



Capitalist healthcare and socialist healthcare

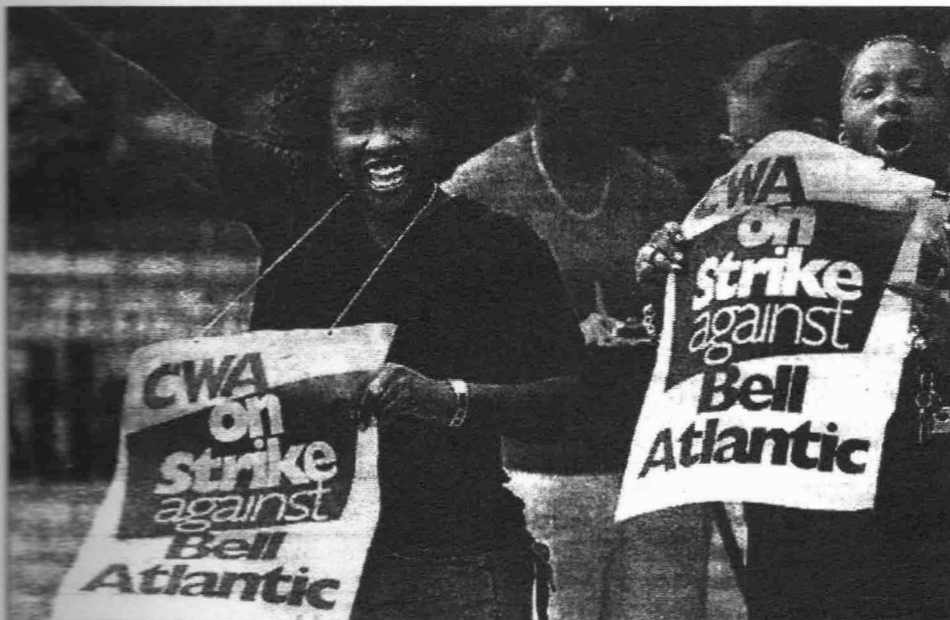
There is great discontent with the healthcare system in the United States. Thousands suffer because they have no health insurance, because they have been denied healthcare by an HMO, or because they have been given bad care.

Discontent is so great that parties and candidates are talking about passing legislation allowing people to sue HMOs for denying them care. The Labor Party is mapping out plans for a campaign for *Just Healthcare* — a healthcare system that provides quality healthcare for all residents and replaces the private, for-profit health insurance industry with a public, non-profit fund.

Why has healthcare become so bad in the United States, one of the richest, most technologically advanced countries in the world? We can bomb a country on the other side of the planet with deadly accuracy. We can clone and alter plants and animals. But we can't provide decent healthcare for everyone who lives here.

The fundamental problem is that we live in a capitalist society, in which a small number of the richest families own the most essential resources and use these resources to enrich themselves at the expense of the majority. These rich families finance healthcare to the extent that they can enrich them-

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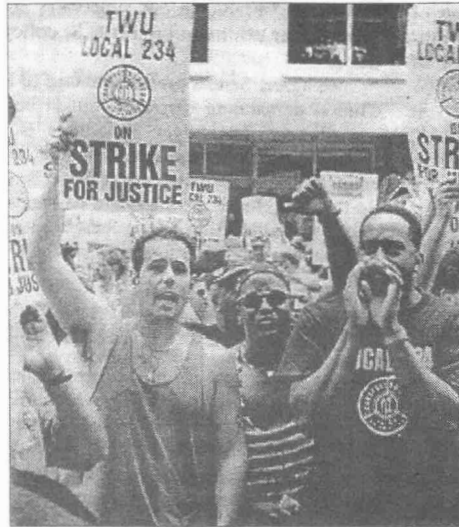
Is socialism realistic?

How to fight for socialism today

The strike wave and the Labor Party

The biggest strike wave in several years has washed across the U.S., cleansing the land of some of the pollution about "the little guys making big in the stock market," "we're all on the same corporate team." The strikes also point the way to a brighter future for all working people.

Below is a chart of the major struggles that workers engaged in the past six months. These strikes reveal an important change in the thinking of organized U.S. workers. Building on the trend-changing victory of the UPS workers, workers raised demands in the interests of those *who were not members of their unions*. This is very important. This is a fundamental change and it was a feature of many of the major strikes so far this year.



The GM and CWA workers raised their struggle with other unions and won support. Even if it was not the primary activity or demand of their strikes, these strikers spoke specifically and openly to other non-union workers, they tried to involve non-union workers in their struggles and they saw the victory of their struggle as a victory not only for their union and all unions, but for working people.

These workers and their mobilization give strength to the most optimistic possibilities for the trade unions in the U.S. That they will become instruments of all working people, that they will be transformed, from organizations that serve a thinner and thinner layer of workers, to fighting organizations of millions against the bosses and

Strike	No. of workers	Key Demands	Actions	Days on Strike	Accomplishments	Limitations
Philadelphia Transit Workers (TWU)	5,200	stop part-time workers from replacing full-time workers; end out-sourcing, no work rule changes	shutdown transit system; picketed 30 sites daily; blocked non-striking trains, provoking injunctions	40	Stopped management from scabbing on trains; Metro AFL-CIO council threatened general strike and million-unionist march of scabs were used	Submitted key demands to arbitration; no serious plans made for threatened general strike and march
GM Metal Fabricating and Delphi (UAW)	9,800	Keep Metal Fab. open and keep promise of investments; maintain present production standards; no sale of Delphi.	Stopped equipment from leaving Metal Fab; organized big, active picket lines	54/48	Shutdown all of GM operations costing company millions. GM pledges to complete \$300 million investment; no sale of Delphi before 2000	UAW leadership settled quickly when GM threatened to have strikes declared "illegal;" higher production standards at Metal Fab; Delphi sold in 2000.
US West (CWA)	35,000	end forced overtime; no to mandatory "pay for performance" plan	First strike of US West; large public rallies to win support of public	14	overtime reduced to a max. of 8 hrs/wk after 3 years; "pay for performance" voluntary; pay raises of 11%	Workers will pay \$800-\$1,000 per family per year for healthcare
Bell Atlantic (CWA)	73,000	end forced overtime; end outsourcing of high tech work to non-union shops	two-hour walkout before strike started to let everyone know seriousness of workers' determination	2	company will allow "card check" organizing at Bell temp workers made permanent; pay raises of 4% each year for 2 years	Allowed non-union work at some facilities; Bell bought GTE the day following settlement; not clear about unions at GTE.
Southern New England Telephone (CWA)	6,500	end two-tiered wage system; wage parity with other telephone companies	solid picket lines; determined local strike	27	phased elimination of two-tiered system; 15% wage increase over 3 yrs; 48,000 Bell South workers settled without strike and won more employed reducing overtime; 12% wage increase	all Bell strikes took place independently of one another despite very close or same contract-ending dates
Northwest Pilots (Pilots' Union)	6,000	15% raise to compensate for 15% cut in 1993; end two-tiered wage system; protection against layoffs	picketed with other Northwest workers not on strike	15	won wage increases and end to two-tiered wages	not linked to contracts for machinists or flight attendants which are coming up

Other strikes include: Peterbilt (UAW; 1,200 workers); GenCorp Automotive (IAM-500 workers); Burlington-Northern-Santa Fe (BMW; 2,500 workers); Conrail (BMW-3,400 workers); Titan Rubber (USWA-650 workers); Kaiser Aluminum (USWA-3,000 workers); Continental General Tire (USWA-1,450 workers); Libby Glass (4 unions-1,200 workers).

against the bosses' government. This is important for all those building the Labor Party.

