

# How to Fight the Unemployment Menace!

By KEVIN FITZPATRICK

All the open enemies (Reagan) and false friends (Democrats) of the working class keep saying the "recovery" is going just fine. What is so fine, from their point of view, is that unemployment remains at extremely high levels.

### Danger and Response

Unemployment is a deadly threat to the whole working class! The division between the employed and unemployed means, in practice, that the youth are isolated from the organized power of the working class and are robbed of a future. It means that the unions are weakened and are more and more cut off from the unemployed and unorganized. It means that the workers are split on racial lines.

We think that the central focus of the fight against unemployment, while excluding no good ideas, has to be a fight for the *sliding scale of hours*, to divide the work up among all those available for work. A "shorter workweek," yes, but with no cut in pay. Some workers are familiar with this as "thirty hours work for forty hours pay" ("30 for 40"). The actual numbers can change as needed ("sliding scale"); the principle is important.

At the same time, we believe that this all-out fight against unemployment strengthens the fight for a Labor Party and helps to make clear why it is necessary.

Unemployment is not just an unfortunate social problem, especially today. Capitalism tries to create, and has created, a "reserve army of labor." The latest official figures admit that in August, the eighth month of the "recovery," the unemployment rate still stood at 9.5%, down all of 1.3 percentage points from last December's high. In actual numbers, this means close to eleven million people. And among youth (16-21) the latest official figures admit an unemployment rate of 18.3%. This average conceals the figure among Black youth — 39.3%. Unemployed youth number over three million, more than a fourth of the total unemployed.

This huge mass of desperate people is a potential and actual danger to the whole working class. Employed workers are under the gun to accept the bosses' terms — "If you won't take it, someone else out there will." This threat becomes real when, as in the Phelps Dodge copper strike in Arizona, scabs are other laid-off workers. The same menace is behind the *blackmail* at Ford's Rouge steel plant (where workers accepted concessions in face of plans to shut the whole thing down and throw thousands out on the street), in the sellout of auto workers in the GM-Toyota agreement, in the airlines and so on.

Thus, auto workers, as our readers in Detroit constantly tell us, are putting in 60-70 hour weeks while almost equal numbers walk the streets. And when workers resist such conditions and the unemployed are used to break strikes, the living standards and working situation of *everyone* worsen. All of this means that the profits of the capitalists rise; that is, the "recovery" goes on.

### Lessons at Chrysler

Recently, after many false steps, the UAW bureaucrats (Owen Bieber, Marc Stepp) and the Chrysler bosses (Lee Iacocca) finally got a new contract past the workers. Under the threat of unemployment, a majority of workers (70%; and Stepp was worried by not getting a larger margin) took what they thought they could get. In this situation, the company gave up some *small* wage increases (which *don't* amount to "parity" with GM and Ford workers *ever*) cost-of-living provisions, etc.

What the company got was two-fold. First, it was able to continue to attack work rules (the new contract says nothing on this point). Work rules changes are a conscious policy to *increase* unemployment. As one boss stated (*Business Week*; May 16, 1983): "We're talking about doing the same amount of work with fewer people or more work with the same people." Second, the Chrysler contract will not expire at the same time next year (September) as the GM and Ford contracts. This means that the potential power of the auto workers is divided at a crucial time, the eve of the elections.

So when *The Militant* (September 23), the newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), says that this contract "is a step forward and a victory for the workers," while also

noting that "most workers are not pleased with the contract," it is engaging in double-talk and confusion. But even in this situation it is possible to learn something. The feeble offer that was made came immediately following the Bell System strike, where determined strikers did make real advances. Chrysler faced real defeat in a strike, so it decided to make a deal with the bureaucrats.

From this we can conclude that it is *class struggle* methods, not deals, that produce advances for the working class. We can also see the policy of the labor bureaucrats leads to more unemployment and to weakening the whole class. If we develop these two choices we can see the road forward much more clearly.

The policy of the bureaucrats on unemployment — and even they don't mention their old swindles like "paid personal holidays" and the "Humphrey-Hawkins full employment bill" — is to rely on the Democrats. But the Democrats are the ones who are trying now, after never opposing him, to out-Reagan Reagan himself on "budget cuts." Ever so gently, the bureaucrats hint to the Democrats that a public works program is the answer.

