

THE MILITANT

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build world youth festival

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Bush tour of Europe seeks to assert U.S. domination

Washington presses Moscow to accept NATO expansion

BY GREG McCARTAN

In a five-nation trip to Europe in mid-June, U.S. president George Bush advanced the military and political objectives of the U.S. ruling class vis-à-vis Russia and Washington's imperialist allies in Europe.

Bush used the trip to take a new step in the drive by Washington to expand eastward the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance, assert its determination to move ahead with an antimissile weapons system, and press the Russian government to accept these moves in exchange for "integration" into Europe. He said the European Union (EU) would have to bear both the "burden" and "benefits" of carrying out this course.

Bush met with top government officials during stopovers in Spain, Belgium, Sweden, Poland, and Slovenia, where he held a two-hour "summit" with Russian president Vladimir Putin. In Brussels he met with leaders of NATO powers, and in Goteburg, Sweden, with heads of state of EU nations.

In a June 15 address at the University of Warsaw, Bush argued for putting NATO expansion on the fast track. "I believe in NATO membership for all of Europe's democracies that seek it and are ready to share the responsibilities that NATO brings. The question of 'when' may still be up for debate; the question of 'whether' should not be."

One of the main axes of Washington's drive to expand NATO and deploy an antimissile shield was to hold out an offer to the Russian government that it can come under the protection of a U.S.-dominated

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Laundry workers in Baltimore win UNITE union contract



Picket line at Up-To-Date Laundry in Baltimore in June. The workers won their fight to be organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and gained a contract after a nine-week strike. They won broad support from other workers both in Baltimore and other parts of the country. "We achieved our objectives: a union contract, respect, health care, a pension fund, and some more money," said unionist Jaime López. See article on page 3.

Meat packers at Nebraska plant set for union vote

BY JOE SWANSON

OMAHA, Nebraska—At a press conference held here June 19, José Juan Robles, who has worked at Nebraska Beef in the cooler section of the cut floor for more than a year, reported that 70 percent of the more than 800 workers at the plant have signed union cards.

Robles said the workers had chosen United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271 (UFCW) to be their bargaining representative and would file with the National Labor Relation Board (NLRB) to request a union election.

Nebraska Beef represents the UFCW's biggest target in Omaha since the union began organizing more than a year ago. Union officials estimate there are some 4,000 packinghouse workers in the area of Omaha and Council Bluffs, Iowa, across the Missouri River.

At a news conference held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in South Omaha, Donna McDonald, president of UFCW Local 271, said, "We accept and welcome the Nebraska Beef workers' request." She added that the UFCW would file with the NLRB the next day and asked the company not to interfere with the workers who want a union.

McDonald noted that meatpacking workers have won union elections at two ConAgra packing plants since the fall of

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Cuba responds to U.S. 'spy' convictions

BY GREG McCARTAN

In a statement featured in the June 20 issue of the Cuban daily *Granma*, the government of that country condemned the June 8 convictions in a U.S. court of five Cuban citizens on espionage and murder charges.

The five, the statement says, were part of an operation to "discover and report on terrorist plans hatched against our people" in Florida by counterrevolutionary opponents of the Cuban Revolution.

Three Cubans—Gerardo Hernández,

Ramon Labaniño, and Antonio Guerrero—were convicted in a federal court in Miami of "conspiracy to commit espionage" and "conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent," and could get life imprisonment. Fernando González and René González, convicted of "conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent," face possible 10-year sentences.

Gerardo Hernández also faces a life sentence on charges of "conspiracy to commit murder" in the deaths of four pilots belonging to the rightist Brothers to the Rescue. The pilots were shot down by the Cuban air force in 1996, following repeated warnings, after they had provocatively entered Cuban airspace. The prosecution won the conviction by asserting that Hernández had provided the Cuban government with flight information about the Brothers to the Rescue operation.

Assault on rights

The arrest, prosecution, and conviction of the Cubans by U.S. authorities is a blow not only against revolutionary Cuba, but against the rights of working people in the United States.

In violation of Fourth Amendment protection against illegal search and seizure, FBI agents broke into the homes of the defendants many times over a three-year period prior to the arrests and searched through their belongings and computers. The prosecution's "evidence" consisted of information the FBI claims it collected from what

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Polisario Front leads fight for W. Sahara independence

BY JACK WILLEY

DAKHLA REFUGEE CAMP, Western Sahara—"We are the last nation in Africa to be occupied by a foreign power. Even after the national liberation struggles of the last century and the decolonization process in Africa, today our land remains occupied by Morocco," explained Bashir Mohamed, secretary of the Western Sahara Embassy in Algeria.

Since the 1970s, Morocco, with the backing of its imperialist masters in Washington, Paris, and Madrid, has occupied this nation. In that period, the U.S. government alone has given the Moroccan regime more than \$1 billion in military aid, used largely against the Sahrawi independence struggle and against resistance by workers and peasants inside Morocco.

A few dozen foreign guests from several organizations supporting the Sahrawi people's struggle for independence recently visited the refugee camps of Western Sahara.

The solidarity visit, which included members of the International Organizing Committee for an anti-imperialist world youth festival planned for August in Algiers, coincided with the Fifth Congress of the Union of Youth of Western Sahara (Ujsario), which was held June 9, the Day of the Martyrs holiday here.

Ujsario organized meetings for its guests with the head of parliament of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), the government-in-exile of Western Sahara, and with activists in the Association of Family Members of the Sahrawi Prisoners and Disappeared, among others. The international guests stayed with Sahrawi families in the tents that have been their homes for some 25 years and learned firsthand about the Sahrawis' tenacious struggle for independence.

The people of Western Sahara began to forge a national identity more than a cen-

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Socialists hold Active Workers Conference

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

OBERLIN, Ohio—From coal miners in Wyoming and Arizona, to the families of poisoned uranium miners demanding justice, to striking garment workers, to dairy and raisin farmers, to fighters against police brutality across the United States—communist workers have found themselves welcomed as they have become more integrated into a broader vanguard of fighting workers and farmers.

This fact was registered at a four-day Active Workers Conference sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. It was confirmed by the presentations on the panel discussions, in contributions from the floor of the conference, and in the examples that were pointed to during a meeting of the party's trade union leadership on the final day of the June 14-17 gathering.

At a June 18 meeting of the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee assessing the conference, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes noted that the breadth and openness of this political response has not been seen in decades. Communists are finding an interest not just in the labor or farm coverage in the revolutionary press but in a much broader range of political ideas.

This interest in ideas was reflected at the

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Pathfinder offers special sales of newly reprinted titles — page 5

Cuban youth leaders in South Africa build world youth festival

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—Three youth leaders from Cuba are touring Southern Africa in order to “consolidate the relationship of friendship and solidarity” with student and youth organizations in the region and to encourage participation in the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students in Algeria, said Julio Martínez, Second Secretary of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba, in an interview here June 8.

Describing the importance of the August 8–16 meeting in Algeria, which will bring together thousands of youth from around the world, Martínez said that “the Youth Festival movement is the only international tribune where imperialism is openly condemned.”

The delegation is visiting Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa, said Juan Carlos Marsán, UJC international relations director. In Angola the delegation is meeting with the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola Youth League; in Namibia with the South West Africa People's Organisation Youth League; and in both countries with youth councils and ministries.

In South Africa they met with the African National Congress (ANC) Youth League, the ANC, South African Communist Party, the National Youth Commission, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and others. In Zimbabwe, the three-person delegation will be hosted by the Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front and plans to meet with various other groups.