Workers have struck a blow against the policy of collaborating with the bosses. Many union leaders have pushed concessions to make corporations profitable, and in this way, to get some gains for their members. These days are over. The results of concessions are a lower standard of living for all workers, including union members, fewer social programs to protect workers in times of need, not to mention weaker, smaller unions.

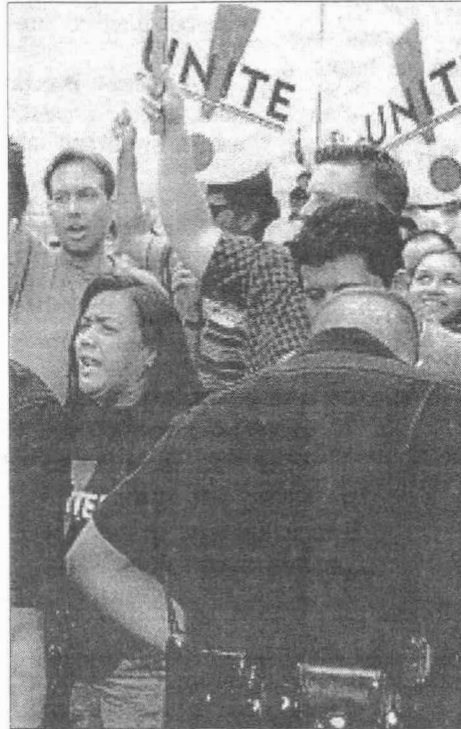
In these strikes, workers began to reject this policy, so suicidal for unions, so harmful to all workers. By taking a stand against certain corporate policies that will definitely increase profits – downsizing of factories, two-tiered wages – these workers fought not only for their own immediate interests, but linked that struggle to demands that are in the interests of *all* workers.

This movement towards class consciousness emerges at the same time as other indications of change in the class struggle. 19,000 United Airlines reservation clerks, customer service workers and gate agents, the lowest paid workers at United, voted to become union and joined the IAM. This is the largest successful union organizing drive in airline history, and one of the largest in years. Unions and workers in California defeated anti-union proposition 226, which called for abolishing the right of unions to use dues money for political purposes. Because of their continuing struggle against NAFTA, MAI and other international trade agreements, U.S. workers are more aware of and increased their solidarity with workers' struggles in other countries.

The cold, wooden speeches and stingy mobilizations of the union leaders and even the formulation of some of the demands by the leaders did not reflect the heat, robust agitation and solidarity among the ranks. As the chart shows, the workers took initiatives in every struggle – GM workers blocked equipment from leaving; CWA workers staged lots of public rallies, neutralizing anti-union propaganda by the companies, Philadelphia workers blocked non-striking trains – that went beyond what was once considered a “normal” strike.

What conclusions can we draw?

In a word, these strikes represent part of the first wave of renewed struggle by U.S. workers. They show the most positive trend



UNITE workers, celebrating victory over Proposition 226, confront police.

for U.S. unions – using them as weapons for all workers against the bosses.

These struggles show that the rise of militancy in the U.S. will not be smooth and regular, increasing day by day, month by month. It will be more like a roller coaster, with sudden highs of lots of struggles occurring at the same time, with different amounts of solidarity, consciousness and gains, followed by dips of silence or retreat. In some of the strikes, judges ordered workers back to work within hours. In others, workers were not successful in winning demands, and were forced back to work under conditions that they had rejected. In others, workers won partial victories, and felt strengthened and ready to fight again.

For future struggles, three demands emerge clearly:

1. Organize the unorganized; unity of the organized and unorganized; unity of old and young workers; end the two-tiered systems, equal pay for equal work.
2. Cut the overtime; a shorter workweek without cutting pay;
3. Make the struggle political, organize community support, fight politically; build the Labor Party.

As socialists we understand that the workers are destined to be the ruling class, and in this way, end the rule of all classes.

With these strikes, U.S. workers are attempting to give leadership to the movement against the right wing in this country. Workers instinctively were trying to take their place, for a short time and in a very modest way, as the future ruling class. They were responding to the mobilizations by right-wing and pro-company forces; they were responding to the growing discontent with this government, seen in polls, the mobilizations against rightwing forces by small groups of young people and people of color. They were trying to lead the mobilization against these right wing forces, the right wing in both the Democratic and Republican parties, the forces that want to break unions, build prisons, and destroy social programs. They were taking the first steps at showing the way for all workers: fight the bosses, deprive them of their profits, force them to give us what we want; use the unions as instruments for all working people; reach out to all working people for support.

The limitations of the mobilizations were clear. The workers did not defy the leaders when they were led back to work without winning all their demands. The workers did not vote down contracts that did not give them everything they had demanded. The workers did not put forward any demands different from those formulated by the leaderships. The workers did not organize the unions to support struggles against police brutality against Black people; they were not able to overcome court injunctions, attacks on picketlines by police, some vicious capitalist owners.

So what can we do to overcome these contradictions?

Build the movement for change, for reform in the unions. Do everything possible to bring every important social question, every struggle, into the life of the unions in whatever way makes sense – reports on meetings or demonstrations; leaflets or flyers to members; pictures, slides, films of struggles; motions, caucuses. Support every effort to expand union membership, expand union democracy, and expand the options for union involvement in political struggles.

Build the Labor Party in the unions. Try to get unions to endorse or affiliate with the Labor Party or its campaigns, or at least to recruit members in the locals with the goal of endorsement.

Join *Socialism!*, an association fighting for workers' control of industry and a workers' government! – Fred Russo □

Resolutions for the Labor Party Convention

We are printing some of the resolutions for the Labor Party Convention that we support.

We think that the most important tasks of the Convention are to:

1. Develop campaigns aimed at building the Labor Party that the majority of Labor Party members are willing to be actively involved in.

2. Adopt the resolution calling for running Labor Party Candidates for office with amendments that encourage Labor Party members to work toward this goal now.

3. Begin to map out plans for what the Labor Party is going to do in the event of a recession and/or more U.S. economic and military attacks on workers of other nations.