### How to Win

Public works are certainly necessary (both for jobs and for major projects), but anyone who thinks that is reason enough for this government to create them is living in a dream

world. The *last* thing the capitalists want to do is to fight unemployment; that is what everything in this article shows. Where would Democrat Lee Iacocca, or the Wall Street bankers who pull the strings of that party, be if there really were a massive program of public works? So the most that appears is like Michigan's "Youth Corps" — a fraction of the youth employed for a few weeks at slave wages, doing the work of laid-off public employees and serving as a possible replacement for those still working.

Public works will be won only in a real fight against the center of the capitalist class — winning the sliding scale of hours in the giant corporations where the capitalists set the work-week, hire and fire, to meet *their* needs. That is what has to change.

This also shows us more about the Labor Party. Obviously, the Democratic Party is run in the capitalists' interests, so the Labor Party is a way for workers to organize themselves in

### Statement of Support

I, Fox Davis, know of how the Labor Party is and shall be a great impact on the union and establish a foundation of unity of all unions.

I do and shall support the Labor Party because it is for all the working people and people who are not working but supportive.

political independence of it. But another "third party" falls far short of what we need. All the class struggle methods that are going to be required in the fight for the sliding scale — strikes, mass picketing, sitdowns, opening the books and so on — demand a *new leadership*, one ready to implement them and go all the way. That is what the Labor Party must be.

We know the capitalist corporations and government will cry poverty. Chrysler has been doing that for four years, while its stockholders get richer and richer. The working class must give them a clear alternative: meet the actual needs of the workers (and the key is *jobs*) or be done away with. In any event, the needs of the working class will be met!

Our call for a Labor Party Coalition means an open discussion on all these questions. It means taking up the fight for our goals, especially against unemployment, as a real way to reach a conclusion to the discussion in *common action* open to every worker, youth and militant.

I am for a Coalition for a Labor Party because a Labor Party is a solid foundation. I ran for a Labor Party myself. Now I shall do it again.  
Fox Davis  
Chrysler Jefferson UAW Local 7

## Boycott Supplies to US Forces!

### Nicaragua

While the Reagan regime has claimed for months that it is seeking a peaceful settlement in El Salvador and is simply trying to stop the flow of weapons from Nicaragua to El Salvador, a representative of the Reagan regime has just said otherwise.

According to Tom Wicker, a liberal commentator, Under Secretary of Defense Fred C. Ikle said: "We do not seek a military defeat for our friends. We do not seek a military stalemate. We seek a victory for the forces of democracy." And, we must "prevent consolidation of a Sandinista regime in Nicaragua." "... we have to anticipate the partition of Central America." The US must be prepared to "man a new military front line of the East-West conflict right here on our continent."

These "forces of democracy" are the same "forces of democracy" that even the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, headed by Doug Fraser, former president of the United Automobile Workers (UAW), found guilty of initiating a "terror that singed every strata of Salvadoran society." And the US is now preparing to defend these forces not simply with funds, supplies, or even troops, but with a *partition of Central America*, that is, a *permanent occupying army* like the one in Berlin or Korea.

These developments show once again that the fate of the oppressed workers and peasants

of El Salvador, Nicaragua and the rest of Central America depends on US youth and workers. If youth and workers wage an energetic struggle on behalf of the workers and peasants of El Salvador and Nicaragua, in words and deeds, with a boycott of supplies to US forces and their allies, they will win and the US will be defeated.

And this demands a struggle not only against Reagan, but also against union leaders like Doug Fraser in the National Labor Committee. For even if certain sections of the union bureaucracy have been forced to admit that the US is pursuing a thoroughly reactionary policy in Central America on behalf of a thoroughly reactionary class of modern day slave-holders, it still isn't for doing anything about it but criticizing and protesting. The union bureaucracy remains patriotic to the imperialist United States and would consider any action going beyond criticism, like a boycott, as unpatriotic or even treasonous.

But we must be patriotic to our class.  
Solidarity with Nicaragua and the oppressed people of El Salvador!

Boycott Supplies to US Forces!

### Lebanon

Reagan authorized US marines to engage in open war in Lebanon in early September. US military personnel in the area now number 14,000, including 4000 that will be engaged in active combat, as well as men on battleships that are authorized to shell the area. And, in the coming weeks, ground troops will be moving from their positions in Beirut to positions in the hills surrounding Beirut, that is, further into Lebanon.