In South Africa, said Martínez, the ANC Youth League is planning to be well-represented at the Youth Festival. The ANC is supporting the international event, as is the South African Communist Party. “We hope that this is what we will find in other countries we're going to visit,” he added, noting that a special effort is being made in Cuba to ensure that some young people from countries in Africa and elsewhere who are currently studying in Cuba can attend the festival.

The theme of the gathering is “Let's globalize the struggle for peace, solidarity,

development, against imperialism,” Marsán said. “The word ‘struggle,’ or ‘fight,’ present in that slogan, shows the festival has an active, not a passive, attitude,” he said. “It calls on youth to take action against the conditions we confront today.” Ofelia Sandar, a journalist for Radio Rebelde, pointed out that the Algiers event would be an opportunity for youth from around the world to exchange experiences about struggles they are involved in.

The Cuban youth leaders said they are also looking forward to the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange scheduled for Havana July 22–30. Marsán said the event will enable young people from the United States “to know the reality of Cuba, our democracy, and the war of ideas that we are waging against the policies the government of the United States is applying against Cuba.”

U.S. imperialism, he said, “is trying to justify the blockade of our country with the so-called human rights issue. Discussions during the exchange will offer youth from the United States arguments that will enable them to fight against that campaign from within the United States. This is very important for the Cuban people. The event also aims to establish an exchange of youth that is an example of the kind of normal relationship that could exist between our two countries.”

Noting that Cuba “was very much committed in the struggle against apartheid, which was the worst expression of racism,” Marsán said the Cuban government would be participating in the United Nations World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, August 31 to September 7. Cuban organizations, he said, would participate in a forum of non-governmental groups being held alongside this meeting.

On their first full day in South Africa, the Cubans visited Soweto, the sprawling black township in the southwest of Johannesburg. The brief visit made an impression on them.

Marsán said two political realities struck him. First, is the effort to “rescue history. This is very important. The past of this country should not be forgotten. Not only be-



The 14th World Festival of Youth and Students was held in Havana in 1997

cause apartheid was shameful to humanity, but because all humanity needs to prevent it in the future.”

Marsán also saw “the challenges facing this society after many years of apartheid. When you see the opulence of a small part of the population versus the poverty of the majority of the people, you start to appreciate the changes” that have taken place since apartheid was ended. He was impressed by “the will to erase the legacy of apartheid.”

Sandar commented on the example Cuba offers to those living on the African continent, which has been devastated by its colo-

nial past and held in chains today by imperialist domination. “The clearest example Cuba has given, not only to African youth, but to the world, is the example of courage, resistance, and of defending at any price the conquests of our society,” she said, noting that there are 457 Cuban doctors working in South Africa alone, many of them in rural assignments refused by South African doctors.

Cuba represents a “people's decision on what their social system will be, with their own means, without international prescriptions. This is inspiring to people who want to choose their own destiny,” said Martínez.

Join a U.S. delegation to the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students

August 8–16, Algiers, Algeria

The festival will bring together thousands of youth from around the globe. Given its location, it is expected to draw attendance particularly from Africa and the Middle East, in addition to Europe, Latin America, North America, and Asia.

The program will offer nine days of discussion and debate on wide-ranging political topics, from the struggles for self-determination in Palestine, Western Sahara, and Puerto Rico, to the U.S. military buildup in Latin America, to the fight for women's rights, to U.S. imperialism's drive to expand NATO eastward.

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Berbers in Paris protest repression in Algeria

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS—Actions by Berbers in solidarity with the fight against government repression in Algeria have been increasing over the past two weeks in France. On June 17 some 10,000 people, overwhelmingly Berbers, marched here a few days after the June 14 demonstration of more than 500,000 people in Algiers that had been attacked by police. Handmade signs and banners dotted the crowd and participants chanted and sung throughout the two-hour action.

The main slogan, shouted again and again, was "Pouvoir Assassin" (The rulers are assassins), referring to the more than 80 deaths in Algeria of demonstrators protesting the April 18 killing of a high school student under police custody in the Kabylia region of the north African country. Many carried signs with pictures of those killed by Algerian government forces.

"In Algeria, there is no work," explained Hadjeb Hanafi, a 52-year-old worker at the Alstom transformer plant outside Paris. "Young people graduate from school with diplomas, but there is nothing to do. Why have I been here for 31 years? In my district in Algeria there are 20 villages. During

the last year 27 young people have come clandestinely to France to look for work. Others have gone to Spain and the Czech Republic." As an example, he pointed to a 29-year-old friend at the demonstration who arrived in France four months ago.

Hadjeb stated, "Young people in Algeria aren't going to stop. They say if we stop we're done for. They want to go all the way—to install democracy." Another demonstrator, Aziz, said, "This is the only way to go forward. Getting democracy is a problem of all Algerians, it's not a Kabyle problem." Both Berber and Algerian flags were prominently displayed throughout the crowd.

Demonstrators chanted demands that the Berber language Tamazight be taught in schools. Another slogan was, "Generals, on your knees!" referring to the top military officers who seized power at the behest of the French government in 1991 in order to annul an election that would have brought an opposition Islamic party to power.

Banners indicated that participants had come from as far away as Belgium, and Rouen and Mulhouse in France. Many came from local Berber cultural associations. Hadjeb said he thought the "political parties, the Regroupment for Culture and Democracy (RCD) and the



Militant/Derek Jeffers

March in Paris June 17 in support of struggle of Berbers in Algeria, who are demanding that their language, Tamazight, be made an official language in the country.

Socialist Forces Front (FFS) have been discredited by their collaboration with the government. That's why it's the cultural associations and an immigrant radio station, Beur FM, that organized the

demonstration."

A week later, on June 24, around 4,000 people attended a meeting and cultural event in Paris to commemorate the anniversary of the assassination of popular Berber singer Matoub Lounes. He was ambushed on a road in Algeria three years ago under circumstances that left many Berbers suspecting government complicity. The meeting called for a genuine investigation into the singer's disappearance and that justice be done.

Another 1,000 people gathered elsewhere in Paris to welcome 15 Berber marchers who had left Rouen, 100 miles from Paris, five days earlier. The marchers had stopped in towns along the way with large Berber communities to drum up solidarity with the actions against repression in Algeria.

During the rally demonstrators sang the hymn of the Algerian Revolution that forced an end to French colonial rule during an eight-year war that cost the lives of 1 million Algerians.

Derek Jeffers is a member of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and an auto worker at the Peugeot plant in Poissy.

Baltimore UNITE laundry workers win union

BY JOHN STUDER AND INEZ MARSH

BALTIMORE—"We have been out on strike for nine weeks and it was well worth it," Audra Murphy, a scale operator at the Up-To-Date Laundry said in an interview at a June 24 victory picnic after winning union representation and gains in wages, working conditions, and benefits.

"I never had doubts we would win. We had a strong strike. Everyone's attitude was: we won't go back without a union, no matter how long it takes."

Nearly 250 workers at the laundry walked off the job April 23 after the employers fired 16 of their co-workers during a fight to win a union in the plant.

Up-To-Date is one of the largest industrial laundries in Baltimore, washing 28 million pounds of linen a year for major hospitals, medical centers, and hotels. The medical laundry, in particular, comes soiled with human blood, waste, dirty hypodermic needles, and other serious health hazards.

The owners of Up-To-Date have fought bitterly for years to keep the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) out of the plant. They have faced numerous complaints submitted to the Maryland Commission on Human Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, and the National Labor Relations Board during the union organizing fight because of racist discrimination, sexual abuse, discriminatory firings, and violations of the right of the workers to organize.

Describing how workers had stood up to company efforts to divide the workforce, Murphy remarked, "Since we have been on strike the African American and Latino workers have definitely bonded. Before, when we were in the plant, because of the language barriers, we were subject to conflict. But on the picket line, we have learned to understand each other."