We are looking forward to the Convention; we are confident that it will be a step forward. We urge all readers to support and participate in it with interest and enthusiasm. The Convention is an opportunity for workers and Labor Party members to say openly and honestly what they think in a fraternal way. The more workers do this, the more progress we will make. When areas of agreement and disagreement are clear, it's easier to see where forces can unite. When they aren't, unity can crumble at unexpected moments. So don't hesitate to say what you think in a constructive and fraternal way. This is the best way to contribute to the Convention, to make the Convention the kind of Convention that will lead to a united fight to build the Labor Party.

For a united campaign to build the Labor Party

Whereas:

It is necessary to come out of the coming Labor Party Convention with a central campaign or campaigns aimed at building the Labor Party and that the majority of forces involved in the Labor Party are agreed upon and committed to build;

The last Labor Party Convention spent almost all of its time adopting a program and constitution and never got to the question of what needs to be done to build the Labor Party, in particular the question of campaigns;

Be it resolved:

That the coming convention of the Labor Party will spend more time on what needs to be done to build the Labor Party.

It will have a full discussion of various proposals for Labor Party campaigns and vote on what the Labor Party's central campaign or campaigns will be and on the most



Philadelphia transit workers march against city government for trying to run trains with management scabs.

important aspects of how they are going to be carried out. — Adopted by the Detroit Chapter

For Labor Party candidates on the ballot

The Detroit Metro Chapter of the Labor Party supports the INC resolution in favor of Labor Party candidates. We are against the Labor Party endorsing candidates of other political parties at this time. We are in favor of the Labor Party running Labor Party candidates for office as soon as possible.

We offer the following amendment to the section of the resolution called Criteria for Running Candidates:

Change:

C.2. Endorsing unions represent a significant portion of area union membership, sufficient to ensure that LP candidate will be seen as the labor candidate

To: Endorsing unions represent a significant portion of area union membership, sufficient to ensure that LP candidate will be seen as a labor candidate.--Adopted by the Detroit Metro Chapter

Motivation:

The support for Fieger in the Michigan Democratic Party Primary Elections shows that working people are tired of traditional Republican and Democratic Party candidates, including many backed by the official

leadership of the labor movement. In this case, workers showed their opposition to the policies of their union leaderships not by going to a union meeting, but by going to the polls. Workers voted for a candidate who was speaking out against the rich, and against both the Republicans and the Democrats, in an aggressive way; they voted against the labor-backed candidate who wasn't even speaking out against the Republicans aggressively! In some situations, labor unions and Labor Party organizations may need to run candidates against Democratic Party candidates backed by the official leadership of the labor movement. This may be an important way of reaching working people with the Labor Party's message.

For an emergency campaign for a shorter work week without cutting pay in the event of a recession

Whereas:

Economists are predicting that it is a matter of time before the economic crisis in Asia and Russia hits the U.S. and, with it, layoffs, plant closings, cuts in pay and benefits;

In cities like Flint, Michigan, unemployment among African-American men is already 37%;

The UPS strike, the GM strike, other strikes and mobilizations, and the Labor Party's campaign for the 28th amendment, showed that workers are already worried about jobs and wages;

The Labor Party and the labor movement as a whole need to prepare now to confront this situation and unify the working class against the employers;

The experience of the European labor movement shows that one of the best ways to do this is to fight for a shorter work week without cutting pay or benefits by law (35 hours or 32 hours) so that all workers can work, share the work, and force employers to hire more workers;

Be it resolved:

The Labor Party will plan an emergency campaign for a shorter work week without cutting pay or benefits by law, to be launched in the event of a recession;

This emergency campaign will include a fight for: a higher minimum wage by law, at least \$10/hour, with automatic wage increases in accord with price increases; the abolition of all laws that restrict labor's ability to fight; the restoration of affirmative action programs to fight discrimination

against women, African-Americans and other peoples of color;

The Labor Party will build support for this emergency campaign by campaigning to get proposals for a shorter work week without cutting pay on local and state ballots and by running Labor Party candidates to speak out for this in elections and in public office, in accord with the criteria established by the Convention;

The Interim National Council is charged with working out further details of this campaign, with preparing materials, and with encouraging all Labor Party unions and chapters to begin preparing now. — Adopted by the Detroit Metro Chapter

For more international labor solidarity

Whereas:

Globalization and the growth of multinational corporations based primarily in the U.S., Japan and Europe have made international labor solidarity more important than ever;

The failure of the U.S. labor movement to take a stand against U.S. corporate and government polices that are hurting working people in other countries — economic sanctions, bombings — is undermining the fight for international labor solidarity, weakening the struggle against U.S. corporations and their representatives, and leaving working people in the U.S. open to counterattacks;

Be it resolved:

The Labor Party will oppose all economic and military attacks by U.S. corporations and the U.S. government on working people of other nations;

It will set up a committee to develop a foreign policy in the interests of working people of all nations, to be submitted to the next Labor Party convention. — Adopted by the Detroit Metro Chapter □



Iraqi women protest against UN/US bombings in 1991.

How to fight the right

The most active workers are very much concerned about the growth of rightwing forces in the United States. They are right.

Some of the most obvious examples are scabs crossing picketlines, violent attacks on African-Americans and other peoples of color, violent attacks on women's rights advocates, like doctors who perform abortions, and on gays and lesbians. The federal investigation into Clinton's and Lewinsky's private lives and the decision to force them

"...campaigning and voting for Democratic Party candidates can only encourage the growth of rightwing anti-labor and anti-Black movements...."

to publicly testify are also examples of the growth of the right wing. So are the various militia groups and "survivalists."

Some sections of the Democratic Party, trade union leaders, the Democratic Socialists of America and the Communist Party talk about the growth of the right wing and the danger that it represents. They say that one of the most important ways to fight the growth of the right wing is to campaign for Democratic Party candidates for public office.

We don't agree. In fact, campaigning and voting for Democratic Party candidates can only encourage the growth of rightwing anti-labor and anti-Black movements.

First, while there may be a difference between the most rightwing Republicans (Newt Gingrich) and the most leftwing Democrats (John Conyers), there isn't much difference between the majority of Republicans and Democrats. Second, Democrats are notorious for being two-faced. They claim to represent the interests of labor and peoples of color while they are campaigning; when they get into office, they vote the business agenda. Anti-labor and anti-Black groups use the Democrats' duplicity, and the support of labor and Black leaders to the Democrats, to turn workers and oppressed *against* the organized labor and Black movements. The more labor and Black leaders campaign for candidates associated with this two-faced party, the more the rightwing grows. Third, when the Republicans are in office, the most active workers are on their toes, aware, preparing to defend themselves and organize. When Democrats are in office,

labor and Black leaders encourage workers to sitback, wait, give the Democrats a chance. Meanwhile, the right wing grows.

