. The "Days of Protest" were the biggest labor actions in Canada since the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919. Called the "Newt of the North," the head of the government, Harris, has revised labor laws, cut welfare payments and the education budget and closed public hospitals.

Mexico

The Zedillo government announced that it was abandoning plans to privatize the nationalized oil industry. Promised to foreign investors for 23 months, the privatization was the centerpiece of the International Monetary Fund imposed program for Mexico. The announcement of the sale had caused months of protests by oil and chemical workers. The government backed down in the face of growing opposition.

Bosnia

Elections were held in Bosnia last month. The elections were imposed on Bosnia by the U.S. and its European allies through the Dayton Peace Accords after the military offensive of the Bosnian army had nearly succeeded in routing the Serbian fascist forces from their country. In support of the Serbian army, the U.S. and European imperialist powers imposed the Dayton Accords to prevent Bosnia from achieving self-determination and to save the Milosevic regime in Serbia as its watchdog in the former Yugoslavia. The elections have not brought peace to Bosnia. The Serbs are boycotting the government. The "coalition presidency" has met once for 4 hours; the parliament not at all. The solution is self-determination for Bosnia; UN and U.S. troops out! Lift the arms embargo!

Belarus

On October 19, in Minsk, the capital, thousands protested against the Lukashenko government's plans to increase its dictatorial powers. Belarus is one of the large industrial states created by the breakup of the former Soviet Union. Lukashenko is a former director of a collective farm; a Stalinist politician. He has arrested and imprisoned worker oppositionists many times before. The struggle in Belarus is a struggle for political freedoms so that the workers can develop their own parties, and for working class control of the economy; both require the downfall of the Lukashenko government.

Russia

Russian coal miners in the Vorkuta region struck for 3 days for back pay September 30-October 3. The strike ended when the government paid them for May and part of June. Their strike was part of a wave of strikes and demonstrations by workers who haven't been paid at state-owned workplaces or at workplaces ostensibly owned by capitalists but in reality still controlled by the state.

Protests by African-Americans against police brutality and racism

On October 24, African-Americans in St. Petersburg, Florida, violently protested the murder of an 18-year-old by police. The rebellion occurred following the shooting during a routine traffic stop around 5:30 pm. One witness said that the man had his hands in the air when he was shot 5 times. As soon as it became dark, the police invaded the community in riot gear. Over 30 fires were started and hundreds swarmed into the streets, throwing bricks and bottles at police. This is the 6th shooting in 1996 in St. Petersburg. This is the 5th rebellion over police killings in Florida since 1980.

In Los Angeles, hundreds protested against the U.S. government's ties to drug dealers who supported the U.S. contra efforts in Nicaragua by introducing crack cocaine into African-American neighborhoods in the early 1980s. The revelations in the *San Jose Mercury News* confirm what has been said in socialist and progressive papers for years, and for which one organization paid 1 million dollars in fines.

Students at University of New York at Binghamton protested campus police assaults by occupying the administration building for a week. During a protest against a right-wing president of the Student Association at University of New York at Binghamton, campus police pepper-gassed students for trying to enter a Student Association meeting. The sit-in ended when the university promised to ask the District Attorney to look into the pepper gas incident.

Hundreds protested the not-guilty verdict rendered in the trial of New York City cop Livoti for killing Anthony Baez. The judge admitted that Livoti's chokehold killed Baez, but the prosecution hadn't presented a good case. Livoti strangled Baez after his football bounced off the cop's car.

The 1991 Gulf War

The "smart" war in which the U.S. government claimed it vanquished the Iraqis with nary a drop of blood spilt or a bead of sweat drawn, is turning into a nightmare for many U.S. soldiers. The U.S. government is finally admitting that thousands who became sick since the war may be telling the truth. "We've decided, after looking at the facts, that it would be best to go out and aggressively reach out to those 20,000 people," said Kenneth Bacon, Defense Department spokesperson, covering for 5 years of denials and inaction. □

A hero for a generation

Robert Williams, armed defender and organizer of the Black community, broadcaster of "Radio Free Dixie" from Cuba, died Oct. 15, 1996. He was a hero to an entire generation of revolutionaries. A memorial meeting at Wayne State University was attended by about 200 supporters.

