

SOCIALISM!



NO. 36 • JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1998 • \$1.00 • BOX 11128, DETROIT, MI 48211 • 313-730-4089

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For Labor Party Candidates in the year 2000!

All out for the next Labor Party Convention!



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The Interim National Council of the Labor Party recently adopted criteria for running Labor Party candidates in elections, which will be submitted to the Labor Party National Convention in November.

This decision is an important step forward for the Labor Party and all working people.

The statement submitted to the Interim National Council says, among other things:

“The Labor Party is unlike any other party in the United States. We stand independent of the corporations and their political representatives in the Democratic and Republican parties. Our overall strategy is for the majority of American people — working class people — to take political power. Within this framework of class independence, with the ultimate goal of achieving power, we accept the electoral tactic of running candidates.

“The Labor Party will run candidates for public office in order to elect representatives to positions where they can help enact and enforce laws and policies to benefit the working class. We will run at governmental levels where we can best advance the goals and priorities of the Labor Party. Unlike other political parties, public officials elected by the Labor Party will be accountable to the party membership and required to follow the positions outlined in the party platform.

“Although we accept electoral politics as an important tactic, we do not see it as the only tool needed to achieve working class power. Unlike other political parties, the Labor Party will be active before, during and between elections, building solidarity in our communities, workplaces, and unions ...

“The Labor Party will support only candidates for office who are Labor Party mem-

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No blood for oil! U.S. out of Iraq! →

Labor Party Candidates!

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bers running solely as Labor Party candidates. The Labor Party will not endorse any other candidates.

"The Labor Party is not politics as usual — we are a party of principle ..."

We urge all Labor Party members to support the decision to establish criteria for running Labor Party candidates and to begin working now to meet whatever criteria the Convention adopts.

The most serious problem facing the Labor Party is that the majority of the leadership of the labor movement in the United States does not support the Labor Party. Poll after poll shows that the majority of working people in the United States oppose both Republicans and Democrats and want a Labor Party now. But the majority of the labor leadership continues to refuse to support the Labor Party, continues to waste union time and money on Democrats and Republicans, in spite of the fact that they've betrayed workers again and again, and uses its ties to the bourgeois media and its position in the union apparatus to justify this policy and stop opposition.

The road forward for the Labor Party lies in a political fight inside the labor movement. The Labor Party needs to fight for the labor movement to join the Labor Party and run Labor Party candidates for office to fight for and enforce laws favorable to working people, to stop all forms of support to parties and candidates owned and controlled by the bosses.

Every Labor Party member should redouble his efforts to win the labor movement and all working people to the Labor Party. Set a goal to recruit more co-workers and friends to the Labor Party and work to achieve it. Make the year 2000 the year of the Labor Party and its candidates! — *Socialism!* □

**Detroit Metro Chapter
Labor Party Meeting
February 25, 7 pm
UAW Local 600
For more info:
248-788-6528**

The economic crisis in Asia

The economic crisis in Asia is a warning to every youth and worker.

While the bourgeois newspapers talk about financial crises, bank failures, loans, and other measures, youth and workers are just catching a tiny glimpse of the serious problems facing their counterparts in Asia.

Thousands of workers are being laid-off. Workplaces are being closed. Funds for unemployment compensation, healthcare, and other essential services are being cut.

Why is this happening? Once again the bourgeois press offers all sorts of explanations: irresponsibility on the part of this or that financial institution or nation; inexperience, bad traditions, bad methods ...

In reality, the fundamental problem is that bankers and businessmen (capitalists) have been investing heavily in Asia for quite sometime. Industry was relatively undeveloped; the workforce was relatively inexpensive and unorganized. So capitalists were able to make substantial profits in Asia.

Now the situation is changing. Industry is more developed; the workforce is becoming more educated, organized, and combative. It is more difficult for the capitalists to make the kinds of profits that they want to make. So they have been withdrawing their investments and seeking greener pastures.

The consequence: layoffs, workplace closings, cuts in social services, etc.

All the solutions to the crisis in Asia will, in the long run, only make the situation worse. International financial institutions are making loans to various governments on the condition that they go along with and promote more layoffs, workplace closings, cuts in social services. Foreign bankers and businessmen are buying up Asian businesses at bargain-basement prices, taking ownership and control even further out of the hands of Asian people.

The current economic crisis in Asia shows one of the fundamental problems with the capitalist economic system. The capitalists, who own and control everything necessary to produce and distribute necessities, allow this process to take place only when they can enrich themselves in this process. When the biggest capitalists can't make an adequate profit, they stop investing until the prices of labor and of plant, equipment, and raw materials fall so low that they can once again make a profit.



Workers showed the way in the South Korean general strike in early 1997.

Almost all bourgeois economists have expressed concern about the situation in Asia. They know that it is a matter of time before there is a recession, perhaps even a depression, in the United States and Europe. They fear the consequences.

As it becomes clearer and clearer that the capitalist economic system is unable to provide workers with basic necessities, more and more workers turn against the system and begin looking for alternatives.

As revolutionary socialists, we think that the economic crisis in Asia shows that it is impossible to rely on the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies to organize the production and distribution of necessities.

Workers need to fight for:

Workers' control of the most important enterprises throughout the world by law;

Collective ownership of the most important enterprises by law;

Workers' governments, composed of workers' representatives, elected in workplaces democratically, to coordinate production and distribution of necessities;

Arms and military training for workers so they can defend themselves and collective property, and suppress the resistance of the rich minority.

The working class is the class most capable of organizing production and distribution. It is the class that must rule.— F. Russo □

Solidarity with the UPS workers' president!

Drop all charges against Ron Carey!

The persecution of Ron Carey, president of the Teamsters' Union during the victorious UPS workers' strike, continues.

First government officials accused Carey of being involved in a scheme to give union money to the Democratic Party in exchange for Democratic Party supporters giving money to Carey's campaign. Then government officials ruled that Carey can't run for president again. Then they put pressure on the leadership of the Teamsters to bring charges against Carey and expel him from the union. Then they pressured Carey himself to resign.