This is the first time that a US regime has openly authorized its soldiers to engage in open combat since the war in Vietnam. While Reagan claims to be peacekeeping, playing a neutral role and trying to "unite Lebanon," the US is defending the Maronite Christian regime against various peoples rebelling against centuries of oppression.

The Maronite Christian regime is a minority regime led by the Phalangists, particularly the Gemayel family, who consciously model themselves on the racial supremacist Nazis and were responsible for the mass murder of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps last year.

The Sunni Moslems, Shiite Moslems, Palestinians and Druse (with roots in both Christian and Moslem cultures), who make up the opposition forces, have been oppressed for years — under the Turks, under the French and British, and most recently under the Israelis and the US. Since the French took over, the Maronite Christians have collaborated in the oppression of the various Moslem groupings in exchange for special privileges.

While the US just announced an accord providing for a ceasefire and greater Moslem and Druse participation in the government, this accord will not be a prelude to peace but to greater US participation and further atrocities against the Moslem and Druse populations. Remember, it was the original US-Israeli-Lebanese accord with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), providing for the PLO's withdrawal, that paved the way for the mass terror against Palestinians and other Moslems in West Beirut. There will never be peace in Lebanon, or any part of the Middle East, as long as US imperialism and its various henchmen are allowed to remain.

US intervention on behalf of the Maronite Christian-Phalangist regime once again shows the thoroughly reactionary, rotten and corrupt character, not only of the Reagan regime, but also of the entirety of the American government and system. Not only are Reagan and the Democrats intervening on behalf of an elitist, racist and murderous minority, they are con-

sciously conspiring to prevent American youth and workers from having any control over this. They are not only spreading the usual mendacious propaganda whitewashing "our side" and slandering the rebel forces. They have completely scuttled the only worthwhile provision in the War Powers Act (which calls for congressional review of sending troops into combat within 60 days) and agreed that the question of US troops in Lebanon will not be reviewed until after the 1984 elections. As if this were not sufficient to prove the Democrats loyalty to Reagan, Democratic House Speaker Thomas O'Neill declared: "We want to work together with the White House. If Syria thinks America is divided and it can wait around until we pull out, they are wrong."

Some may think this is out of character for a Democrat, but they would be wrong. In reality the Democratic Party is a party of Dixiecrats and big city political bosses, both of whom have made a business out of using one nationality to keep down another. In defending the Maronite Christians, they are only defending their own. The only reason that anyone thinks differently about the Democrats is because of a systematic campaign of disinformation.

American youth and workers cannot confine themselves to simply demanding that the US withdraw its troops. We must wage an active struggle on behalf of the various oppressed peoples of Lebanon. This means politically defending their right to drive the US and its allies out and establish their own nation or nations and fighting for an active union boycott of supplies to all US forces and their allies.

Naturally some will protest that this means betraying "our nation" or "our boys dying over there." But this nation is a nation ruled by imperialists intervening on behalf of a tiny, racist minority against the oppressed, overwhelmingly Moslem, population of Lebanon.

These "boys" are marines, an elite, volunteer corps totally separated from the working class. A photograph of some of these "boys" now involved in the combat that appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* included their hand-made sign saying: "Kill all ragheads."

Why should the working class defend such a nation or such "boys." We have far more in common with the oppressed Moslems and Druse!

Drive the US out of Lebanon!  
Boycott supplies to US forces!  
Down with the Phalangist regime!  
Freedom for oppressed peoples of Lebanon!  
M.G.



# For an Open Trotskyist Congress to Rebuild the US Section of the Fourth International

A significant number of young people have begun to turn to Trotskyism as the only tendency capable of guiding the working and oppressed masses.

Yet there are several organizations that claim to be Trotskyist. Each has its own policy that it calls Trotskyist. And the largest of these, the Socialist Workers Party, appears to be the farthest from basic Trotskyist principles.

kyist principles.

The Trotskyist Organization of the USA, Section (Sympathizing) of the Fourth International, was founded in 1975 to overcome this problem; to lead a struggle to clearly differentiate Trotskyism from various centrist or intermediary tendencies that masquerade under its name; to train a new generation of

revolutionaries capable of guiding the American working class in the foundation of its own party and the fight for power; in other words, to rebuild the US Section of the Fourth International.