According to union organizer Melvin

Newsome, the company went on a campaign in the months leading up to the strike to recruit Latino workers from the Washington, D.C., area. The bosses paid these workers slightly higher wages than the rest of the workers in the plant, who were in their majority Black workers from Baltimore. The company hoped the immigrant workers would act as a brake on a strike and prevent any union election victory. The attempt to pit workers against each other failed, however, as virtually all workers of Latin American origin signed union cards and joined the walkout and strike.

Broad support for strike

The strike won broad support in the Baltimore area because of the company's notorious record. The NAACP, whose headquarters is in Baltimore, campaigned in defense of the strikers.

"This is a real step forward for the brave workers at Up-To-Date," Kweisi Mfume, national president of the NAACP, told the Baltimore *Sun* after the unionists' victory. "Their courage and hard work brought them a well-deserved victory."

Although the laundry bosses tried to keep the plant running with temporary workers escorted by uniformed guards during the strike, the strength of the strike and the support it won forced the company to settle.

Under pressure, some of the laundry's largest customers, including the University of Maryland Medical Center and Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel, threatened to cancel their contracts with the laundry.

Both companies sent letters to the laundry saying they were "troubled by continuing allegations that there are serious violations of employees' rights."

Under the contract, which was approved overwhelmingly June 21, workers won union representation, a three-year contract, immediate wage increases, health and pension benefits, eight paid holidays a year, one week of vacation, vaccinations against disease exposure, and the right to form a union health and safety committee.

"The struggle has been going on for two years," Francisco Leiva said in an interview. "We got stronger and stronger. I was sure of the victory because I was sure of the people."

He commented, "To me, medical coverage is most important." Leiva works separating soiled laundry before it is cleaned. Because of the medical waste, workers face the constant danger of hepatitis, and the company had refused to provide protective vaccinations.

"Now we have shots for the diseases we come into contact with," Leiva said.

"We achieved our objectives: a union contract, respect, health care, a pension fund, and some more money," Jaime López added. "What helped us win was solidarity, support from the community and other unions, and from the NAACP."

Newsome, an African-American who worked in the plant until he became a union organizer, said Up-To-Date was "a planta-

tion that was out of date."

He added, "When the owner of the shop was forced into signing the agreement with the union, she came out of the plant to the union picket line and kicked over a table the union had set up with cold drinks for the picket line."

"It shows she is still going through denial about the union," added Perry Hopper, another union organizer, who used to work at Cannon Mills in Kannapolis, North Carolina. "She will probably have relapses. A strong union will help her through the transition."

John Studer is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 15 in Philadelphia.

Meat packers in Twin Cities mark first anniversary of sit-down strike

BY MARCO ANTONIO RIVERA

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—One hundred workers participated in an action June 15 marking the one-year anniversary of the sit-down strike by meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods that launched their fight to join a union, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789.

The marchers staged a mock funeral procession to protest the refusal of Rosen's Diversified, Inc., Dakota Premium's parent corporation, to negotiate a contract with the meat packers. Workers wearing pro-union T-shirts with the slogan *Si se puede!* ("Yes we can" in Spanish) carried a black casket followed by marchers carrying crosses and chanting picket slogans in English and Spanish.

They walked from the Dakota Premium plant gate to the offices of UFCW Local 789 a half mile away.

Shortly after the beginning of the march, a group of workers from Dakota rushed to the front of the march chanting in Spanish and English, "We want a contract and we want it now." The unionists set the pace of the march.

The event also included the participation of staff and rank-and-file members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 17, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, United Transportation Union, United Auto Workers, Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, and members of Local 789 at two other workplaces—Rainbow Foods and a St. Paul nursing home.

Workers at Dakota, in their majority workers born in Mexico and Central America, shut down production on June 1, 2000, for seven-and-a-half hours to protest working conditions and the production line speed in particular. The sit-down strike initiated an organizing drive that culminated in a union victory seven weeks later when

the meat packers voted 112 to 71 to join the UFCW.

The company appealed the election to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which upheld the union election last November. The Dakota bosses appealed once more to the NLRB; no ruling has been made by the government agency in the past six months.

After the march, a rally took place at the Local 789 union hall, where refreshments and snacks were served. William Pearson, UFCW local president, and a number of workers from Dakota Premium addressed the crowd.

"There are those who think we have accomplished nothing in this year of struggle, but I believe the opposite," said one of the speakers, Miguel Olvera, a worker at the plant and member of the local's Communications Committee.

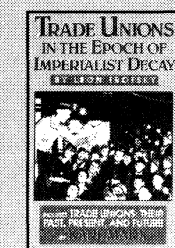
Over the past year, Olvera said in Spanish in an interview with the *Militant*, "we have pushed the company to treat people who get injured in a different way [from how they have treated them before]. Despite the problems, we have now forced them to provide some treatment. We received a 50-cent raise in our wages for the first time in many years, and although we do not have the line speed we want, we got them to lower it, and they don't run it at the speed they would like to run it."

"We are fighting the line speed. The line speed is no joke. You feel it in your body," said Bobbi Negrón, another worker at Dakota. "Our main problem is the speed of the line is really fast," remarked Reynaldo Montoya, another Dakota worker who participated in the action.

"Looking back at this past year we have to ask ourselves can it be done? Can we get union recognition and get a contract?" Olvera said. Paraphrasing the old farm worker slogan *Si se puede*, he replied, "I have to say 'yes, it can be done.'"

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

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Bush's tour presses U.S. military plans

Continued from front page

military alliance in Europe and receive economic aid from those countries. This would mean the European Union governments underwriting massive support payments and capital transfers to workers states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, countries where capitalism has been overthrown.

"Across the region, nations are yearning to be a part of Europe," Bush said in his Warsaw speech, referring to the desires of the pro-capitalist ruling layers in Eastern Europe and countries of the former USSR. "The burdens—and benefits—of satisfying that yearning will naturally fall most heavily on Europe itself." He presented a view of an imperialist-led European bloc, including countries from the "Baltic to the Black Sea and all that lie in between." Among those countries he included the "Ukraine, a nation struggling with the trauma of transition," a euphemism for the fact that capitalism is far from being reimposed in that workers state.

The U.S. president said Europe must "be open to Russia. We have a stake in Russia's success—and we look forward for the day when Russia is fully reformed, fully democratic, and closely bound to the rest of Europe. Europe's great institutions—NATO and the European Union—can and should build partnerships with Russia and all countries that have emerged from the wreckage of the former Soviet Union." He added that "Russia is part of Europe and, therefore, does not need a buffer zone of insecure states separating it from Europe."

The *Financial Times* of London noted the pro-Washington "yearnings" of a senior Czech diplomat prior to Bush's visit who summed it up this way: "By NATO we mean the U.S. The EU is about economic integration. But we are Atlanticists. We see the US/NATO security role complementing the EU's economic role. They go hand in hand. This is the message we want to hear from Bush. This is why enlargement must continue."

NATO admitted Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in 1999, extending the imperialist military alliance right up to the borders of Russia.

Antimissile weapons and ABM treaty

In declaring its intention to deploy sea-, land-, and space-based missile intercept weapons as part of a "National Missile Defense," which was previously a priority of the Clinton administration, Washington has openly declared the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty a thing of the past. In addition, Bush has stated his intention to drastically cut the number of nuclear warheads in the U.S. arsenal to around 2,000 or less.

The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty stipulates that Washington and Moscow will not "develop, test, or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based, or mobile land-based." It does not rule out fixed land-based missile systems or those for small geographic areas, known as "theater" missile defense.

The U.S. Navy has been developing ship-based interceptors and the Air Force is testing lasers mounted on an airplane. Both

could be used in the broader system envisioned by the U.S. rulers. "We do all our testing in accordance with the treaty," claimed Lt. Gen. Ronald Kadish in congressional testimony recently. "And it hasn't prevented us from doing what we need to do for the ground-based system per se."