We don't agree with many of Carey's policies. We don't think that any labor leader or organization should give money to the Republicans or the Democrats under any circumstances; these parties are owned and controlled by the bosses. We don't agree with the decision of Carey and his supporters to turn a deaf ear to Detroit newspaper workers fighting for a mass labor march on Detroit with the goal of shutting down the scab plants. We don't agree with his decision — made with other top union leaders, without the support of and behind the backs of the Detroit newspaper workers — to tell the owners of the scab papers that Detroit newspaper workers would go back to work under any conditions (the "unconditional offer" of February 14, 1997, otherwise known as the unconditional surrender or the Second St. Valentine's Day Massacre ...). If Carey was involved in a plan to give union funds to the Democratic Party in exchange for contributions to the Carey campaign, we don't agree with that either. But we don't see any reason to believe government or Democratic Party officials on this issue.

But government officials are not persecuting Carey because of the false policies that he pursued. Government officials are persecuting Carey because he and his supporters were working class and militant enough to prepare and organize a large, serious, and successful strike against the owners of UPS. The UPS strike terrified the wealthiest families and their supporters. So they have begun a systematic campaign to disrupt, disorganize, and ultimately destroy the union that led that strike by trying to force Carey and others who have supported him, like Rich Trumka, out of the labor movement.

The most serious problem facing the labor

movement and the working class in the U.S. is that there isn't a single major labor leader who has taken an open and public stand defending Carey against this persecution and demanding that the government drop all charges against Carey, drop all investigations into the Teamsters' Union, and get out of the Teamsters' Union now.

Nor is Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), the rank-and-file opposition within the Teamsters Union, waging an aggressive campaign to demand that government officials drop the charges against Carey and get out of the union now. On the contrary, TDU seems to regard Carey's exclusion as a done deal; it continues to rely on and work with government officials to oversee the coming elections.

All these developments show that there is a tremendous amount of confusion in the labor movement, even in the most working



class layers of the labor movement, which is leaving it open to exploitation and abuse by the bosses' and their government.

All the tendencies who are against the intervention of the bosses' and their government in the unions, who understand how dangerous it is to go along with this, who understand that the workers cannot rely on the bosses, the Republicans; the Democrats, or any elements in the government to defend their rights, need to make a common fight in the labor movement against this policy. □

Notes

Solidarity with workers of color!

There have been a series of attacks on the rights of workers and oppressed peoples of color in the Detroit area. Larry Nevers, one of the policemen involved in beating Malice Green to death, was released from prison. The judge overruled the decision of the Detroit jury, said the jury was prejudiced and let Nevers go. A group is starting a campaign against affirmative action programs at the University of Michigan, which are designed to make sure that a certain number of young people of color are admitted to the University. A Republican candidate for the State Legislature in Shelby Township recently put at a flyer suggesting that Black doctors are not as qualified as others, as if they had been able to become doctors simply because they are Black. The purpose of these attacks is obviously to put down and discredit Black people, and to turn white working people against them. Young people and workers of all ethnic groups need to take a strong stand against these attacks, in solidarity with workers and oppressed of color.

Cuba

The head of the Catholic Church recently visited Cuba and called for lifting the blockade against Cuba. But he also called for more freedom for opponents of the working class and socialist revolution in Cuba.

Workers in the United States should support the fight for lifting the blockade against Cuba, but not calls for more freedom for opponents of the workers' revolution. If these things go together, they will be used to reestablish more capitalist control in Cuba and push back the workers. On the contrary, the fight for lifting the blockade against Cuba must be accompanied by a fight for more direct workers' control of both the domestic economy and foreign trade, against the influence of the foreign capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracy in Cuba, in and around the Cuban Communist Party.

Panama

Under the pressure of workers and oppressed in Latin America, the U.S. agrees to get U.S. troops out of Panama by December 31, 1999. However, the U.S. has now changed its mind. Some are trying to maintain troops under the guise of fighting drugs. Others are trying to openly renegotiate an agreement to allow them to stay. Workers in the U.S. should fight to get all U.S. troops out of Panama and all foreign lands and waters. Labor movements in North and South America need to work together to fight for decent jobs, wages, working conditions, and all the other things that working people need. □

The 80th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution of 1917

Between capitalism and socialism

The Russian Revolution of October, 1917 has a dual historical importance. We can see it as an accomplishment of the Russian workers or the Russian revolutionaries, and compare it with the other great revolutions of the past: for example, with the French revolution in 1789, which had a bourgeois democratic character and dug the tomb for feudalism in Europe; with the Commune in Paris in 1871, in which the workers had the audacity to storm the heavens, but were crushed mercilessly by the capitalists. Or we can compare the Russian Revolution with other, later revolutions, like the one in China in 1949 or the one in Cuba in 1959. In this way, the differences in circumstances, tactics and results stand out.

The Russian Revolution then appears as an example full of admirable lessons, in a certain sense as a "model" of workers' revolution, perhaps one that has never been surpassed. But here we see only *one part* of its historical significance.

In order to see the other part, the most important part, it is necessary to see the Russian Revolution as the first chapter in the socialist revolution, only the first, with all

the virtues and defects of first attempts, with the enthusiasm and haste of all first chapters.

A new era

But when one speaks of the "socialist revolution," the word "revolution" already does not have the same meaning as it does when one says "the revolution of 1917." The "revolution" of 1917 consists of a series of enormous actions in the class struggle, intensified as much as possible, through which working people defeated their enemy, the capitalists, threw them out of power, and took power into their own hands. On the other hand, one says socialist "revolution" in order to describe an entire historic cycle of transformations in the regime in property and in production, during which capitalist civilization (based on the exploitation of wage labor by the private owners of the means of production) will be displaced by a different culture (based in the collective exploitation of the means of production by the workers themselves, associated and free). In this process of the socialist revolution, the victorious uprisings of the workers against the capitalists — like the one in 1917 — and the new revolutionary states, are decisive battles; they mark the rhythm and the strength of the transformation; they mark the chapters in the revolution.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 entered into history as the first chapter in the revolutionary transformation of the capitalist society of exploitation into the socialist society of the liberation of labor.

With the virtues and the defects of a first attempt.

It is necessary to add that the national conditions in Russia did not predispose the semi-Asiatic Russian peasantry, subjugated by landholders and bureaucrats, to take the first steps toward a socialist production and culture. Quite simply, circumstances were combined in such a way that the first steps toward socialism could be taken by a working class on a terrain less favorable for building a socialist society.