Robert Williams organized Black working class people in Monroe County, North Carolina to arm and defend themselves from Ku Klux Klan attacks. He recruited over 60, many ex-service men, in the late 1950s. They waged many struggles for Black rights. He recounted his struggle in *Negroes with Guns*, a book that is out of print today. The memorial meeting raised over \$2500 to republish it.

Several African-American political tendencies worked together on this memorial, including some who have recently become active in the Labor Party. It was a good sign for the future that they worked together in spite of long-standing differences.

Below is an excerpt from the book. After 35 years, it still rings with the revolutionary spirit and passion that inspired democratic and revolutionary people around the world.

"There were about two or three thousand people along the highway ... The crowd started screaming, 'Kill the niggers!'... What they didn't know was that we were armed... I had two rifles and a pistol in the car. When this fellow started to draw back his baseball bat, I put an Army .45 up in the window of the car and pointed it right into his face and I didn't say a word. He looked at the pistol and he didn't say anything. He started to back away from the car.

"All this time three policemen had been standing about fifty feet away from us while we kept waiting in the car for them to come and rescue us. Then when they saw that we were armed and the mob couldn't take us, two of the policemen started running. One



ran straight to me and he grabbed me on the shoulder and said, 'Surrender your weapon! Surrender your weapon!' I struck him in the face and knocked him back away from the car and put my carbine in his face and told him we were not going to be lynched. The other policemen who had run around the side of the car started to draw his revolver out of the holster. He was hoping to shoot me in the back. They didn't know that we had more than one gun. One of the students (who was seventeen years old) put a .45 in the policemen's face and told him that if he pulled out his pistol he would kill him. The policemen started putting his gun back into the holster and backing away from the car, and he fell into the ditch ...

"... (a city councilman) conceded that I had a right to picket and he said that if I were willing to go home he would see that I was escorted. I asked him who was going to escort us home. He said 'the police.' I told him that I might as well go with the Ku Klux Klan as with them ... I told them that that I wasn't going to leave until they cleared the highway. I also told them that if necessary we would make our stand right there ... As a result of our stand ... no one got hurt in a situation where normally (in the South) a lot of Negro blood would have flowed ...

"The future belongs to today's oppressed and I shall be witness to that future in the liberation of the Afro-American." — F.R. □

(Continued from back page)

totally devoted to this struggle in order for it to be successful.

The outcome of the struggle to overthrow the power of the privileged bureaucracy, reestablish a workers' revolutionary democracy, and begin to build socialism again in Russia and other republics from the old USSR is important for young people and working people in every country. If this struggle is successful, it will be a step forward for the struggle for socialism everywhere. If it's not, if the privileged bureaucracy succeeds in privatizing everything, in bringing back a capitalist way of doing everything, in developing a capitalist class, it's going to be a blow to the struggle for socialism everywhere.

New Life is part of International Workers Unity, a tendency of the Fourth International, an organization founded by Trotsky, and by co-thinkers and followers of Lenin and Trotsky, to continue their struggle. We are trying to unify all the tendencies of the Fourth International that continue to fight for its goal — working class and socialist revolution, against the imperialists and capitalists and against the privileged labor bureaucracies. We are convinced that this is absolutely essential in order to build parties that can lead workers to power in every country. Revolutionaries in every country who continue to be true to basic principles have to work together.

79 years after the first Russian workers' revolution, the revolution is still alive. It lives in the struggles of the Russian workers and the oppressed nationalities against the privileged bureaucracy. It lives in the second revolution against this privileged bureaucracy that is developing. And it lives in all the revolutionary groups and tendencies associated with the Fourth International that are still fighting for working class and socialist revolution against the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies throughout the world. — M. Guttshall □

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79 years of the first Russian workers' revolution

November 7th — or October 25th, if one goes by the calendar used in Russia at the time — is the 79th anniversary of the first Russian workers' revolution.

This revolution is important because it is the first time that workers not only took power but also succeeded in holding onto it and in beginning to build a socialist society. A socialist society is a society in which workers have overthrown the power of the capitalists, established their own government, taken over the most important enterprises, and begun to plan and organize the production and distribution of goods in accord with the interests of the working majority.