Philip Coyle, former head of weapons testing at the Pentagon, said that the 1972 treaty has not held Washington back from "development of the technology needed for national missile defense, nor is the treaty slowing the testing of an NMD system."

Both statements, in addition to the Bush administration's stated goal of cutting Washington's massive nuclear arsenal, point out the degree to which the ABM treaty is already a dead letter, something Bush used to his advantage to counter protests by the French and German governments over the scrapping of the treaty.

Russian president's response

After his meeting with Bush, Putin said he was "very grateful" that "these words" about Russia's integration into Europe and relations with NATO were "finally" heard from the president of the United States. "This is very important for us. We value this. When a president of a great power says that he wants to see Russia as a partner, and maybe even as an ally, this is worth so much to us," he declared.

Putin responded to Bush's statements by urging Washington not to act "unilaterally" on the missile shield plan. "The president now says that Russia and the United States are no longer adversaries; moreover, they can become partners," he said. "It is precisely from this standpoint that we should have a look at the entire package of previously concluded agreements between us."

Putin said he "offered to work together" with Bush on the missile defense, but that if Washington moved ahead without Russia, "we are ready to act on our own." The Russian president asserted that Moscow would deploy multiple nuclear warheads atop the country's current single-warhead missiles in order to potentially overwhelm any U.S. defense system. But he put off the possibility of doing this for a long time, stating that he was "confident that at least for the coming 25 years" the missile system "will not cause any substantial damage to the national security of Russia." Shooting down a missile is "like a bullet hitting a bullet," the Russian president said. "Is it possible today or not?" adding that "today it is impossible."

'Putin's bluff'

In an opinion column entitled "Putin's bluff" that appeared in the June 21 *Financial Times*, Padma Desai, director of the Center for Transition Economies at Columbia University in New York, said, "The Russian bear is trapped between a failing economy and pressing defense needs on the nonnuclear front."

The Russian president's threat to deploy missiles with multiple warheads if Washington moves ahead unilaterally to deploy an antimissile system is "little more than noise and cheap bargaining. Mr. Bush has the bear over the barrel," Desai wrote. He added that "Russia's dependence on foreign assistance continues to be acute" and that recent budget improvements only reflect "the massive increase in oil revenues because of high oil prices and that is unlikely to last."

While figures for Russian government expenditures vary widely, most sources put the upper limit at around \$60 billion. One-quarter of the budget goes to service the country's debt payments to imperialist banks, a figure that is expected to rise to one-third of government expenditures by 2003. The defense budget is estimated by several sources at \$5 billion. By contrast, the U.S. government has an annual federal budget of \$1.78 trillion, some \$300 billion of which is earmarked for military spending. Expenditures for missile systems are expected to increase by \$2.2 billion next year.

The extent of the economic difficulties in Russia and the rapid deterioration of the country's economy can be seen in the fact that the most optimistic figures record its gross domestic product (GDP) at \$593 billion in 1998, ranking 14th in the world—above south Korea and below Indonesia.

Unionists in France demand government action on layoffs



Militant/Nat London

A contingent of 2,000 members of the Basque Workers Union march against layoffs in June 9 national demonstration in Paris of more than 20,000 workers. Many came from areas where bosses have announced plant closures and job cuts. "We need a law giving rights to union representatives allowing them to block layoffs," was the view expressed by Correa Bissent, an auto worker from Senegal who works at the Peugeot assembly plant at Poissy, in the Paris area. Earlier that day, the unionists from the Basque region had joined a rally defending Corsican and Breton nationalist political prisoners in France.

With a population of 146 million, Russia's per capita GDP is \$4,000, placing it among the lower tier of countries. By contrast, Turkey, a semicolonial country of 65 million, had a per capita GDP of \$6,600 in 1998, and the Dominican Republic a per capita GDP of \$5,000.

Desai wrote, "There is no doubt that Mr. Putin must dread the prospect of NMD eventually destroying the utility of Russia's nuclear stockpiles and turning the U.S. into a hyper-power with first-strike capability without fear of retaliation.... His budget cannot possibly find the necessary resources to begin a nuclear arms race; and his immediate defense needs are focused on the country's difficult neighbors."

Reactions from Germany, France

NATO members are not unanimous in their support to Washington's plans. French president Jacques Chirac said after the NATO meeting that a missile shield would be a "fantastic incentive to proliferate weapons" for countries that want to try to overwhelm any defense system and added that he saw the need to preserve "strategic balances, of which the ABM treaty is a pillar."

German chancellor Gerhard Schröder said he saw "a host of issues that need to be clarified, and therefore we must and indeed will be continuing intensive discussions on this subject." Newly elected prime minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy said the differences were a matter of "degree of enthusiasm between those who are more advanced on the project and those who are less advanced."

The U.S. president urged EU members to accelerate their eastward expansion plans, something the Swedish government, which currently holds the presidency of the EU, has placed at the top of its agenda. The meeting in Göteborg agreed to this perspective, despite stated reservations by the German and French governments, setting the end of 2002 as the date by which to complete negotiations with up to a dozen countries on joining the EU. Top on the list are Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovenia, and Poland. Others in discussion with the EU are Cyprus, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Romania.

What bearing the "burden" of the EU expansion means and the impossibility of reimposing capitalism through simply economic means in workers states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union can be seen in Germany. At the end of June, Germany's federal government decided to extend massive financial subsidies to the region comprising the workers state in eastern Germany—the former German Democratic Republic—until 2020, starting with a \$134 billion commitment. Over the first decade since reunification in 1990, the German government transferred \$540 billion in direct subsidies to the east. Despite this, the region's unemployment remains at 18 percent, its per capita gross domestic product remains at only two-thirds of that in the west,

and a construction and real estate speculation boom has gone bust.

Taking a typically arrogant, American nationalist tone, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote in a June 22 piece that the EU is "economically strong enough to play an important role in stabilizing messy states in Western Europe, Russia, Central Europe, and even North Africa, by nurturing these regions toward democracy and capitalism. But it is politically divided enough, particularly on foreign policy, not to pose any serious challenge to U.S. global leadership."

In face of the fact that Washington will press ahead regardless of the stand of any individual government, an unnamed diplomat from a major European imperialist power told the *Financial Times* that the EU powers are "trying to develop our own European Security and Defense policy. But if MD [missile defense] goes ahead, we will be beholden to the Americans for our security." No matter what extent of economic integration is achieved, "being beholden to the Americans" militarily gives Washington a strong leg up in relation to its imperialist allies/competitors in Europe.

Kyoto treaty

Bush also brushed aside criticism of his administration's decision not to sign the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on climate control, exposing the hypocrisy of the big powers in Europe on air pollution controls.

The Kyoto agreements set targets to cut heat-trapping greenhouse gases by 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. Government representatives from economically advanced countries agreed to slightly more stringent reductions than semicolonial countries. At the time, both U.S. president Clinton and vice president Albert Gore said they would press, in Gore's words, "for meaningful participation by key developing nations." Bush has continued this theme.

Imperialist powers could easily get around the emission standards, though, through a system of "trades" built into the treaty that allowed a government to "buy" emissions reduction permits from another government. The *New York Times* wrote at the time that the agreement was held up due to "resistance" by "some of the developing nations, including China, India, and Saudi Arabia, to the inclusion of a provision enabling the industrialized nations to trade or purchase emissions rights," and that the "objectors said that the mechanism could lead to shifting the burden to less developed countries, and that countries and companies might be able to buy their way out of their obligations."