The only way to fight the growth of rightwing anti-labor, anti-women, and anti-Black movements is to build a mass, militant workers' movement in the workplaces and in the streets, prepared to hunt down and effectively mobilize against these forces, and armed with working class solutions to the problems that are fueling the right wing, like unemployment, low wages, poor working conditions, lack of decent healthcare, housing, etc. A mass movement for decent jobs, wages, healthcare and housing for all, and for independent labor and Labor Party candidates to fight for these goals, will cut the rug out from under the right wing. Campaigning for Republicans or Democrats will only add fuel to their fire. — M.G. □

From the Program of the Fourth International

"The bourgeoisie is nowhere satisfied with official police and army. In the United States, even during "peaceful" times, the bourgeoisie maintains militarized battalions of scabs and privately armed thugs in factories. the bureaucrats of the trade unions systematically close their eyes to the bourgeoisie's private army The reformists systematically implant in the minds of the workers the notion that the sacredness of democracy is best guaranteed when the bourgeoisie is armed to the teeth and the workers are unarmed."

".... Only armed workers' detachments, who feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them, can successfully prevail against the fascist bands.

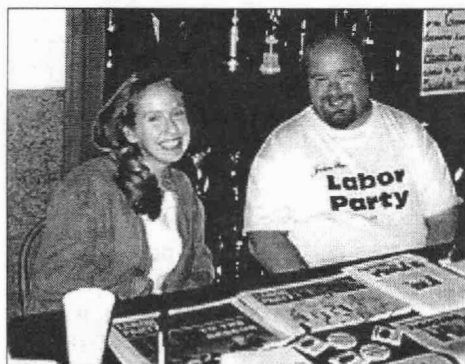
"The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory — and ends in the street. Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating workers' groups for self-defense." □

ARA: Anti-Racist Action Convention

Members of the Labor Party's Detroit Chapter attended the Anti-Racist Action (ARA) Network's national convention in Columbus, Ohio, October 16th-18th. We set up a literature table along with many other political groups – including socialists, anarchists, prison reform groups and representatives of Black militants. The Labor Party table was well-received, and many of the young people in ARA came by to ask questions and share their views. Two new members joined the Labor Party at the convention, and 24 individuals signed the 28th Amendment petition for the right to a job. We also sold pamphlets on the 28th Amendment campaign and 23 Labor Party papers.

Many of the young people who stopped at the Labor Party table were interested in the 28th Amendment campaign. As young people are most frequently those subject to second tier wage structures, non-union jobs and part-time jobs with no benefits, they feel a real need for good paying jobs and health insurance. Also, some felt that if people didn't have to worry about where their next paycheck is coming from, they could focus more on political questions, such as fighting racism.

Young people we talked with had no affinity for the Democratic or Republican parties, and viewed the Labor Party as a legitimate party. The young man and young woman who joined liked the idea that the Labor Party is a serious alternative to the Democrats and Republicans. What convinced them was that it's not like the Green Party or the New Party; in contrast, they believe that the Labor Party has something concrete to offer. They see the need for a party which represents working people, and were impressed with the list of international unions which endorse the Labor Party. They were also interested in the grass roots nature of the chapters.



Labor Party members at the ARA Convention.

The Anti-Racist Action Network has chapters all over the U.S. and Canada. They are organized around fighting racism wherever it's found, particularly through protests against fascist groups such as Neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. They also focus on education about racism, as well as sexism and prejudice against gays and lesbians. In addition, members of ARA helped organize protests against the U.S. threats to bomb Iraq. They were among those we cheered when they embarrassed Madelyn Albright during her attempts to convince the public that bombing Iraq was justified.

The defining issue for ARA is the fight against fascism. Partly, it's an attempt to counter the success of neo-nazis and the KKK in attracting white youth and usurping

"... The young people in ARA have clearly demonstrated that they energetically and emphatically oppose the status quo in our society. We need to ... share more of their experience in that fight."

the skinhead identity. Many of the young people in ARA emphasize that being a skinhead is not the same as being racist. In fact, they attempt to re-shape the argument by calling racist skinheads "boneheads." They reject the attempts of fascist groups to manipulate their experience of lack of jobs into scapegoating of African Americans and immigrants.

On a deeper level, ARA's fight against fascism is a fight for democracy in the broader sense of the word. They recognize that if we allow anyone's rights to be taken away categorically, then everyone's rights can be taken away. If we tolerate Klan attacks on Black people, then we are all under threat of attack. Their analysis of fascism is sophisticated in that it recognizes the role of the police in this fight is ultimately *support of fascism*. Not only do they acknowledge that many cops are members of fascist organizations, their experience in protests against Klan rallies has shown that the police are there to *protect the Klan*, and to attack the young people who protest. ARA opposes not only fascist groups, but also the state itself, by confronting the Klan and their ilk directly, wherever they surface.

The courage, conviction and energy of the young people in ARA can be a valuable



ARA banner at the convention.

contribution to the Labor Party. If the Labor Party is going to grow, and include the majority of working class people, we need to bring many more young people into the Labor Party. We can do this in a number of ways. First, we need to push for unions to organize and support young workers. We need to fight two-tier wage structures and, like the Teamsters in their strike against UPS last year, place more emphasis on creating full-time jobs rather than part-time jobs.

Second, we should continue to mobilize around social issues which affect young people. In addition to fighting for jobs for all and universal health care, we must fight discrimination – such as that based on race, sex and sexual orientation. These kinds of attacks on basic democracy are particularly appalling to youth, as they should be.

In addition, we need to demonstrate openness to participation and leadership by young people in the Labor Party. This could be done partly by supporting a formal grouping of young people in the Labor Party – like a Labor Party youth group. Some older members and leaders of the Labor Party also need to overcome the assumption that because young people lack their experience, they should just listen and follow. The basis of the Labor Party is a mission to *change* our society. What young people may lack in length of experience, they more than make up for in their ability to envision change and commit to change in society. That very lack of experience means that they haven't built up a tolerance of the status quo – and tolerance of the status quo is something that greatly endangers our efforts to *change* the status quo.

The young people in ARA have clearly demonstrated that they energetically and emphatically oppose the status quo in our society. We need to learn from them and share more of their experience in that fight.

–K. Morgan □

Should labor fight foreign imports?

According to owners of steel companies in the United States, Asian steel companies are now “dumping” Asian steel in U.S. markets, that is, selling Asian steel for less than what it takes U.S. companies to make steel.

U.S. steel company owners say that, as a consequence, they can't sell their steel and have to layoff U.S. steelworkers.

George Becker, president of the Steelworkers' Union, and other labor leaders are responding to this by appealing to the U.S. House and Senate to pass legislation preventing Asian steel companies from selling their steel at low prices in U.S. markets. An important number of labor activists, including Labor Party members, are supporting this campaign.

We think this is a serious mistake. It won't save steelworkers' jobs in the U.S. or Asia. It will cause them to lose jobs.