Workers took power and established their own government in Paris in 1871 — the famous Paris Commune —, but they were unable to hold onto power for long. Russian workers in 1917 were able to do so for two reasons: the actual material conditions at the time and the Bolshevik Party. The capitalist system was in a terrible crisis. It had reached the point where the capitalists were no longer able to produce goods and make a profit without waging war on each other with the goal of acquiring control over raw materials, destroying their competitors, and acquiring control over markets. In addition, Russian revolutionaries and workers had succeeded in building a party totally devoted to the working class and the fight for workers' power, a party forged in two decades of ideological and practical struggle for the working class to be totally independent of the other classes in the society. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself, the Bolshevik Party was there to lead the working class in overthrowing the old order and establishing a new order, when all the other classes in society opposed this.

Imperialist and capitalist propagandists say that the Russian workers' revolution came to nothing, that socialism and communism are totally dead. But they still set aside a lot of time and money to attack the Russian workers' revolution and its parties and leaders, especially Lenin and Trotsky. This is because the Russian workers' revolution and its parties and leaders have been an inspiring example of working class struggle, courage, daring, power and leadership to so many workers and revolutionaries.

Their main line of attack is to say that it was the Russian workers' revolution, its party and its leadership, that led directly to the terrible dictatorship of the privileged bu-

reaucracy in and around the Communist Party and led by Stalin, and that nothing remains of any of the positive things that the revolution might have accomplished. This isn't true.

Thousands of Russian workers and revolutionaries, including and especially Lenin and Trotsky, fought until they died against the rise of the privileged bureaucracy and its attempt to take over the Bolshevik Party (also known as the Communist Party). Their opposition was so irreconcilable that the privileged bureaucracy and Stalin weren't able to takeover the Bolshevik Party until after they had killed thousands of old Bolsheviks, including *every single member of the old Bolshevik Central Committee except Stalin and Trotsky* who was in exile.

The Russian workers' revolution and the Bolshevik Party didn't lead to the dictatorship of the privileged bureaucracy and the development of the Stalinist Communist Party. Quite the contrary. Workers had to wage a war against 21 imperialist armies that invaded the country, many of the most devoted and educated workers were killed, wounded and/or worn out in the war, the workers weren't able to spread the revolution to other countries and the capitalists were able to keep putting pressure on the young workers' state. Old Czarist functionaries, old bourgeois officials, opportunist workers' leaders, took advantage of the situation. They couldn't overthrow all the institutions established by the workers' revolution, but they began to takeover them, to undermine them from within, and drive out the revolutionaries. In other words, they began to try to hold back and destroy the revolution from within.

This privileged bureaucracy has obviously done a tremendous amount of damage. The workers' councils, in which workers decided democratically what they wanted to

do, have been destroyed. The Bolshevik Party was destroyed. Thousands of revolutionary workers were killed. The Third International was destroyed. For many, socialism, communism, Stalinism, and the dictatorship of a privileged bureaucracy have become synonymous.

But this privileged bureaucracy hasn't been able to destroy all the gains of the revolution. Even now, 79 years later, when the privileged bureaucracy is threatened by working class and popular uprisings, when it's no longer able to exercise a total dictatorship, when it's trying to privatize banks and basic industry and sell them to the capitalists at bargain basement prices, it's meeting ferocious resistance from the working class. 79 years after the first Russian workers' revolution, there are millions of workers in Russia — no matter what they call themselves, no matter what ideology they may adhere to — who don't think it's OK for them to be laid off and have all their wages and benefits cut so that a small minority can enrich itself at their expense. Workers are not only continuing to fight the bureaucracy and its privileges and repression and for more equality and democratic rights for themselves. Many are also fighting for the renationalization of banks and basic industries.

79 years after the first Russian workers' revolution, a new, second revolution continues to develop, this time against the privileged bureaucracy that has been undermining and holding back the revolution for so long. Like the first Russian workers' revolution, this revolution will come to a successful conclusion when it succeeds in overthrowing the power of the established order and in replacing it with a workers' revolutionary democracy that begins to build socialism again. As in the first Russian workers' revolution, workers need to build a party

(Continued on page 7)



Belarussians demonstrate against the Lukashenko government. These mobilizations are part of the new workers' revolution.