Imperfect and varied attempts

The Bolshevik leaders were very conscious: the Russian worker can take the first steps, but he must have, as soon as possible the help of the German worker, the English worker, the North American worker. The Russian worker can begin, be the first, to

"The Russian Revolution in 1917 entered into history as the first chapter in the revolutionary transformation of the capitalist society of exploitation into the socialist society of the liberation of labor.

"With the virtues and the defects of a first attempt...."

destroy the capitalist edifice, but alone he will never be able to conclude the socialist edifice.

And this is where those who speak of the Russian Revolution "as a model," or of the old USSR "as a model," good or bad, stumble, forgetting that the 1917 revolution and the history of the Soviet Union only have universal meaning as first chapters, first efforts, first sketches, in a socialist transformation that needs, in order to conquer, to base itself in the most powerful, concentrated, and technically advanced productive forces in the world, in the most developed and democratic cultures.

No one had fewer illusions than Lenin in Russian socialism as a supposed "model."

"We know that the transition from capitalism to socialism is a struggle that is extremely difficult," wrote Lenin in 1918. "But we are ready to support a thousand difficulties, we are ready to make a thousand attempts, and after a thousand attempts to undertake attempt number one thousand and one."

Lenin did not speak of the "Russian model of socialism," but of an attempt, or, better said, "attempts," plural. The thing was to attempt, to correct, even to fail. And then to try again. Not one hundred, but a thousand times if necessary; and, then, "one thousand and one." The Bolshevik workers tried more than one road. They advanced with cunning between 1917 and 1918, but the capitalists



V. Kozlinsky, *A Worker*, sketch for a street decoration, 1923

would not allow this: they rebelled. Then, between 1918 and 1921, they tried to reach socialism by way of a frontal and massive assault against capitalism. Nothing, they could not finish with it. Then they changed course again, in order to temporarily coexist with some capitalism "under control," between 1921 and 1924 ...

Many Russian revolutionaries dreamed of implanting, from their positions in power, a "model" of socialism taken from books or elaborated in heads. But, once in power, the Bolshevik workers learned that the social revolution was something different: it was to struggle to cultivate and to strengthen the first shoots of socialist economy and culture, in the midst of tenacious remains of capitalism and of new expressions of capitalism. Lenin criticized revolutionaries that imagined a direct, orderly and harmonious road toward socialism after taking power:

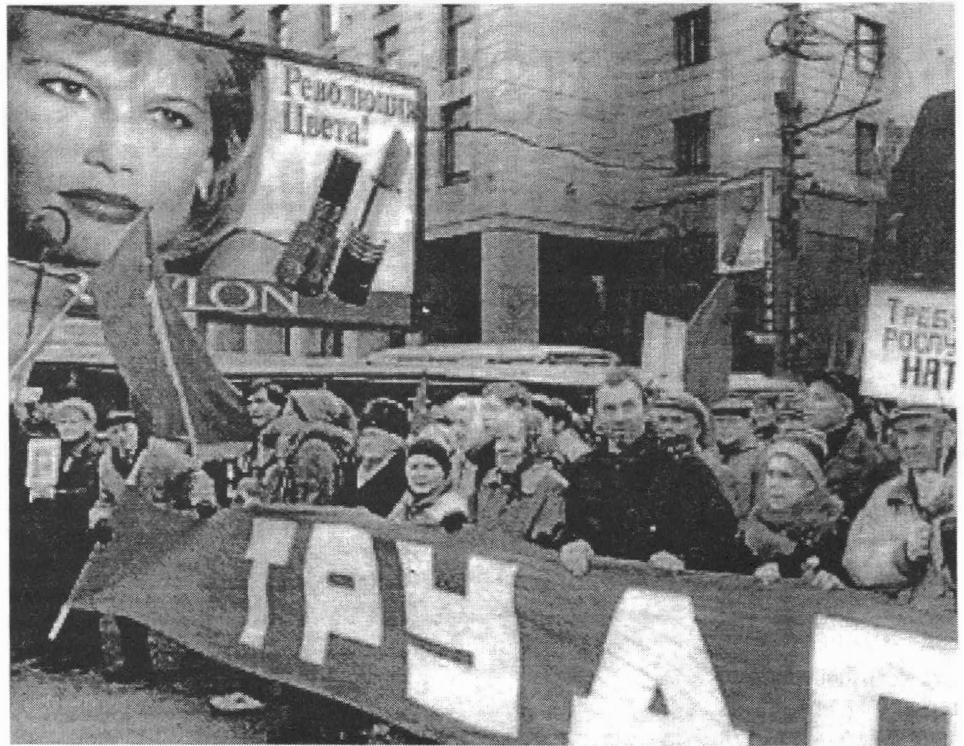
"Only through a series of attempts — each one of which taken by itself will be one-sided, suffer from a certain lack of harmony — will victorious socialism be created with the revolutionary collaboration of the proletarians of all countries."

The Russian was one of these "attempts," necessarily one-sided, unbalanced. But it would end up coming together with other attempts that were certainly different, certainly one-sided in a different way, if not in years, in decades. Through all these attempts, mutually influencing each other, making corrections, humanity would enter into a socialist era.

And, meanwhile, no victory could be certain. What was won by workers in one country, perhaps later might be overthrown by the capitalists. And perhaps more than once it might be necessary to begin work again, very much from the beginning, before achieving "a new society."

"Clearly," Lenin wrote in 1921, "this new society is also an abstraction that can only be made into a reality through concrete, imperfect and varied attempts to create this or that socialist state."

Not only imperfect, but varied. Socialism cannot be the implantation of a model, nor the imitation of a model, nor the exportation of a model, but the coming together of imperfect and varied attempts (one of them, the Soviet), the evolution of socialist states,



Demonstration in Moscow, 1996

some of which might fail, get off track, degenerate, even collapse ...

The Stalinist model

The idea of a model was the idea of Stalinism, that is, of the political current that dominated the revolutionary movement after the death of Lenin. But Stalinism was not a genuine representation of the revolutionary workers, of the vanguard, but a representation of a new post-revolutionary social strata: the bureaucracy. This new "leading group," born in the bitter contradictions in the struggle for a socialist society in a very backward country, developed in a very massive way under the oppressive strength of international capitalism, which isolated and threatened the embryonic workers' state, to the point that the bureaucracy succeeded in gagging the masses, destroying Soviet democracy, annihilating the revolutionary protest, and in this way usurping the power of the workers and the socialist conquests for its own benefit.