Philip Gordon and James Lindsay of the liberal Brookings Institutions wrote in a June 22 column that Bush had the upper hand in defending Washington's decision. They say that "the four-year-old Kyoto accord has yet to be ratified by a single European country, most of which have made little progress in curbing their own emissions."

Last week in Young Socialist Fund Drive! May 6-July 1

City	Goal	Paid	%
Seattle	90	165	183%
Pittsburgh	200	202	101%
Chicago	300	300	100%
Tucson	300	251	84%
New York	700	348	50%
Philadelphia	150	70	47%
Twin Cities	300	99	33%
Los Angeles	450	0	0%
Other		427	0%
Tuscaloosa	0	0	0%
Total	2,490	1,862	78%
Nat'l goal/Should be	2,400	2,100	88%

Pathfinder promotes special offers for the 'Books of the Month'

BY STEVE CLARK
AND MIKE TABER

Beginning with this issue, the *Militant* each month will feature several Pathfinder Press books and pamphlets from among those reprinted by its printshop the previous month. These "Books of the Month" will be available at a special 25 percent discount to members of the Pathfinder Readers Club.

The purpose of this effort is to aid Pathfinder bookstores in North America and around the world in promoting the entire range of revolutionary literature Pathfinder publishes and keeps in print—in English, Spanish, French, and in some cases Swedish and Icelandic as well.

These include the works of communist leaders from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, to V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky; to speeches and writings of the pioneering leaders of the revolutionary workers movement in the United States, such as James P. Cannon and Farrell Dobbs; to titles by outstanding revolutionary and Marxist leaders of the world struggle for national liberation and socialism over the past half century, such as Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, Malcolm X, Thomas Sankara, and Maurice Bishop.

At the heart of Pathfinder's political arsenal are writings and speeches by Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters, and other current leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and communist movement—books and pamphlets such as *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*, *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation*, and many others. Together with issues of the Marxist magazine *New International*, these titles provide a working-class political analysis of, and strategic orientation to, the expanding opportunities and challenges of the class struggle in today's world.

Pathfinder bookstores will receive a special 60 percent commercial discount during the month on newly reprinted books such as these and other Pathfinder titles. The bookstores will feature the Books of the Month on their counters and bookshelves, and supporters of Pathfinder will take these

and other titles out each week to street corners, picket lines, campuses, and political events in the workers' neighborhoods and cities where they are located and to the surrounding area.

These monthly promotional offers are a chance for workers, farmers, and youth interested in the lessons of hard-fought struggles by working people over the past century and a half to expand their libraries and equip themselves to be more effective militants and leaders. Each week the *Militant* will highlight one of these titles, running excerpts from it, along with an ad for the specials as a whole.

Pathfinder Reprint Project

The Books of the Month are selected from titles newly digitized by the more than 150 volunteers around the world participating in the Pathfinder Reprint Project, as well as from titles they have already digitized but have sold out and been reprinted once again. Volunteers in this project are organizing to put all 350-plus Pathfinder titles into electronic form, so they can be kept in print at a smaller cost and with less labor time using the state-of-the-art computer-to-plate technology in Pathfinder's printshop.

The printshop has set the goal of a one-month turnaround of titles as they are turned in by Pathfinder to go on the presses.

At the beginning of May, the Pathfinder Reprint Project volunteers celebrated the half-way mark in this international effort, and they have set the goal of surpassing 75 percent by this time in 2002. Without this volunteer project, a growing percentage of Pathfinder's catalog of revolutionary literature would simply be unavailable for purchase, study, and use by working people and youth.

The newly digitized titles represent a substantial upgrade to these books and pamphlets: larger, more readable type; a more attractive internal presentation; higher-quality photographs and other graphics; corrections of errors in previous printings; improvements to the indexes; and in some cases newly designed covers.

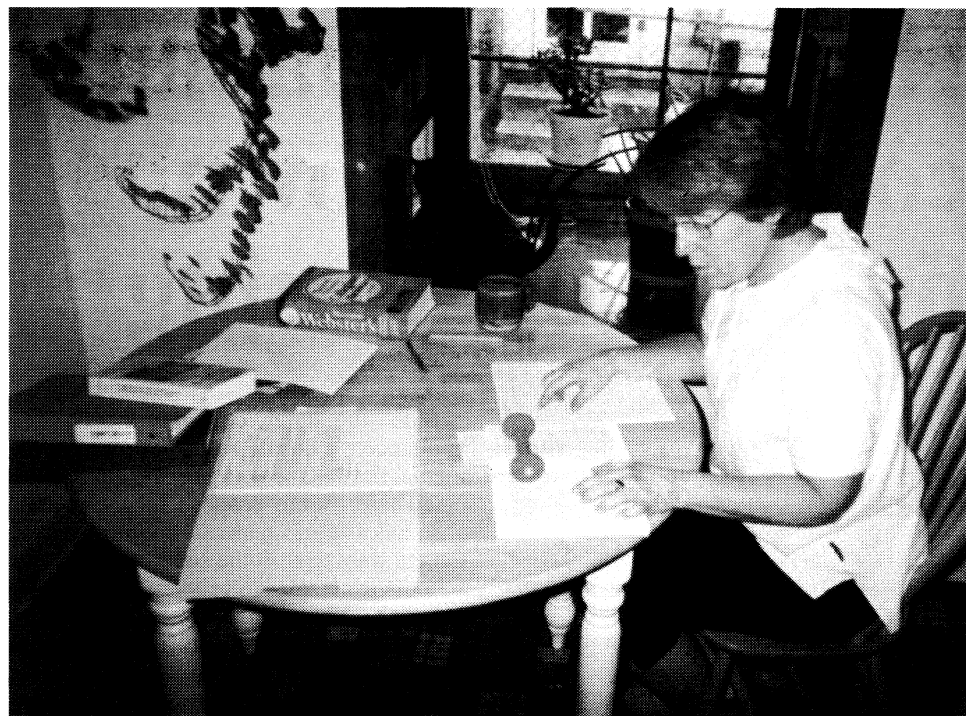
For that reason, readers who have earlier, well-worn printings of these books on their shelves are often replacing them with the reprints. Some readers also point out that when they join in classes to study and discuss these books and pamphlets, it's useful for all involved—from whatever generation—to be using the same editions with the same page numbers.

July special offers

Titles to be featured in July are:

• *Revolutionary Continuity in the U.S.: The Early Years 1848-1917* by Farrell Dobbs. Newly redesigned and more inviting to the eye, this is the first of two volumes by a central leader of American communism. These books, in Dobbs's words, "trace three major threads through the history of the workers' movement in this country and its revolutionary continuity: (1) the fight for the economic organization of the working class into trade unions, and for organization along industrial rather than craft lines; (2) the fight for political and social consciousness and action by the workers' movement; and (3) the fight for the independent political organization of the working class, a labor party, to advance its interests and those of its allies against the interests of the ruling capitalist minority. Tying these threads together are the efforts by the Marxist wing of the workers' movement to gather the cadres of a proletarian revolutionary party needed to lead the fight to end capitalist rule, establish a workers and farmers government, and open the road to a socialist order."

• *Class, Party, and State and the Eastern European Revolution*. This Education for Socialists publication, also newly reset in a more attractive format, contains documents and polemics from the discussion in the Socialist Workers Party and world communist movement on the post-World War II overthrows of capitalism across Eastern Europe. An understanding of the process through which these social transformations took place—from a deep-going popular revolu-



Militant

Jane Roland, a volunteer in the Pathfinder Reprint Project, proofreads newly reprinted book. The more than 150 volunteers in this project are working to put all 350-plus Pathfinder titles into electronic form so they can be easily kept in print and meet demand. Pathfinder is now offering special sales on its reprinted books and pamphlets.

tion in Yugoslavia, to more bureaucratically organized mass mobilizations of workers and peasants in most other of these countries—sheds light both on the collapse of the Stalinist regimes at the opening of the 1990s and the obstacles imperialism still faces in its efforts to impose stable capitalist regimes and exploitative social relations on working people throughout this part of the world.