If the U.S. outlaws a foreign import, other nations will retaliate by outlawing U.S. products. This will impede trade between corporations based in different nations, lead to cutbacks in production, and will be used to justify more layoffs. It will also contribute to developing an anti-foreign climate in the U.S., which will encourage workers who think they are the “real Americans” (and no one can claim this but the Native Americans!) to attack workers who seem “foreign.”

There is no doubt that the UAW's campaign against Japanese auto companies contributed to the climate that encouraged two laid-off autoworkers to beat to death Vincent Chin, a young Chinese man, on the grounds that his kind had stolen their jobs. Campaigns against foreign imports undermine the solidarity of the working class and make it easier for the bosses to layoff workers.

The U.S. labor movement needs to look for solutions to problems that are really long-term solutions for workers of all ethnic groups and nationalities, not just short-term solutions for a small number of the most privileged workers in the U.S.

Labor movements of all nations need to make a united fight for a shorter work week without cutting pay so that all workers can keep on working when there are cuts in production.

When each labor movement tries to save “its” jobs by fighting foreign imports, they aren't just hurting their brothers and sisters in other countries, they are hurting themselves. — M.G. □



Left, Korean workers protest against demands by U.S. banks (International Monetary Fund). Right, top section of full-page ad in *The New York Times*, signed by George Becker, president of the Steelworkers, and presidents of major U.S. steel companies. Should workers ally themselves with bosses or other workers?



Lessons of the Fieger campaign

As we are completing this issue of *Socialism!*, the results of the 1998 elections are coming in. On a national level, it seems that the Republicans did not do as well as they expected to do; they lost five seats in the House, when the party that doesn't have the presidency usually gains seats in a mid-term election. Many media spokespeople are interpreting the election results as a sign of popular disgust with the Republican Party for the investigation into Clinton's and Lewinsky's private lives.

In Michigan, on the other hand, the Republican Governor, John Engler, was reelected; Geoffrey Fieger lost 2-1.

Many workers are very disappointed that Engler was reelected, that Fieger lost, and this is understandable. Engler is an open enemy of the working class and the oppressed population; Fieger won the Democratic Party nomination by speaking out against both the Republicans and the Democratic Party machine, and promised to be much more representative of working people and the poor.

Workers say that Fieger lost by so many votes because the Democratic Party leadership and the trade union leadership didn't back him. This is true, but it's not the whole story.

There is no question that Fieger faced an uphill battle; he had to take on the Republicans, the Democratic Party leadership, the union leadership, and the Black leadership in Detroit. But this wasn't the only problem. Fieger didn't have concrete solutions to the most serious problems facing working people in Michigan — unemployment, underemployment, low wages, lack of adequate healthcare and housing. He didn't have an

organization capable of mobilizing hundreds of thousands against the Republicans, Democratic Party, trade union, and Black leaderships and he didn't use his campaign to try to build one. He just said: “Vote for me, I'll do better.”

There is no way to overcome the combined power of the banks, the corporations, the media, the Republicans and the top Democratic Party and conservative union leaders without a mass movement, without a mass machine, armed with concrete solutions to the problems workers face.

This is why we think that it is best for workers to spend their time and money on building the labor movement, building the Labor Party, and gathering the resources necessary to get independent labor and Labor Party candidates on the ballot that will use their campaigns to build movements, rather than on Republican or Democratic Party candidates, no matter how radical they may sound.

What happened with Fieger shows, once again, how un-democratic the Democratic Party is. Even if you win the Democratic Party nomination, fair and square, the Democratic Party machine is not going to back you if you don't do exactly what it wants you to do. So there is no point in running as a Democrat and trying to reform the Democrats. There is no point in campaigning for candidates associated with the Democratic Party — except in the most exceptional circumstances — because they all hide this fundamental truth: that this party is just as rotten, corrupt and undemocratic as the Republican Party; it just has a different facade, a different role in the established order. — M.G. □

More solidarity with workers of other nations!

Socialism! is fighting for the U.S. labor movement and the Labor Party to take a clear stand against U.S. economic and military attacks on workers and oppressed of other nations and to support their struggles. The more the U.S. labor movement joins with labor of other nations against U.S. and multi-national banks and corporations and their governments, the stronger international labor will be. In this issue, we are printing an appeal from Russian workers to support their struggle to force their government to pay them their back wages and an article for getting U.S. and Serbian forces out of Kosovo.

August 18, 1998

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The leadership of the Independent Union of Russian Miners (NPG) is worried about the criminal investigations against the leaders and activists of our union. As of now, ten judgments have been initiated in regions in connection with the protests led by the NPG. The intent is to make the NPG financially responsible for all the losses incurred during the blockades of the railroads.

On August 11, the President of the NPG, Alexander Sergeev, was arrested and held under armed guard at the Central Department of the Ministry of the Interior for questioning. The interrogation lasted several hours. Sergeev refused to give any information about the criminal investigation of the miners' blockades, until there was a judicial investigation of the months of delay in the payment of salaries. Sergeev was freed thanks only to the growing pressure of mass actions in the regions.

On August 12, the Department of Interior Affairs started an investigation into the offices of the NPG and took a large number of documents from the union, which violated the law on unions and the guarantees of their rights and activities. The Penal Code article, which the authorities use to accuse the miners' leadership has a prison term of up to 4 years. It is thought that the authorities will use the same article against strike leaders in the regions.

Moreover, on August 12, the Minister of Justice, Krashennikov, announced that due to the miners' activities, it has become necessary to introduce changes in the law on unions, taking away some rights from the unions. These changes, that have since been retracted, would place the unions under the total control of the Ministry of Justice.

The facts described above are all dedi-

cated to weakening the role of the unions in Russia. To increase the hateful character of these acts, they are being carried out together with the implementation of the anti-social program written on the basis of the recommendations of the IMF, as is evident in a Memorandum written by the Russian government. The activities of the Russian government against the unions are going to be stronger during the actions of the masses planned by the union leaders for the Fall.

Please send this information to your affiliates and to the international union movement to organize an international campaign against the persecution of the union activists. Letters of protest and declarations of solidarity should be copied and sent to the following leaders:

Attorney General Skuratov
General Attorney of the Russian Federation
Ul. Bolshaya Dmitrovka, D. 15A

Moscow, Russia 103793

Fax: (7095) 229-4662

District Attorney of the Cheliabinsk Region
Ul. Elkina, d. 34

Cheliabinsk, Russia 454091

Fax: (73512) 335314

First Prime Minister Sergey Kirienko
Government of the Russian Federation
Krasnopresnenskaya Naberezhnaya, d. 2
Moscow, Russia 103274
Fax: (7095) 925-3581

Send copies to: Alexander Sergeev
Independent Union of Russian Miners
Ul. Krzizhanovskogo 13-2-38
Moscow, Russia 117218

Signed,

Nicholay Stirkov

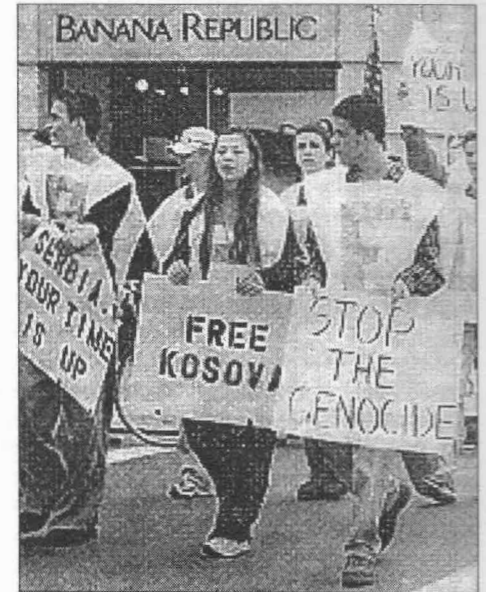
Vice president of the NPG ☐

U.S. and Serbia out of Kosovo!