When this bureaucracy elevated its totalitarian regime to the level of a "model," it was already a question of a grave deviation from the socialist road, of a deformed construction, with monstrously reactionary charac-

teristics superimposed on socialist characteristics. And this deformed construction, poisoned by bureaucratic parasite-ism, was imposed on the victories of socialism that took place afterwards, because the Kremlin bureaucracy's influence over working class parties and unions throughout the world, over small peoples and national liberation movements, was immense.

This development brought before workers a completely new situation and new tasks in the transition from capitalism to socialism that not even the most lucid Marxists had imagined before 1925; the situation of a big workers' state, based in socialist conquests as decisive as the nationalization of the soil and the big means of production and the organization of the whole labor force in big state enterprises and cooperatives, but whose progress toward socialism was blocked by a force worse than cultural backwardness and national isolation, by a legion of privileged bureaucrats, armed with all the repressive power, more and more the friends of and the imitators of the foreign capitalists.

A second revolution would be necessary. Lenin only spoke of multiple and diverse attempts, from different countries, in imperfect and varied forms. But there would also

“Without a second chapter, as revolutionary as 1917, socialism will never be reached. ...”

have to be a *second revolution*, this one against the bureaucracy, in countries where the process of the construction of socialism had entered into a dead end. Trotsky called this second revolution a “political revolution,” because it would have to preserve the socialist orientation of the state and, at the same time, eliminate the *parasitic element deforming it*, the “socialist” bureaucracy, and replace it with the effective exercise of power by the workers, democratically organized.

The revolution in 1917 was the first chapter in the socialist revolution, but it did not install and it could not install a “model” of society: it began to transform a backward capitalist society into a socialist society. But it got off the track. More and more. And it expanded in a deformed way. Without a second chapter, as revolutionary as 1917, socialism will never be reached. The Russian Revolution began, in the 20th century, a new era by bringing before the revolutionary workers’ movement, the complex tasks of the class struggle in intermediary, transitory societies, where capitalism has begun to disappear and some partial elements of socialism have arisen.

Where are we

Between 1989 and 1991, the supposed Soviet “model” — deformed, inherited from Stalinism — broke into pieces. The increasing greediness of the bureaucracy ruined the social productive apparatus that the lives of millions of workers and peasants depended on. The bureaucracy could not contain the people’s protest, which made way for itself, destroying the police dictatorship. At the same time, the bureaucracy leaned decidedly toward capitalism in order to save its privileges.

Those who say that socialism has failed have mistakenly seen the USSR of the bureaucracy as a more or less finished socialist society, when it was only an attempt that was side-tracked and degenerated, worn down by the bureaucratic cancer.

In the same mistaken way, they say that Russia today is a capitalist country. They keep thinking of “models,” without under-

standing anything about the process of the revolutionary transformation of one society into another, of partial advances toward socialism, of steps back toward capitalism.

In spite of the indisputable advance of capitalism in Yeltsin’s Russia, it is still far from having conquered, from having swept away, the forms of property and the relations of production resulting from the revolution in 1917. Property that is clearly capitalist continues being secondary. The true capitalists only lead the country, and in a partial way, thanks to their alliance with the much more powerful functionaries in industry, commerce and finance with a public or mixed character. The gains of these functionaries come less from profits than from abuse and robbery, and they waste and lose more than they invest. Public property, which has to a large extent been *privatized*, has not become *private property* simply because it has been privatized, because it is not clearly under the control of anyone. The reason is that the labor collectives, the bureaucracy, the state as such and a certain number of private investors and speculators, are sharing, with great difficulty, property and the leadership of the enterprises. In agriculture, the old production cooperatives still have a dominant position with respect to an ascending swamp of family producers, that are still very far from true capitalist agriculture. The working class, in spite of its difficult and uncertain material situation, and in spite of its ideological confusion, has an incomparable weight in the enterprises, as much because of the extenuation of the old social property as because of the new “labor collective property,” and, finally, because the whole culture of the country, the product of decades of production without capitalist bosses, inspires workers to consider the means of production as instruments with which to improve the life of the people, not as means with which to exploit the labor of others.

In order to retrace the road begun in 1917, the capitalists today count on the total disorganization of the planned economy, on the bureaucracy’s capitalist vocation, on the aid of international capitalism, and on the workers’ confusion; but only on an incipient, corrupt, Mafia-like bourgeoisie that is marginal to the national economy. They still have to sweep away the obstacles to capitalism represented by state property, the generalized intervention of the state in the economy, the rights of the labor collectives over property, the obstacles to the buying and selling of land and the transformation of the labor force into a commodity, and what has

been left in the consciousness of the working class as a result of three quarters of a century of production without capitalists. The culture of a workers’ state, although very degenerated, is present in the consciousness of the workers.

The workers can count on the latter factors in order to advance a second step toward socialism, deeper than the one in 1917. They have in front of them, blocking the road, the bureaucracy which controls the state and the new capitalism which is gaining positions in the economy, the society and the state administration. But — and here is the big question! — now the workers, since 1989-91, have won freedom to organize themselves democratically *without which* they never would have been able to free themselves from the bureaucratic parasite.

Socialism is not the Stalinist “model,” with its “five-year plans,” economic autarchy, its combination of collectivism and backwardness, of strength in industry and misery in consumption, of statification and bureaucracy, of social rights and political oppression. It is not a question of going back to this “model” nor of repeating it in any way. It is good that it is dead. Socialism is the efficient transformation of the capitalist economy, realized by the workers from their position in the state, into collective production, constantly readjusted and corrected.

What capitalist property has gained in the last years will be a price worth paying, if the working class learns how to use the freedom that it has gained to organize itself and reconquer power, annihilating the bureaucracy, and beginning the construction of socialism in Russia again, in a new, original manner. — Anibal Ramos □

Celebrate the 150th birthday of the Communist Manifesto!

“This pamphlet ... astounds us even today with its freshness. The young authors (Marx was 29, Engels 27) were able to look further into the future than anyone before them, and perhaps anyone since them.” Leon Trotsky, on the 90th anniversary of the Manifesto

The First World Congress of International Workers Unity (Fourth International)

International Workers Unity (Fourth International), an international organization for socialist revolution and rebuilding the Fourth International, held its first World Congress in Argentina in December.