• *Maurice Bishop Speaks*. The only collection of speeches, interviews, and writings still in print by the central leader of the 1979-83 Grenada Revolution, explaining the anticapitalist course and internationalist foreign policy of the workers and farmers government in that Eastern Caribbean island. The collection contains an introduction by Steve Clark that reviews the achievements of the revolution and the background to its overthrow in 1983 by a Stalinist faction, paving the way for an invasion by Washington, as well as a speech by Fidel Castro and statement by the Cuban government condemning the counterrevolutionary coup and subsequent imperialist intervention.

• *Che Guevara: L'économie et la politique dans la transition au socialisme* (Economics and politics in the transition to socialism) by Carlos Tablada. A new French-language edition drawn from the writings of Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution. When the original Spanish edition was first published in the late 1980s, Cuban president Fidel Castro commented that the author had "compiled, studied, and presented in the book the essence of Che's economic ideas...dealing with a subject so decisive in the building of socialism." The Spanish and English editions are also available through Pathfinder.

• *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1939-40*. These articles and letters were written at the onset of World War II by the Bolshevik leader who led the international fight to continue putting Lenin's political legacy in practice following the Stalinist political counterrevolution

in the Soviet Union. They assess the aims of the contending imperialist powers in the unfolding slaughter and the tasks facing the world communist movement. This newly redesigned and reprinted book is part of the 14-volume collection of writings by Trotsky from the decade of capitalism's most devastating social and political crisis of the last century and many of the biggest class battles by workers and farmers. This series is an important component of the library of revolutionaries anywhere in the world.

• *50 años de guerra encubierta* by Larry Seigle. This Spanish-language pamphlet contains a translation of the article, "Washington's 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation," which appears in issue no. 6 of *New International* magazine. The pamphlet, the author says, looks "at the origins and continuity of the FBI's covert war against the Socialist Workers Party" going back to the U.S. government's preparations to drag U.S. workers into World War II. In the process, the article explains why the SWP has taken the lead in unconditionally championing the rights of all those targeted by the U.S. imperialist rulers—rather than "the Social Democrats, who have substantially greater resources," or "the Communist Party, which has suffered more than the SWP from the FBI's illegal campaigns of spying, harassment, and disruption."

Pathfinder Readers Club

Annual membership cards in the Pathfinder Readers Club are available for \$10. In addition to taking advantage of the monthly 25 percent discounts featured here, Readers Club members can purchase any Pathfinder title at a 15 percent discount and are also eligible for special prepublications offers on new and forthcoming Pathfinder books and pamphlets. These discounts are good at all Pathfinder bookstores, as well as for Readers Club members ordering directly from Pathfinder.

Sign up for the Pathfinder Readers Club today!

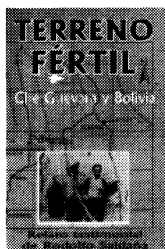
**Now available
in Spanish!**

**Fertile Ground:
Che Guevara
and Bolivia**

**A firsthand account by
Rodolfo Saldaña**

Rodolfo Saldaña was one of the Bolivians who joined ranks in 1966-67 with Ernesto Che Guevara to forge a revolutionary movement of workers, peasants, and young people to overturn the military dictatorship in Bolivia and open the road to socialist revolution in South America. Here, Saldaña talks about the unresolved battles of the tin miners, peasants, and indigenous peoples of his country that created "fertile ground" for Guevara's revolutionary course and mark out the future of Bolivia and the Americas. Published by Editora Política. Distributed by Pathfinder. **\$9.95**

Also available in English.



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

N.Y. Spanish-language daily plugs 'Che Guevara Talks to Young People'

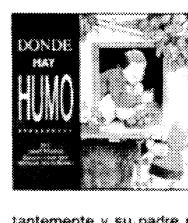
• R E C O M E N D A D O S



Che Guevara habla a la juventud no es "Che para principiantes". El legendario revolucionario nacido en Argentina, quien ayudó a dirigir la primera revolución socialista en Las Américas e iniciar la renovación del



Tras una breve revisión histórica de algunos acontecimientos y personajes que han colaborado a nuestro bienestar, **Luis Rojas Marcos** plantea en **Nuestra Felicidad** la diversidad de significados que damos a la felicidad, su medida, su abundancia, su distribución entre las personas y su expresión a través del cuerpo y del espíritu; examina "las semillas" de nuestro talante dichoso, las directrices genéticas que guían su desarrollo.



Daniela y su padre tratarán cualquier cosa para deshacerse de sus malos hábitos —Daniela se come las uñas cons-

tantemente y su padre no deja pasar una oportunidad para fumar. Para el año nuevo, toda la familia hace propósitos y Daniela y su padre se comprometen a renunciar a sus malos hábitos. Ellos deciden ayudarse uno al otro. **Donde hay humo** de **Janet Munsil** con ilustraciones de **Michael Martchenko**.

Pathfinder's *Che Guevara habla a la juventud* (*Che Guevara Talks to Young People*) was one of the books featured as "Recommended reading" for youth in the Sunday books section of the New York City Spanish-language daily newspaper *El Diario/La Prensa*. Lectorum bookstore, one of the largest Spanish-language bookstores in the city, is listed as the place to get a copy of this title. The blurb quotes the back cover of the book.

Residents of Alabama coal mining town fight school closing

BY ARDELLA BLANDFORD
AND CHERYL GOERTZ

EMPIRE, Alabama—"Why are they closing my school?" asked Tommy, a seventh grade student at Empire school. His question was posed at a May 7 community meeting of about 100 parents, teachers, students, and other local citizens. It was the third of four such meetings organized to rally support for keeping open the only school in this small mining community.

In mid-April, residents of Empire were informed that the Walker County Board of Education was considering closing the school. The board's stated reason for this move was to help the school system balance the budget in preparation for coming statewide cuts in funds for education totaling \$266 million.

"Save Empire School" signs were posted on telephone poles, on trees, and in yards throughout the town and surrounding area. Residents launched a petitioning campaign, gathering signatures door-to-door in neighborhoods, at shopping areas, and on the job. Nearly 2,000 people signed up in support of the fight.

"It's not just about our school," said Donna Savage, a participant in the struggle who circulated petitions at her job in nearby Jasper. "We don't want any schools closed."

Alabama is already ranked 44th in total

education spending.

Since the statewide funding cuts were announced, a debate has taken place in the media, the state legislature, the courts, and elsewhere. Some propose increasing the state sales tax to generate more revenues. Others want to shift the source of funds for schools from sales to property taxes, arguing that property taxes would be a more stable source of income. Still others pit funding for kindergarten through 12th grade against funding for higher education, arguing that if cuts have to happen, colleges and universities should bear the greater burden. And there are those who propose equal cuts throughout the system.

Several retired coal miners in Empire told these reporters that they thought the decision to close the school was tied to mining interests. One of them, James Lemley, explained that "coal is being strip-mined about a quarter mile from the school. A seam of coal runs right through here," indicating the area in which the school is located.

When asked what she thought would happen to the school, Linda Busby, also a former miner, said, "They'll tear it down and strip it," referring to McWane, a major mining operator that owns the land adjacent to the school.