Many of the most active workers and students in the U.S. are very much against U.S. intervention in Kosovo. They know what U.S. and U.S.-backed forces have done to people in Vietnam, Iraq, and elsewhere. They don't trust the U.S. government and the armed forces that it controls to be on the side of the people at the bottom anywhere.

We agree. We are urging the labor movement and the Labor Party to take a stand against all U.S. corporate and government economic and military attacks on workers and oppressed of other nations. We are urging the Labor Party to develop a foreign policy in the interests of workers of all nations. We are for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces from all foreign lands and waters.

But just because we want the U.S. to get out of Kosovo, doesn't mean we should support Serbia against Kosovo and oppose the struggle of the people of Kosovo for an independent nation. The U.S. ruling class may be the most vicious oppressor on the planet, but it isn't the only one. The labor bureaucracies that developed in Russia, Eastern Europe, and China after the revolutions in these countries are also very oppressive, like the labor bureaucracy in the United States. This is why there have been so many working class and popular uprisings against these bureaucracies — in East Germany in 1953, in Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968, in Poland in the 1970s and 80s, in China at Tianamen Square in 1989 and,



Students demanding independence for Kosovo, April 24, United Nations.

in a massive way, throughout Russia and Eastern Europe in the late 80s and early 90s. The struggle of the people of Kosovo for their own nation, which is being led by young people, is part of this working class and popular struggle against these privileged bureaucracies. In some cases, these bureaucracies' ideologies and methods are so rightwing, they are indistinguishable from fascists. U.S. and Serbia out of Kosovo! Independence for Kosovo! No to big power chauvinism! — M.G. ☐

Is socialism realistic?

More young people and working people are becoming interested in socialism. They see so many problems in our society today; they are joining more struggles alongside socialists. Some young people, especially students, are joining socialist groups and thinking about dedicating their lives to the fight for socialism.

At the moment, workers are more reluctant to join socialist groups. They may be interested in socialism, they may even be sympathetic to socialism. But many workers think socialism is not very realistic. Even those who think socialism is possible, often think socialism is a long way off.

But socialism may be closer than we think it is.

The international capitalist economy is in deep trouble. Banks and industrial enterprises are closing; thousands of workers are being laid-off; factories are closing. The richest families are starting to argue among themselves over how to deal with this crisis. Some want to continue with so-called free market policies, that allow the richest bankers and businessmen to do whatever they want. Clinton is promoting a policy of more public funds for the International Monetary Fund, which will be used to bail-out private banks and enterprises, as well as more investigation and regulation of recipients. European capitalists want more state intervention, more public enterprises, and more concessions to workers. They know, from bitter experiences, that if the richest families push the workers and the oppressed population too far, they risk provoking working class and socialist revolution. The Japanese capitalists have nationalized a number of banks and plan more state intervention in and control over their economy. Others have begun to call for the kinds of protectionist measures that eventually lead to war, like limiting imports.

At the same time, Russian workers, after 70 years of experience with a very poor and bureaucratic form of socialism, and less than 10 years of experience with an even poorer form of capitalism, are starting to draw the conclusion that capitalism is not the solution to the problems they have been facing. Almost every political party in Russia is now calling for renationalizing some banks and essential enterprises and for more investigation, regulation, and control over foreign intervention in the economy, in order to stop U.S., European and Asian businessmen from completely destroying their economy.

It's possible that the combination of the



Russian nuclear workers demand back wages. Signs say: "The government must go to jail"... "A hungry nuclear worker is much more dangerous than anyone."

international economic crisis, the growth of state intervention in the economy, the growth of working class and popular struggles and the participation of socialists in these struggles, will cause thousands, even millions, of workers to question the capitalist system, question capitalist ideology and to begin to turn toward socialism.

Obviously, a turn toward socialism on the part of thousands or even millions of workers will not, by itself, bring about a successful working class and socialist revolution or a socialist society. But it is a beginning.

To transform a turn toward socialism on the part of thousands or millions of workers into a successful working class and socialist revolution, revolutionary socialists need to *prepare now* to fight for the revolutionary socialist program, to win workers to that program, and to prepare workers to fight for that program.

A fight for the revolutionary socialist program means a fight for: a shorter work week without cutting pay so that everyone can work; a higher minimum wage with wage increases in line with price increases so that everyone can eat; workers' control of essential banks and industries by law; a workers' government, composed of workers' representatives, elected in workplaces democratically, to coordinate production and distribution; arms and military training for workers so they can defend themselves and overcome the resistance of the richest families; equal rights for youth, women, workers of color, and all oppressed groups and nationalities ...

Revolutionary socialists also need to *prepare now* to build a revolutionary workers

organization that will take advantage of the moment when the ruling classes are the weakest and most divided, when the working classes are the most fed up, the most determined to build a new society. This is the moment in which revolutionary workers will be able to lead the masses of working people in taking over the most important institutions, in establishing their own government, and in crushing the resistance of the richest families, as revolutionaries have done before them.

There are many aspects of the coming of socialism over which workers have little control: society must be in tremendous crisis; ruling classes must be weak, divided, fighting among themselves; the masses of working people must be engaged in enormous struggles, acquire experience and the conviction that this society offers no way out.

Many of these things will happen no matter what workers do today. But there are things workers can do today to bring the socialist future closer. They can join and build the labor movement, the Labor Party, and revolutionary socialist groups in their workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods. They can join and build *Socialism!*, which is working to unify and expand all the forces for working class and socialist revolution against the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies. The more unified revolutionary socialist groups are, the more realistic revolutionary socialism will appear to the masses of working people. And this is the only group that can bring about the socialist change. — M. Guttshall □

How to fight for socialism today

There are many different views among socialists on what is the best way to fight for socialism today. The most conservative, those that belong to the Democratic Socialists of America and the Communist Party, argue that the best way is to campaign for the Democratic Party and its candidates. We can't agree. Campaigning for a corrupt and bankrupt party that advocates capitalism, on the grounds that anything is better than the Republicans, or that this is the best alternative in the election, encourages workers to be short-sighted, to continue the policy of choosing between the various, increasingly *bad*, alternatives offered to us by the capitalists, rather than striking out on our own, and building our own alternative. It undermines workers' confidence in themselves, in their own abilities, in their own futures. It wastes workers' time and money, campaigning for alternatives that aren't really *working class* alternatives.