The Congress began with a public rally organized by the Socialist Workers Movement of Argentina (MST) to celebrate the Congress and welcome the delegates from different countries. Over 1,000 attended the rally, including several hundred Argentine youth chanting slogans in favor of socialism, Trotskyism, and the Fourth International and waving red banners and flags.

Delegates from 15 different countries, including the United States, Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Belarus, and Russia attended the Congress. An observer from the Committee for a Workers International, an international revolutionary socialist and Trotskyist tendency based in Great Britain, also attended.

The Congress decided to organize campaigns for a 35-hour work week without cutting pay, against the U.S. blockade against Cuba, to get U.S. troops out of Panama, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto, and for other causes.

The Congress closed with singing the International in at least 6 different languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German and Russian.

This Congress was an important step forward for the international working class and revolutionary socialism.

It showed that different international and national revolutionary socialist and Trotskyist tendencies can work together and build a common international organization as a step toward rebuilding the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded in 1938.

International Workers Unity (Fourth International) was founded in 1995 by two different Trotskyist tendencies, the International Revolutionary Current, which came out of the International Workers League (Fourth International) and was based largely in Latin America, and the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth



International, based in the United States and Europe. Shortly after the founding of International Workers Unity, La Commune from France and revolutionary workers from Belarus joined.

The foundation of International Workers Unity was the result of a common fight on the part of the International Revolutionary Current and the International League to defend and advance the struggles of the workers in the old USSR and Eastern Europe against the privileged labor bureaucracies in these countries. Unlike some other socialist tendencies, both the International Revolutionary Current and the International League saw the struggles of workers in the old USSR and Eastern Europe against the privileged labor bureaucracies in these countries (which used to falsely call themselves Communists), and the breakup of these privileged labor bureaucracies, as very positive developments. Thus we supported these struggles and worked to develop ties with workers and activists in the front ranks of these struggles. The workers from Belarus and Russia who have joined International Workers Unity are workers who were in the front ranks of the strikes against Gorbachev and the ruling Communist Party and who have been in the front ranks of the struggle against capitalist restoration, against Communist Party collaboration with capitalist restoration, and against the attempts of the AFL-CIO to take over workers' unions in the old USSR.

The foundation of International Workers Unity was also the result of discussions between the International Revolutionary Cur-

rent and the International League aimed at clarifying where they agreed and where they disagreed. At the Founding Congress, a document was adopted summing up the points on which the two tendencies agreed: Political Foundations of International Workers Unity (Fourth International).

While efforts were made to clarify and resolve differences that continued to exist between the two tendencies prior to the foundation of International Workers Unity, various differences continued to exist, emerge, and be debated.

Some of these differences concerned:

To what extent have all the gains of the working class and socialist revolution in Russia been destroyed?

To what extent has capitalism been restored in the old USSR?

Should we work to win workers in the old USSR to socialism and Marxism or have socialism and Marxism been so discredited by the privileged labor bureaucracy led by Stalin that we should distance ourselves from socialism and Marxism?

To what extent should we orient toward workers who are not associated with any political tendencies? To what extent should we orient toward workers and activists who already consider themselves socialists, communists, Trotskyists?

Exactly what is the international situation right now? To what extent are we in a *pre-revolutionary* period in which it is necessary to focus on *preparing* the working class to fight for power? To what extent are we in a

revolutionary period in which it is necessary to organize the working class to fight for power now?

What kind of role have the Trotskyists and Fourth Internationalists been playing in the class struggle? Can we rebuild the Fourth International, making use of the Trotskyist and Fourth Internationalist forces that continue to exist? Or must we begin anew, and build a new Fourth International, more or less from scratch?

The First World Congress of International Workers Unity showed that in spite of these differences and debates that the different tendencies that make up International Workers Unity have continued to work together and can continue to work together to build International Workers Unity and that International Workers Unity itself can grow. International Workers Unity's sections in Brazil, Argentina, Spain and France have grown. We have also won new members in Belarus and Russia. All tendencies that make up International Workers Unity worked together to build the demonstration against unemployment in Europe in Amsterdam and to build support for International Workers Unity in this demonstration.

Debates at the Congress focused on clarifying and resolving differences on various issues. An International Executive Committee Majority, an International Executive Committee Minority, and an Argentine Minority presented counterposed texts on different questions. There were also substantial amendments.

The points on the agenda were: (1) The international situation and tasks, with documents from the IEC Majority, the IEC Minority, and the Argentine Minority; (2) The situation in the old USSR and tasks, with documents from the IEC Majority, the IEC



Minority, and substantial amendments to the Majority document; (3) The Balance Sheet of International Workers Unity, with documents from the IEC Majority, the IEC Minority, and the Argentine Minority; (4) Campaigns; (5) The election of a new leadership.

Delegates took the following positions on some of the issues in dispute:

— that the working classes in the old USSR and Eastern Europe have not been completely defeated; that capitalism has not yet been completely restored; that the economies in these countries are not yet completely capitalist economies; that these countries and states are still “workers’ countries” or “workers’ states,” albeit weak and degenerated as a result of the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies; that the road forward for workers in these countries lies in a combined struggle against capitalist restoration and the privileged labor bureaucracies, for a political revolution, for workers’ revolutionary democracy. *An amendment to the Majority’s text saying that capitalism had been completely restored in the old USSR was defeated.*

— that it is necessary to work to win workers in the old USSR and Eastern Europe to the fight for socialism as understood by revolutionary workers throughout the world, that is, a socialism based on workers’ revolutionary democracy and the emancipation of the working class, not the bourgeois, bureaucratic brand of socialism promoted by Stalin. *An amendment to the Majority’s text emphasizing the importance of this struggle was adopted.*

On some of the other issues in dispute, the results of the Congress were not as clear, at least to this delegate.

The majority of delegates seemed to agree that although a revolutionary situation might arise in this or that country, that, generally speaking, we are in a period in which it is necessary to prepare the working class to fight for power, rather than a period in which it is necessary to actually organize the working class to fight for power directly. However, the document adopted by the majority did use the term “revolutionary situation” to describe the international situation.

The majority of delegates also seemed to think that it is necessary to orient toward the most advanced workers, including socialists, communists, Trotskyists. They seemed to be interested in and enthusiastic about trying to reach agreements with other revolutionary socialist and Trotskyist tendencies



aimed at building a common International.