Supporters of Empire school packed the May 10 school board meeting expecting



Militant/Dave Wulp

Opponents of decision by Board of Education to close the only school in the coalfield community of Empire, Alabama, pack a May 10 school board meeting in nearby town of Jasper. The state of Alabama is ranked 44th in total education spending.

their position to be considered, but board members quickly approved the closing. Busby, who is also the grandmother of an Empire student, pointed to the already crowded schools to which Empire children

will be bused next year. "Children are not a priority," she said. "These kids will get lost in the system. It's heartbreaking and it's an outrage."

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists in Alabama passed out a joint statement in support of the struggle to save Empire school. Many who attended the community meeting on May 7 read the statement with interest. Demands raised in that leaflet included, "Stop the cuts in education funding now. No sales or property taxes on working people—tax the rich. A public works program, paid at union-scale, to build needed schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and other facilities workers and farmers need. Free education for all, through the university level."

Construction workers strike against harsh conditions and for a union in Salt Lake City

BY HEIDI MELLOR

SALT LAKE CITY—Workers at Utah Structural Coatings have been on strike since April 30 when 60 of the 65 employees walked off the job. The workers, almost all Mexican-born, apply fireproof coatings to construction materials.

The issues of the strike are nonpayment for overtime worked, arbitrary reduction in wages, deduction of insurance premiums without providing benefits, and failure to provide adequate safety training and equipment. The workers are being represented by

the Rocky Mountain Regional Council of Carpenters. The *Salt Lake Tribune* called the strike "the latest battleground for Utah's burgeoning union movement."

The strikers have maintained daily pickets at the massive Gateway Construction project, a complex of apartments and businesses scheduled to be ready in time for the 2002 Winter Olympics here. On May 6, 57 workers received termination letters. Some 30 strikers have returned to work.

At a fund-raiser for the strikers held at the Salt Lake Union Center on June 10, a striker who has worked for the company for more than four years told the *Militant*, "Many workers had their wages cut to \$5.15 an hour, after having been promised \$9.00 when they were hired." When the foreman was asked why the workers were not being paid the full amount, he said that they didn't speak English, "so we don't have to." Company owner Chris Utley has accused workers of sabotaging equipment by leaving fireproofing material to harden in hoses.

Victor Bautista, an organizer for the carpenter's union, told this reporter that when he first met with Utley "he refused to negotiate with the union, denied all the charges, and said, 'I am going to call the INS.' I asked him, 'Why are you doing this?' and he said, 'They are illegal. They don't deserve to be paid the same,'" Bautista said. "This is not just about money. Sometimes you have to stand up for your rights," added Bautista. "We are going to prove this is not a country just for the people who speak English."

Utley has maintained that the workers were coerced into signing the union cards, and denies any wrongdoing. He was quoted in the May 1 *Salt Lake Tribune* as saying that some workers had been "wasting" respirators, using five or six a day, and he clamped down on how many they can use. Under the impact of the walkout, however, the company has been forced to make some concessions. Utley told the *Deseret News* in an interview on June 8, "The company commissioned an internal audit of the company's insurance benefits system and payroll records," and will work to resolve disputes in a timely manner.

The strike has received a large amount of press coverage in the Salt Lake area. The carpenter's union has received support from other locals, including Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union Local 8-578 at the Phillips refinery in Woods Cross, Utah.

The union has petitioned the National Labor Relations Board to be the negotiating representative for the workers, and expects a ruling next week.

UFCW drive in Nebraska

Continued from front page

2000 and are now in negotiations for a contract there.

McDonald referred to a UFCW press release reporting that the union has filed a number of charges with the NLRB against Nebraska Beef. The union is protesting a December 2000 raid of the Nebraska Beef plant carried out by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in the middle of the union-organizing drive. The immigration cops arrested more than 190 production workers and marched them onto buses in their work clothes.

Two days after the INS raid, seven workers led a work stoppage after Nebraska Beef attempted to maintain the brutal line speed with 200 fewer workers. The company fired the seven workers, all women, according to a worker at the plant. The UFCW is seeking to get them reinstated with back pay.

Robles pointed to the conditions at Nebraska Beef as the main reason workers need the union. He described several examples of the ongoing company intimidation and harassment. Supervisors yell at workers and sometimes stop them from using the rest rooms. Work hours are long—in some cases up to nine hours without a break. The line speed continues to be increased, and many workers are getting injured and threatened with loss of jobs if they complain.

The press conference was attended by Nebraska AFL-CIO officials, local union representatives, and members of Omaha Together/One Community (OTOC), an organization of religious congregations and political activists that back the union-organizing campaign.

Nebraska governor Michael Johanns and Omaha mayor Michael Fahey were among those speaking at the press conference. In his remarks, Johanns placed big emphasis on the first anniversary of a law he signed called "Nebraska Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights."

This state law supposedly guarantees workers the right to organize and join together for collective bargaining purposes,

the right to a safe workplace by establishing "management/employee safety committees," and a few other provisions. This measure, like others adopted around the country, is designed primarily to try to convince working people that the pro-employer government will actually protect their rights, but in fact is crafted so as to protect the bosses. The text of this "Bill of Rights" begins by accepting that "Nebraska is a right-to-work state," referring to the open-shop legislation that weakens union representation.

At the press conference, Robles said the pro-union workers at Nebraska Beef will continue to talk to co-workers about the need for a union and organize meetings at homes and at the church "to involve workers to respond to what the company will do now that we are going to have a union election."

Pulp and paper workers make gains in strike

BY JOHN NAUBERT

LONGVIEW, Washington—Pulp and paper workers won a victory after their nearly four weeks on strike shut down most production at four Weyerhaeuser plants. The Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers approved a new six-year contract with higher pensions and lower health-care costs than what the company originally offered.

The new contract removes language that would have allowed the subcontracting out of union work, the issue that union members said sent them out on strike May 8. Approximately 1,300 workers had walked out of mills in Oregon and Washington. Some 681 workers were on strike at the Longview mill.

Many union members had reservations about the contract, but did not feel they could get a better offer. However, most workers considered the strike a success, saying the union gained respect. They cited the removal of the subcontracting issue as a significant gain.

Strikers accused drivers of trucks crossing the picket line of bumping one worker and running over picket signs, saying they had to jump out of the way of the trucks on several occasions.

The strike won a great deal of community support. The union's biggest rally was May 19, where several hundred strikers, family members, and other workers were on the picket lines.

from Pathfinder

Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

BY JACK BARNES

"The capitalist rulers offer us social disaster. They offer us depression. They offer us death from curable disease. They offer us war. They offer us fascism. They offer us an unending list of horrors. But we offer ourselves the ability to prevent those horrors from becoming the final reality, the confidence that we can transform that future."

Also available in Spanish and French.
\$23.95

Available from bookstores,
including those listed on page 12.

Puerto Rico independence: stakes for workers

The following statement was presented by **Martín Koppel**, on behalf of the **Socialist Workers Party National Committee**, to the **United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization**. He was among some 30 individuals and representatives of organizations who testified at the hearings on the colonial status of Puerto Rico, held June 21 in New York City. Subtitles are by the *Militant*.

Distinguished Chairman and honored committee members:

The bombing of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, which the U.S. military resumed just days ago, is a bald imperialist outrage against an oppressed people. It deserves worldwide condemnation. The U.S. government's persistence in these brutal actions, in defiance of the will of the majority of the people of Puerto Rico, reveals one fact above all: Puerto Rico remains a U.S. colony.

The latest expression of Washington's colonial arrogance is the U.S. government's promise to end the bombing practices on Vieques—two years from now! But the U.S. colonial masters have not experienced an epiphany, like Saint Paul on the road to Damascus. To the contrary, this still unfulfilled "concession" comes only as a result of the refusal of tens of thousands of workers, fishermen, students, and others in Puerto Rico to give up their struggle—a struggle that has won support among increasing numbers of working people in the United States and around the world.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists will join with many others in New York in demonstrating to demand that the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques now! Drop the charges against all those arrested for protesting on Navy-occupied land!