We call on youth turning toward Trotskyism, as well as youth and workers fighting for a Labor Party, to join us in this struggle, in particular, in preparing

and building an open Trotskyist Congress to bring the struggle to a successful conclusion. This page is especially dedicated to this struggle. It is open to any militant or tendency that wants to contribute to it.

## Trotskyists and Black Liberation

Once again the great destiny of the Black people — to be the vanguard of the American Revolution — is unfolding. The movement to support an independent Black candidate, the recent Chicago elections where the Black candidate, Harold Washington, defeated the racist Daley machine is only the beginning.

The struggle of the Black worker will not only free himself, but having proved himself to be the most capable proletarian fighter, will free the white worker from his barbarous prejudices, thereby preparing the whole of the American working class to conquer power and smash the racist, capitalist government it lives under. That, in essence, is the Trotskyist position on the Black question.

Among all other currents, history shows that only the Trotskyists and the Fourth International have the authority, the wisdom, and the experience to guide this crucial struggle. But it is not enough to say it, it is necessary to prove it and, at the same time, it is necessary to overcome the misconceptions that exist on the fight for Black liberation among militants and organizations that claim to represent Trotskyism.

In the original discussions with Trotsky on the Black question, the American Trotskyists were behind. They posed the question of Black liberation in theoretical and rather abstract terms. Should Trotskyists support the demand for self-determination? Do blacks constitute an oppressed nation? These were some of the questions that were raised to Trotsky. (Discussions with Trotsky can be found in *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*, available from *Truth*.)

Though Trotsky was quite unfamiliar with the actual situation of Black Americans, a fact

that he stated quite openly himself, his experience as one of the most capable leaders of the October Revolution allowed him to get to the heart of the question very quickly:

"I believe that the first question is the attitude of the Socialist Workers Party (American Trotskyists — *Truth*) toward Negroes. It is very disquieting to find that up until now the party has done almost nothing in this field. Our party is not safe from degeneration if it remains . . . isolated from the genuine masses. Under these conditions our party cannot develop — it will degenerate." (Leon Trotsky, April 11, 1939).

This was no minor criticism. The SWP was by 1939 one of the most working class parties of the Fourth International in terms of composition and experience. But, like the overwhelming majority of the workers movement, its parties, and the trade unions, it viewed the special oppression of Blacks at best as a question of economic and political equality, subordinated to the struggles of the organized workers who were overwhelmingly white.

The SWP, however, through the discussion that it opened up in the Fourth International, which included those with Trotsky, began to see the real stake of Black liberation. In this sense, even the question of the working class composition of the party and its importance came from a larger consideration — the necessity to teach the American worker "that the American state is not their state and that they do not have to be the guardians of this state."

In other words, the Trotskyists finally came to view the liberation of Blacks as an instrumental means of molding the consciousness of the whole of the American working class, including the backward and prejudiced white

worker, for the task of smashing the American imperialist state and making the socialist revolution.

This was also the content that Trotsky believed the demand for self-determination could be given. He felt that the SWP had originally opposed this demand for the wrong reasons:

"If the situation was such that in America common actions existed between the white and colored workers, that the class fraternization had already become a fact, then perhaps the arguments of our comrades would have a basis — I do not say that they would be correct — then perhaps we would separate the colored workers from the white if we commence with the slogan 'self-determination.'

"But today the white workers in relation to the Negroes are the oppressors, scoundrels, who persecute the black and yellow, hold them in contempt and lynch them" (Leon Trotsky, 1933).

In other words, for Trotskyists to defend the right of self-determination — the right of Blacks to set up their own independent state — was key to preparing the whole of the American working class for its revolutionary tasks, in much the same way that the demand for national self-determination raised by Lenin prepared the Russian worker to make the first victorious workers revolution. Trotsky once remarked, "The Russians were the European Negroes."

The demand for self-determination was a means by which the Fourth International could make clear that it took the side of the most oppressed, giving them the full right to decide their own fate, against the aristocratic and prejudiced layers of the working class. Trotsky felt that if indeed the Black Americans did decide to

form an independent state it would be "a sign of great moral and political awakening. It would be a tremendous revolutionary step."

Nevertheless, he considered the position of the Communist Party (Stalinist), which advocated in a certain period the formation of a separate Black nation (even to the extent of drawing up maps of the region to be taken), to be completely opportunist. In essence, he felt that by making the demand for a separate nation imperative: "It was a case of the whites saying to the Negroes, 'You must create a ghetto for yourselves.'"