The question of whether we want to rebuild the Fourth International, build a new Fourth International, a revolutionary socialist International, or a revolutionary International was not openly debated much. While one could see and hear differences on this issue, no one moved to change the founding documents which called for rebuilding the Fourth International.

Socialism! was pleased with the results of the Congress. While we were in a minority on some issues that were important to us, we were in a majority on others. We were especially pleased that the Congress concluded that the workers in the old USSR and Eastern Europe have not been defeated, that it is essential to continue the fight for workers’ revolutionary democracy and socialism in the old USSR and throughout the world, and to continue to seek agreements with revolutionary socialist and Trotskyist tendencies aimed at building a common International. We are also especially pleased that the Congress voted to organize campaigns for a 35-hour work week without cutting pay, against the U.S. blockade against Cuba, against U.S. troops in Panama, and to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto. These are issues that are going to become more and more important to U.S. workers.

The more revolutionary socialists and Trotskyists come together and make a common fight for the interests of the working class, the more it will be clear that working class socialist revolution and the Fourth International offer the most practical solution to the problems facing working people.

The working class is the class most capable of insuring the production and distribution of basic necessities for millions. It is the class that must rule. Rebuilding the international party founded to lead the workers to power — the Fourth International — is the road forward. Join us!—M.Guttshall □

One step forward for the International

Interview with Peter Taffe, General Secretary, Socialist Party of Great Britain

For several days discussions took place between delegations of International Workers Unity-Fourth International (IWU) and the Committee for the Workers International (CWI). The discussions have been fruitful; they were intended to confirm agreements and the subjects that require still more discussion, in order to be able to advance in the process of unification of these international tendencies. It is an indisputable fact that the Trotskyist movement is advancing in resolving its crisis and division, especially starting from the crisis of Stalinism with the fall of the Berlin wall and of the bureaucracy in the ex-USSR.

For months the IWU and the CWI have participated together in various initiatives. In the march against unemployment in Amsterdam the contingent formed by both tendencies distinguished itself by offering, in their slogans and propaganda, a socialist alternative of mobilization against the Europe of the capitalists. This experience confirmed that we should see if our relations could go much further, as much in action as in convergence in a new international. In action, we have confirmed it through conducting various campaigns. This visit has served to develop the discussion. We held the following interview with Peter Taffe, General Secretary of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, the most important section of the CWI, in which he explains his impressions.

Question: Why are there discussions between IWU and the CWI?

Answer: The first reason has been to learn in more detail the politics of the comrades of the IWU, and those of the CWI, and thus to be able to have a better basis for collaboration around various campaigns that are unfolding, such as the one in solidarity with *Rainha* (the Movement of the Landless in Brazil) or against the repression of our comrades in Kazakhstan, in which the comrades of the IWU have done very valuable solidarity work. The objective of these discussions has been to deepen the collaboration between the internationals around these same campaigns and other, new ones. For example, we have initiated a discussion on the question of the 35-hour work week and the possibility of a European campaign around



this issue. The discussions have also had an important political purpose: to explore the possibility of a possible unity between the comrades of the IWU and those of the CWI.

Q.: What have been the subjects of the discussion?

A.: The discussions have been very broad during the six days that our visit has lasted. We have arrived at agreements around many questions. We have a very similar attitude regarding the processes of capitalist globalization. We don't believe that the globalization is going to offer a way out for the capitalist system, it doesn't signify a progressive phase of capitalism. On the contrary, it's going to deepen its contradictions, as it has shown in the stock market crisis recently. It is a sign of what will happen to the economy. We believe that we are going to see a world-wide economic recession, although we cannot say exactly when. On this and other questions, there is agreement.

There have also been differences. We discussed them very fraternally. For example, in our assessment of the countries of Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR: on the national question, which is a very complex question, but essential for the workers' movement; and, on our assessment of the traditional organizations of the working class.

Q.: And what are the first conclusions?

A.: It's been a very positive discussion. We think that it has been a step forward for the Trotskyist movement. In the declaration that we agreed upon we established the bases to explore the possibility that through other discussions, visits and contact between different sections and parties of the IWU and the CWI, as well as through the publication of a discussion bulletin... that all this will serve for the unification of both international forces. It would be a very important step in order to build a powerful pole of attraction and it would help very much in the construction of a new Trotskyist international.

Q.: From your words can we deduce a process of unification of both forces?

A.: Yes. For a while now the CWI has defended the idea of the construction of an authentic workers international with the initial objective of unifying the authentic Trotskyist currents. If this is carried out, if it is formed on the basis of principles, it can attract the attention of other or new, revolutionary forces, above all of tendencies that are in the process of breaking with Stalinism and probably of other revolutionary groups. With this objective we have opened a dialogue with other international Trotskyist tendencies and we are going to continue with this process. We have found the comrades of the IWU to be the most receptive to this attitude. We believe that we have a similar position. The debates and the discussions have been very lively, very open, on the possibility of exploring a process of unification.

Q.: You have participated in various meetings of the POR. What has been your impression?

A.: I have been very impressed with the meetings that I've attended, although I could only attend for a brief period of time. Particularly the discussions around the tactic to pursue in the crisis of the *Izquierda Unida* (Left Union) and on the national problem in Catalonia. I believe that both the comrades of the POR and of the CWI, together, have the possibility of advancing in the formation of a revolutionary party in Spain. Also, I want to express my appreciation for the



hospitality that has been offered to me by the comrades of the POR.

Q.: Will these discussions be reflected on the level of mobilization?

A.: Yes, we have very much hoped that it would be so, and our intention is to assure that process. We have organizations and parties that work in different countries and are already collaborating and we hope that that work will continue. We hope to organize visits — not only on the level of the international leadership, but also of the different national parties. It's important that the ranks of the parties meet each other. Clearly, there will be campaigns on the European level and on the international level in which we are going to collaborate. I am certain that the experience together and that of the sections of the IWU and the CWI, if they are united, can go toward making the construction of a stronger, and authentically revolutionary, international.

Q.: What is the CWI?

A.: It is the acronym of the Committee for a Workers International. A Trotskyist tendency with a presence in many countries. For years we were known as the Militant tendency, especially in Great Britain, through our work inside the Labor Party. Since 1980, it has reoriented itself, abandoning work inside the socialist parties, to build an international and independent parties. It pushed, with great success, the struggle against a tax imposed by the Thatcher government, the poll-tax, which won, when 18 million people that should have paid it demonstrated in London in one of the greatest demonstrations in its history. It was the point of departure for the fall of Margaret Thatcher.