But even revolutionary socialists and communists, who don't campaign for capitalist parties and candidates, who don't support the privileged socialist labor bureaucracies in the old USSR, China, and Europe, have different ideas about what is the best way to fight for socialism today.

We think it is important for revolutionary socialists and communists from different groups and tendencies to talk to each other, to exchange ideas, to clarify where they agree and disagree, to work together where they can, and to look for ways to resolve their differences. *This doesn't mean that any revolutionary should ever give up his/her own ideas.* The first obligation of a revolutionary is to be true to the working class, to be honest, to say what he/she thinks and stick to it until someone convinces him/her otherwise. But it does mean listening, considering other opinions, thinking about what's really important and what's not so important, what's worth arguing about and what's not worth arguing about. In this way, revolutionary socialists can contribute to the unification of the working class against the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies and, within this framework, to the unification of all forces truly fighting for the socialist revolution.

With this goal in mind, we are summing up what we see as the best way to fight for socialism today.

1. Support working class and popular struggles against the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies. Revolutionaries need to be in the front ranks of the

most important working class and popular struggles; they need to be the best fighters for these causes. The further workers go in their struggles, the more they see the limitations of this system. The more socialists participate in these struggles, the more positive their role is, the more they gain in knowledge and experience, the more they win the respect and attention of their co-workers, the more their co-workers will be open to changing their ideas.

2. Urge working class and popular struggles to be independent, not to look to or count on capitalist parties, capitalist politicians, or any other capitalist institution to aid them. The working class needs to break with and be independent of the capitalists and their parties and candidates in the same way that battered women need to break with and be independent of abusive husbands. It's time to stop looking to these parties and candidates to change, time to stop hoping that they'll do you a favor, time to stop thinking that through some complex maneuver you'll get anything out of them but pain and suffering. This is why we think it is so important to build the Labor Party. The Labor Party is the largest independent working class political organization in the United States that is speaking out against Republicans and Democrats and urging workers not to rely on them. It is the only independent working class political organization in the U.S. that is open to all workers who are against the Republicans and Democrats and who want to fight the bosses.

3. Advocate working class and internationalist policies in the labor movement and the Labor Party. In order to progress toward socialism, it is necessary to unify workers of all ethnic groups and nationalities against the capitalists. It is necessary to find solutions to problems facing workers that are really solutions for workers of all ethnic groups and nationalities, not just solutions for a small group of relatively privileged workers. This means fighting for: a shorter work week without cutting pay so that everyone can work; a higher minimum wage with automatic wage increases in line with price increases so that everyone can eat; workers' control of banks and basic industries by law and public ownership of banks and basic industries by law so that workers can combat capitalists' strikes, capitalists' shutdowns of the economy and attempts to blackmail the population; an end to U.S. labor support to U.S. corporate and government attacks on workers and oppressed of

other countries. Revolutionary socialists also need to push for unions and the Labor Party to run their own, independent labor and Labor Party candidates for public office and for a workers' government or labor government, based on an independent mass mobilization to carry out working class policies. Revolutionary socialists shouldn't attempt to fight for all of these policies, at the same time, everywhere. They won't be understood and they won't have an impact. It is necessary to do this in a thoughtful and tactical way.

4. Build support for revolutionary socialism and communism among the most advanced youth and workers. Some socialists and communists say that we should fight for socialism and communism without using the words socialism and communism. There is a certain amount of validity to this in the sense that it is possible and necessary to fight for basic socialist and communist principles without using these words — like the fight for a shorter work week without cutting pay so that everyone can work, which is a basic socialist principle. But the working class will never acquire the clarity, strength, organization, energy and audacity necessary to overthrow the capitalist class and establish their own government, without taking the 150-year-old workers' revolutionary socialist movement as its own. It is important to differentiate the 150-year struggle for workers' revolutionary socialism and communism, not only from capitalist ideology and capitalist principles, but also from the bourgeois, bureaucratic forms of socialism advocated by the privileged labor bureaucracies in the old USSR and China. It's important to study the history of the revolutionary workers' movement, its theories, policies, and practices, work to see what is most important and develop it today.

5. Build a revolutionary socialist International that brings together all the forces for working class and socialist revolution, against the capitalists and against the privileged labor bureaucracies. Bringing an end to the power of the U.S. capitalist class and its allies, disarming it, and replacing it with a workers' revolutionary democracy, is a big task. It requires the combined efforts of all who are devoted to this task and willing to work collectively to achieve it. It means drawing on the experiences of revolutionary socialists throughout history and throughout the world. We think that the best way to build a big revolutionary socialist International is to begin by unifying Trot-

skyists and Fourth Internationalists who are still fighting for the revolutionary socialist program. We think they have been the most consistent partisans of working class and socialist revolution. But we are open to working with any tendency for building a revolutionary socialist International against the capitalists and privileged labor bureaucracies.

6. Form revolutionary socialist alliances and associations to advance the fight for the revolutionary socialist program and party. Most revolutionary socialist groups and tendencies in the U.S. today are very small and narrow. They are formed around very narrowly defined ideologies and leaderships and dominated by members from middle class backgrounds. Many of these groups have made important contributions to the working class struggle and the fight for workers' revolution. But, even so, they aren't very open to or hospitable for workers. Larger revolutionary socialist formations, with different tendencies within them, with everyone not thinking and acting *exactly* the same way, will be more open to workers and help them progress. Alliances and associations are not a substitute for building a revolutionary socialist/communist party, but they can be a step toward it.
— M.G. □

To our readers

Regular readers of *Socialism!* will notice that this issue is later than usual. We have decided to publish *Socialism!* four times a year, instead of six times a year. We have been finding that we have been spending so much time building the Labor Party, and writing and producing *Socialism!*, that we haven't had time to talk to friends about the contents of *Socialism!*, to distribute *Socialism!*, or to discuss *Socialism!* adequately. We hope that by publishing *Socialism!* less often, we will be able to get readers more involved in planning *Socialism!* and that we will be able to distribute it and discuss it more widely. The next issues of *Socialism!* will appear at the end of February, May, August, and November, 1999. They will be the Spring, Summer, and Fall, 1999 editions, and the Winter, 2000 edition! Thank you for your continued support. The 20th Century saw the first successful working class and socialist revolution in a poor and backward country, Russia, and all the consequent weaknesses and difficulties. Let the 21st century see a successful working class and socialist revolution in a wealthy and technologically advanced country, like the United States, so that the victory of international socialism can be ensured! □