The early Trotskyists even proposed a special black organization, a sort of "pre-political school," that would be based on the Black worker and sharecropper. It would be independent of the Fourth International in the fullest sense, but the Trotskyists would try to guide its work and would maintain a critical stance toward it.

"This organization can justify itself only by winning workers, sharecroppers, and so on. If it does not succeed, we will have to confess that it was a failing. If it does succeed, we will be very happy because we will have a mass organization of Negroes."

The formation of the Black organization was an important tactic to aid the central task, which was still that of the revolutionary party itself. Educating the party as to the importance of Black liberation. Formulating the special demands of Blacks. And recruiting the most advanced Black workers to the Fourth International.

"Unless it can find its way to the great masses of the underprivileged, of whom the Negroes constitute so important a section, the broad perspectives of the permanent revolution will remain only a fiction and the party is bound to degenerate" ("The SWP and Negro Work," Resolution of the 1939 Convention of the SWP).

Even though the special Black organization was never formed, the SWP was able to recruit and train an important core of Black workers during and immediately following World War II. But when the SWP abandoned the Fourth International and rejoined the Pabloites, a pro-Stalinist tendency, in 1963, it also abandoned the struggle for the proletarian party and adapted itself to the petty bourgeois milieu of the student movement and liberalism.

In fact, in 1968, when an important movement of Black workers in Detroit, the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM), began to fight the racism and class collaborationism of the trade union bureaucracy, the SWP

did not even play any active role in aiding their fight. It had missed a development of tremendous importance wherein the Black worker in the urban industrial working class had gone from being a small minority to a majority today.

That does not throw out the acquisitions of the early Trotskyists. Still today it is necessary for Trotskyists to defend the right of Blacks to form their own nation and their own organizations. But it is also necessary to open one's eyes to the Black organizations that exist, from the NAACP to the National Black Independent Political Party, which are thoroughly imbued with the ideology of the intellectual, not the worker, and refuse even to make a clear break with the Democratic Party — the sole means by which Blacks have been kept down despite their heroic struggle for liberation.

Today, more than ever, the Fourth International has to find its way to the Black worker, the Black woman and the Black youth. To that end the Trotskyists are fighting today to build a coalition of Black workers in the factories and neighborhoods for their own independent party. We have given that party the name of Labor Party, because what is important is that it represent the laborer, the assembler, the janitor, and the unemployed worker. What is important is that it dedicate itself to the interests of the least advantage of the working class: to the Black, the immigrant worker, the peasant under the oppression of American imperialism, and present a fighting example to the backward and prejudiced among the white workers.

Only with such a struggle can the Fourth International prove that it alone can build such a party. Only then can it prove that it alone can be such a party.

## From Walka Klas

The Rewolucyjna Liga Robotnicza Polski (RLRP — Revolutionary Workers League of Poland) is fighting to build a new leadership of the Polish working class that is independent of the Catholic Church in order to bring down the Stalinist junta. Here are some excerpts from its journal, *Walka Klas* ("Class Struggle"), concerning Solidarnosc and the Pope's recent trip to Poland.

"... Some affirm that the Pope's 'purely religious mission' will serve to 'lead to peace.' Still others that it will constitute a support to the workers in struggle. In one way or another, the point of view dominate in the society that the Pope's visit will surely be a positive factor in

the development of the struggle against the military junta . . . We say immediately that any hope that the Pope's visit will in any way aid the working class to overthrow Jaruzelski's junta appears to us to be very illusory . . .

"The Vatican chief's second visit to Latin America is rich in lessons for the Polish Revolution. In El Salvador and Nicaragua, where the workers and peasants armed struggle against imperialism is a daily and bloody reality, the Pope's declarations in favor of 'social peace' and 'national solidarity' provoked violent protests from crowds that chanted 'all power in the hands of the people' . . .

"When American imperialism openly pre-

pare war against Nicaragua in order to crush the revolution in Central America in blood, any call in favor of 'national solidarity,' any call to stop the struggle and toward 'conciliation,' can only be interpreted as a call to the working class and peasantry to lay down its arms and submit to imperialism's dictates."

On this basis the RLRP fought for Solidarnosc to organize independent demonstrations under its own banner in the course of the Pope's visit. If you want to send this message to the Polish workers, support the Polish Trotskyists! Make a pledge to the International Workers Fund! (Make checks payable to and send to *Truth*.)

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