Q.: What is the IWU?

A.: It is the acronym of International Workers Unity - Fourth International. Its formation is the result of the convergence of three

Trotskyist tendencies, the CIR-LIT, with a great tradition and influence in Latin America, the ILRFI, in which the POR was active, and the French group *La Commune*, in addition to other revolutionary militants coming from the ex-USSR and Belarus. Through campaigns of international mobili-

zation and through discussions between the different tendencies they reached a political basis of principles that, two years ago, allowed them to unify their forces. Now the IWU is preparing its first congress.

(Translated from *La Aurora*, Dec., 1997)

Declaration of the CWI and IWU

Between the 30th of October and the 4th of November, a meeting took place between representatives of the leaderships of the CWI and the IWU to advance joint collaboration with the perspective of the regroupment of revolutionary and Trotskyist forces for the construction of the International. Both organizations now consider that a period of class struggle has opened in which the task is posed of building a revolutionary organization with decisive influence amongst the international working class.

The economic globalization by which capitalism has supposedly demonstrated its vibrancy/vigor and entered a new stage of development, has done nothing else but illustrate its sharp crisis. The recent fall of the stock markets is nothing less than an anticipation of a new crisis and consequential political convulsions flowing from its stagnant phase. The chronic unemployment throughout the world, the increase of misery and hunger for the population of the semi-colonial countries, the built-in social crisis in the big imperialist countries are all proof of a system which cannot take society forward and offer any lasting concessions to the movement of the masses.

Reflected in this crisis, there is also the globalization of the class struggle. During the last few days, the French truck drivers have again paralyzed the transport system. This action, like the French strike in November/December 1995, is nothing less than an expression of the workers' struggle in Europe against Maastricht. The general strike in South Korea, the general strikes in Latin America in recent years against neoliberal policies, the strike of UPS parcel workers in the USA, are all important indications that the working class and other exploited layers, in more and more countries, are fighting with greater tenacity against the crisis of capitalism and anti-working class policies which are being implemented by governments.

In contrast to this increasingly energetic attitude of the workers, the old traditional workers' parties (the Social Democracy and

Stalinist parties) and the bourgeois and petty bourgeois movements in the semi-colonial countries, which have had a decisive influence for decades in the workers' movement, have taken a pronounced turn towards the right. They have abandoned the struggle of the masses to win their demands. They increasingly have adapted to the new pro-capitalist ideologies. This has provoked crisis and fragmentation and has opened a bigger vacuum for the construction of a revolutionary party.

The world situation in all its facets is evidence that there is no progressive way out of the crisis for the working class and exploited layers other than socialism. In the face of the crisis of the capitalist system in its imperialist stage the working class has to struggle to take into its hands the destiny of the nation and economically expropriate the big capitalist monopolies and multi-nationals. Only socialism with workers' democracy offers an alternative to this crisis-ridden society. This can only be won with the building of an international organization which defends the program of revolutionary socialism with the new layers and vanguard of workers who will be in the forefront of the workers' struggle.

Based upon these issues a period of collaboration and discussion between both organizations — the IWU and CWI — has opened up. The discussion of the differences which exist relate to various questions but in particular relate to the estimation of what took place in 1989 in the countries of Eastern Europe and the USSR, the current class character of these states, the character of the Social Democratic parties and the national question. These discussions will be developed in a frank and loyal debate together with mutual collaboration over international campaigns in countries and at the international level.

This is taking place to explore the possibility of unifying our two organizations as part of the regroupment of revolutionary currents and Trotskyist organizations which defend revolutionary socialism. □

Join *Socialism!*

We ask readers to join *Socialism!*

Socialism! is both a publication and an association working to rebuild the Fourth International, an international organization founded to lead the international working class to power and build a revolutionary socialist society.

In order to rebuild the Fourth International, it is necessary to unify tendencies for working class and socialist revolution against the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies. It is especially important to unify working class revolutionary Trotskyists, who have fought most consistently for workers' revolutionary democracy and socialism against these forces.

In order to unify different tendencies, we ourselves must grow. We talk to other revolutionary socialist and Trotskyist tendencies about joining forces and building a common International. We make some progress. But too many are not yet convinced that this is the only road forward, that this is what youth and workers want, that youth and workers don't want revolutionary socialists to exaggerate their differences with each other and remain separated.

Joining *Socialism!* is a way for you to show that you want revolutionary socialist tendencies to unite and rebuild the Fourth International.

What does it mean to join *Socialism!*

Joining *Socialism!* means making a commitment to:

— make a small monthly contribution to help finance *Socialism!* and,

— meet with another member at least once a month to discuss *Socialism!* and what can be done to build support for *Socialism!*

We also have regular meetings and an annual conference open to all members.

There are other tendencies for socialist revolution and against the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies in the old USSR, Eastern Europe, and China. Many are much bigger.

Why should you join *Socialism!*? First, we don't counterpose membership in *Socialism!* to membership in other working class

and socialist organizations. It's possible to be a member of another organization and still be a member of *Socialism!*, that is, work for unifying revolutionary socialist tendencies and rebuilding the Fourth International.

But, if it is necessary to choose, we urge you to join *Socialism!* because it has made the most consistent struggle in the Detroit area for unifying revolutionary socialist and Trotskyist tendencies on a principled basis. In the long run, this tendency has to grow in order to bring together the contributions of the others and build the kind of organization necessary to take power and build a new society.

It is precisely because we are so concerned with unifying workers against the bosses that we have put so much emphasis on building the Labor Party and on different tendencies in the Labor Party working together to build it. Building support for working class and popular struggles, building the Labor Party, are excellent struggles in which to bring together revolutionary socialist and Trotskyist forces and rebuild the Fourth International in the U.S.

As workers know, the unique contribution of each of us is made stronger when we unite together in struggle for common goals. This important lesson applies to socialists and Trotskyists, too. The unique contribution of the different Trotskyist forces will be stronger, not weaker, if the Trotskyists unite.

We ask you to support the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International, the international organization for socialist revolution, by joining *Socialism!*

We need you!

No blood for oil! ...

Continued from back page

say everything about what the priorities of U.S. officials are? Wealthy U.S. officials and their "rights" count for everything. Oppressed women count for nothing.