Generation X

Branded and herded in corral X generation of
Conformist, misfits, geeks, freaks, tomboys,
mama boys, straitlaced, back-stabbing, sluts,
virgins, dysfunctional, all American, degenerate,
gay, straight, hip, burn out, straight A, junkie,
gothic, neo-hippies, gangster, straight edge, hip hop
Youth is lost, dying, confused, thrown away and given up on
They blame us, lazy, stupid, spoiled, unrealistic,
Not trying hard enough, too violent, not serious.
But we see and have seen what has come before us,
war, death, destruction, hatred, hunger,
All the evils of our world.
We see the street people throng to the curb, white-washed racism,
Corporate restructuring of our future, multi-national corporate
Genocide of indigenous people for profit, liberal-minded hypocrisy,
Forced starvation, saturation bombing of neighborhoods, police violence,
Death squads, humanitarian relief, executive orders,
Execution of the innocent
These weigh heavy on our youth.
We have drank ourselves to bar room floors, bathroom floors,
Kitchen floors, hotel room floors, brick, tile, carpet, pavement,
Floors, floors, floors, and no solution or answers have been reached.
Smoked pipes, and bongs till we glazed our eyes shut,
But no tranquility do we find.
Indulged in eruptions of mindless violence,
Smashing, bashing, crashing, destroying any trivial or monumental object
We feel fit to lash out against and still no release comes from the heavy weight on our
chest.
We've found Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Allah, Scientology,
The Occult, Chi, visions of Christ & Mary, read the Torah, book of Mormons,
Lost sea scrolls, Kabala, and satanic bible, all to no avail.
We are lost in a world we don't understand, playing by rules that make no sense to
us,
Work, eat, sleep, pay bills, back to work.
Responsibilities piled on us we don't want or respect.
Values we abhor and spit at, corporate policies, profit margins, red tape, bottom lines,
Acceptable losses, undercut programs, survival of the richest in general.
We hate this system that punishes us for reacting to it, throws us in jail, fire us,
Kicks us into the streets with no hope of job or money, points its ghostly white finger
Out scolding us its own mirrored reflection, born out of its violence, and
Drunken power trip.
We laugh and taunt its crippled up institutions, banks, religions, industries and
governments,
We set ablaze its founding preambles and toke on them.
We crack its foundations with every step we mock, it knows we're its grave diggers
And it fears our youth. — Tim James □

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Socialist healthcare

Continued from front page

selves in the process. Thus they generously finance the development, production and sale of drugs, which have proven to be very profitable for the richest families. But they are very stingy when it comes to financing changes in the environment, the workplace, nutrition and physical therapy, because these things are not profitable. They don't care that drugs often make people sicker in the long run, while other forms of healthcare are known to provide long-term cures. They aren't interested in the short-term or long-term interests of the majority of working people. They are interested only in enriching themselves.

A revolutionary socialist healthcare system will be totally different. It will be totally owned and controlled by the majority of working people. Workers will meet in their workplaces and talk about the health problems that they and those close to them face. They will commission healthcare professionals to design programs to deal with those problems. Undoubtedly, some of the first recommendations that workers and healthcare professionals will make will be to: drastically cut the number of hours that working people have to work so they aren't subjected to so much pressure and stress; increase their wages so they have enough money to buy food and other things they need; stop anything and everything in the workplace and the environment that hurts workers and those close to them in any way. In one swoop, many health problems will be totally eliminated. For the rest, workers and healthcare professionals will fight for all the resources of the society to be mobilized to prevent and cure diseases and poor health. There will be massive research into the causes of drug addiction, cancer, AIDS. Workers and healthcare professionals will undoubtedly decide to redesign our environment, our workplaces, our homes, our food, and who knows what else, to eliminate everything in our environment that contributes to diseases. Those who suffer from them will receive the best possible care, not the cheap, stingy care they receive today. Young people who suffer from drug addiction will be able to go to rehab centers for as long as they need to go, not until some insurance bureaucrat pulls the plug.

Many workers will think that a revolutionary socialist healthcare system is utopian or, at best, a very long way off. But there has already been progress toward such a system in countries like Russia, China, Cuba. The problems in these countries today

are not because workers took over the land, banks, different industrial and commercial enterprises and tried to run these countries in the interests of workers and farmers. The problems are a result of the original poverty of these countries, the capitalists' attempts to undermine and destroy their gains, and the rise of privileged labor bureaucracies in Russia and China. These bureaucracies took an unfair share for themselves, disenfranchised workers, and are now working with U.S. and European capitalists to try to bring back capitalism and destroy workers' gains. In Western Europe and Canada, there has also been some progress toward a socialist system, in the sense that workers have forced the capitalists to provide better, inexpensive healthcare to a much larger percentage of the population. Even in the U.S., there has been some progress toward a revolutionary socialist healthcare system, in the sense that we do have a relatively large, technically advanced healthcare system. The problem is that it is being run by a small group of rich men, in the interests of rich men and their families.

What is the best way to make progress toward a revolutionary socialist healthcare system in the U. S.?

1. Support the Labor Party's campaign for *Just Healthcare*. Work to make this campaign as successful as possible. Work to get all unions, working class and popular organizations to join this campaign, to join the Labor Party, and to get Labor Party candidates on the ballot to fight for *Just Health-*

"Many workers will think that a revolutionary socialist healthcare system is utopian or, at best, a very long way off. But there has already been quite a bit of progress toward such a system"

care in coming elections. The more the Labor Party's campaigns and the Labor Party grow, the more workers will see they can make big changes.

2. Speak out for workers' control of the healthcare industry by law; for unionizing all healthcare workers so that they can effectively exercise workers' control; for retraining and redeploying health insurance workers so that they can engage in constructive work; for a labor government, based on an independent, mass mobilization to carry out these measures.

3. Join a revolutionary socialist group in your area. Join *Socialism!*, which is working to build and unify revolutionary socialist forces against the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies.

The more youth, workers and socialists work in this direction, the closer we will be to the kind of healthcare system, and the kind of society, that we need. □

Join *Socialism!*

Socialism! is an association and a publication that is fighting for:

Decent jobs, wages, healthcare, housing and education for all.

Workers' control of essential industries throughout the world by law.

Collective ownership of essential industries by law.

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

Arms and military training for workers so they can defend themselves and collective property and overcome the resistance of the richest families.

Equal rights for youth, women, workers

of color, and all oppressed groups and nationalities.

Solidarity with workers and oppressed peoples of all ethnic groups and nationalities against U.S. corporations. End U.S. sanctions against Cuba and Iraq. U.S. forces out of all foreign lands and waters.

A revolutionary socialist International to lead the international working class to power, establish workers' revolutionary democracies, build revolutionary socialist societies, and sweep away the capitalists and the privileged labor bureaucracies. Uniting all forces fighting for these goals.

Socialism! is open to all who share these goals. Join us! □