Detroit newspaper workers, the labor movement, all working people in the U.S. need to fight for solidarity between workers of all ethnic groups and nationalities against the U.S. owners of the giant oil monopolies who enrich themselves at the expense of the people.

Supporting any kind of U.S. violence against Hussein and the Iraqi people will undermine the fight for international labor and working class solidarity. It will discredit Detroit labor in the eyes of labor movements and working people in other countries.

Detroit newspaper workers should remember the support that Arabic people gave to the newspaper workers' strike. One after another posted signs in Dearborn. Now is the time to return the solidarity. Don't support U.S. violence against Arab peoples in Iraq.

I ask locked-out workers at the *Detroit Sunday Journal* to seriously consider these issues.

Join the fight against U.S. threats of violence against the Iraqi people!
No blood for oil!
End U.S. sanctions against the Iraqi people!
U.S. out of Iraq now!

In solidarity,

Margaret Guttshall
Member of the National Writers Union
and the Labor Party

Please send me more information about *Socialism!*
Here is \$1 to cover the cost of copying and postage (includes *Socialism!*'s Platform).

I want to subscribe to *Socialism!*
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Socialism! is a bulletin for the Labor Party, socialism, and rebuilding the Fourth International published in Detroit. We support International Workers Unity (Fourth International), an international workers revolutionary socialist tendency making an important contribution to rebuilding the Fourth International. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialism!* These are expressed in editorials. Editorial Board: Margaret Guttshall, Tim James, Kim Morgan, Fred Russo.

No blood for oil! U.S. out of Iraq!

To the *Detroit Sunday Journal*

Dear Locked-Out Workers:

I am writing to ask you to take a strong stand against Bill Clinton's threats of violence against Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi people, for stopping the sanctions against Iraq and getting all U.S. forces out of Iraq.

U.S. violence against Hussein and the Iraqi people is not in the interests of Detroit newspaper workers, the labor movement, working people in the U.S. or anywhere else.

Detroit newspaper workers, the labor movement, and all working people need to fight for resources to be used to provide decent jobs, wages, working conditions, health-care, housing, education, and pensions for all, not for making war on leaders and peoples of other nations. We need to use our resources to make a positive contribution to civilization, not to destroy other peoples and what they have tried to build.

We need to fight for solidarity between working people in the U.S. and working people in Iraq against the wealthiest families in the U.S., their oil corporations, their government, and their threats of violence. We need more and more workers' control of U.S. oil corporations and other giant multinational oil corporations, so that these corporations are run in the interests of working people of all nationalities. We don't need more and more domination of the oil industry by a small handful of wealthy families in the U.S. and their allies, so that they can continue to use the oil industry to enrich themselves at the expense of millions of working people and their families.

The wealthiest families in the U.S., and their spokesmen, Clinton, Newt Gingrich and others, know that the majority of working people in the U.S. are not in favor of a U.S. war on Iraq or any other nation. After the experiences of working people and their sons and daughters with the war in Vietnam and the last war on Iraq — which was supposed to be a "safe war" in which very few U.S. soldiers would suffer and die, but which ended not only with U.S. soldiers becoming chronically and incurably ill with "Gulf War Syndrome" — most working people in the U.S. are very suspicious of U.S. corporations and the U.S. government. Most working people sense that it is the wealthy families and their corporations who own the government and the armed forces

"Detroit newspaper workers, more than anyone else, should question what the media says about Hussein and Iraq. ..."

and dictate what they are going to do, that these institutions act in the interests of the rich, not in the interests of working people.

For precisely this reason, Clinton and Gingrich, like George Bush before them, are trying to paint Hussein as an evil madman who may begin biological, chemical or some other form of warfare against other peoples at any moment. They are contacting Iraqis who have been persecuted by Hussein and are using them to try to build support for violence against the Iraqi nation.

But Clinton's and Gingrich's portrait of Hussein is anything but objective and disinterested.

Many working people in Iraq and the Middle East see Hussein as a hero because he stood up to U.S. and British oil corporations and their attempt to totally takeover the oil industry by beginning to bomb Iraq back to the Stone Age — the so-called "Gulf War." Others see Hussein as an opportunist who only stands up to U.S. and British oil when he is forced to do so by the pressure of his own people, a man who is ready to make a deal with U.S. and British oil at any moment, and to sell-out and persecute his own people.

The spokespeople for the wealthiest families in the U.S. magnify Hussein's faults and crimes and invent them when they have to,



while they cover up their own.

It was U.S. officials who used "weapons of mass destruction" against the Iraqi people. It was U.S. officials who continued to bomb Iraqi troops after they had surrendered, while they were fleeing through the desert sand. It was U.S. officials who have insisted on seven years of sanctions against the Iraqi people, which have kept them from selling their oil, which have resulted in the starvation and death of thousands of Iraqi men, women and children. It is U.S. officials who insist that U.S. officials be allowed to go anywhere they want in Iraq, without any restrictions.

Is Iraq a sovereign nation? Do the Iraqi people have any rights? Has the U.S. decided that the Iraqi people are an inferior people with a right to nothing but poverty, starvation and death?

Detroit newspaper workers, more than anyone else, should question what the media says about Hussein and Iraq. The same media that tried to paint Detroit newspaper workers as violent madmen in order to justify police attacks on newspaper workers and refusing to negotiate with the newspaper workers' unions, is now trying to paint Hussein as a violent madman in order to justify violence against Hussein and the Iraqi people and refusing to reach an agreement acceptable to the Iraqi people.

I am not saying I agree with Hussein and his policies. I don't. I'd like to see workers in power in Iraq. I'd like to see an end to the persecution of ethnic minorities, like the Kurds. But that's not what U.S. officials want. They don't want more rights for workers and oppressed peoples in Iraq. They want a government that is more servile to big oil than Hussein. They want fewer rights for workers and oppressed peoples.

When Bosnian women were being gang-raped in massive numbers, U.S. officials stood by and did absolutely nothing. More exactly, they established an embargo against arms to Bosnians which made it difficult for the women and their families to get guns to defend themselves. But now that Hussein won't allow U.S. officials to go anywhere they want to go on demand, the U.S. is supposed to go to war and start bombing the Iraqi people. As one young woman said, if only the Bosnian women had had oil! Doesn't the contrast between these two situations

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