For workers and farmers in the United States, supporting independence for Puerto Rico is not only a matter of elementary solidarity. A successful struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico is necessary if the vast majority of the people of the United States are to successfully confront their own oppression and exploitation.

A common enemy: Washington

Working people in the United States and the people of Puerto Rico have a common enemy—the small handful of billionaire families who rule the United States and who benefit from the exploitation of Puerto Rico's labor, land, and natural resources. As long as Puerto Rico remains under the U.S. colonial boot, the fighting capacity and solidarity of working people in this country will be debilitated.

As long as any worker or working farmer thinks of the U.S. government as "we" or "ours," all of us will be weakened in our struggles. Our efforts to reach out for anti-imperialist and proletarian solidarity will be obstructed.

The U.S. rulers are pushing to brutally speed up production, stretch out working hours, undermine health and safety on the

job, slash social benefits, and attack union rights. They are tightening the bondage of working farmers to the banks and to giant agribusinesses from whom farmers must buy and to whom they must sell. These assaults have led a growing number of working people in city and countryside to resist the offensive against our wages, our land, and our social and political rights.

Just two weeks ago, 5,000 workers—many of them involved in struggles of their own—marched in Columbia, South Carolina, to demand the government drop the frame-up of five longshore workers facing felony "rioting" and "conspiracy" charges for the "crime" of taking part in a protest last year by hundreds of dockworkers against company union-busting that was violently assaulted by 600 cops.

Emerging working-class resistance

This emerging resistance takes many forms. In Colorado uranium miners and their families are demanding U.S. government compensation for poisoning and deaths caused by the mine bosses' profit drive. Working people in Cincinnati, Miami, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and other cities are protesting racist killings by the police. In the Upper Midwest, from Minnesota to Nebraska, meat packers have held job actions to protest the inhuman speed of the production line and demand union recognition. Immigrant workers in California have marched to oppose government attempts both there and nationwide to require a Social Security number for anyone obtaining a drivers license—a government move that, if successful, will open the way to the imposition on all U.S. working people of a national identification card in defiance of the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights.

Mr. Chairman,

Some 2.7 million Puerto Ricans live in the United States, making up a productive and weighty component of the working people in this country—including of those who took part in two labor rallies in this very city yesterday, as transit workers defended health benefits and telephone workers protested union busting by Verizon.

Puerto Rican workers here are subjected to systematic racist discrimination, as are Blacks, Chicanos, and other oppressed nationalities. Colonial rule in Puerto Rico reinforces every reactionary force in the United States: from attacks on affirmative action, to anti-immigrant terror by *la migra* and right-wing groups, to antiunion assaults and campaigns.

Washington's colonial domination of Puerto Rico gives the U.S. government a freer hand to restrict the rights of working people and others fighting for their livelihoods and social justice. Today six patriots—Antonio Camacho, Oscar López, Haydée Beltrán, Juan Segarra Palmer, José Solís, and Carlos Alberto Torres—remain in U.S. prisons because of their activity in support of Puerto Rico's independence. Some have already been jailed for more than 20 years, making them among the longest-held political prisoners in the world.



Residents of Monte Carmelo, a community on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques that in the 1980s successfully recovered land occupied by the U.S. Navy, protest Washington's resumption of bombing practice on the island in mid-June and the efforts by police to arrest anti-Navy protesters. Signs say, "We don't want police on our lands."

As the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists demanded of William Clinton yesterday, we today demand of U.S. president George Bush: "Release them now!"

The attacks on democratic rights in Puerto Rico—from FBI spying against tens of thousands of unionists, independence supporters, and others, to the denial of bail to anti-Navy protesters appealing their sentences—will be used increasingly in the United States as workers and farmers resist the employers' efforts to drive down our wages and social gains and to restrict our capacity to organize and resist.

For decades the U.S. government has tarred the struggles of *independentistas*, calling them "terrorists" and railroaded freedom fighters to jail. Similarly, in the so-called embassy bombing case here in New York, Washington is waving the banner of the fight against "terrorism" to try to establish a precedent for kidnapping citizens from African nations to be tried in the United States. At the same time, the U.S. rulers are stepping up use of the death penalty as a weapon of terror aimed at working people.

Since Washington invaded Puerto Rico more than a century ago, it has used that Latin American nation—including the Puerto Rican island of Vieques—as a base for launching military aggression around the world, from Panama to Cuba, to the Middle East. The use of U.S. military facilities in Puerto Rico in the name of fighting "drug trafficking" reinforces Washington's growing semisecret military intervention and construction of bases under the same pretext in Colombia, Ecuador, the Netherlands Antilles, and elsewhere in South America and the Caribbean.

Puerto Rican youth have been dragooned as cannon fodder into all of U.S. imperialism's wars, from the first and sec-

ond interimperialist world slaughters, to Korea, to Vietnam, to Iraq, to the Balkans. The resistance by Puerto Rican youth to Washington's imperial conscription has set an example for young people in this country.

Last month, working people in this region got a taste of what the people of Puerto Rico have been subjected to for decades. On May 9 more than 100 U.S. Army special operations soldiers from Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, carried out a simulated assault near a residential neighborhood in East Brunswick, New Jersey. These war training exercises go hand in hand with the establishment, for the first time, of a de facto U.S. military "homeland" command right here in the United States, which will be aimed against working people in this country.

A successful struggle to win independence for Puerto Rico will deal a powerful blow to our common enemy. It will show it's possible to stand up to the most brutal capitalist class in the world and break its dominion. Right now this is being shown especially by the fishermen, workers, students, and others standing up to Washington in the fight to evict the Navy from Vieques.

Example of revolutionary Cuba

Mr. Chairman,

The people of Puerto Rico and working people in the United States are often told by our common oppressors in Washington that it's futile to struggle, that we cannot survive without our masters, that independence will only spell ruin. But the example of revolutionary Cuba demolishes that self-serving myth.

The socialist road taken by the workers and farmers of Cuba is the only one that has proven capable of leading to genuine independence and sovereignty. In face of four decades of a relentless U.S. campaign to punish them for the audacity of becoming the first free territory of the Americas, Cuba's working people have not only resisted—they have emerged stronger.

A recent reflection of this strength was seen in a mass rally a few weeks ago by 100,000 people in Havana in solidarity with the Puerto Rican people and their fight to demand "U.S. Navy out of Vieques." This rally highlighted Cuba's consistent course of championing Puerto Rico's desire for independence.

Another expression of Cuba's selfless solidarity is the fact that today the Cuban government is offering free medical schooling to working-class youth from the United States—including young people from the Bronx, home to a significant Puerto Rican population. Revolutionary Cuba continues to point the road forward for Puerto Rico as well as for working people in the United States and worldwide.

The condemnation by this committee of Washington's colonial rule of Puerto Rico will serve the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States and those fighting throughout the world for national self-determination and for the future of humanity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, for the opportunity to present these views before you today.

UN committee backs right to independence

BY RÓGER CALERO

UNITED NATIONS—Almost 30 individuals and representatives of organizations testified here June 21 at hearings on the colonial status of Puerto Rico. Virtually all the speakers pointed to the fact, recognized worldwide, that Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony. Most of them spoke in favor of independence from U.S. rule.

The testimony was dominated by the struggle that has become the center of politics on the island today, as well as an issue in U.S. politics—the mass movement demanding that Washington halt the bombing practice on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques and end the Navy's occupation of that territory.

At the end of the day's testimony, the 24-member committee adopted a resolution, introduced by the revolutionary government of Cuba, reaffirming "the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence." It was the second year in a row that the committee adopted such a resolution by consensus.

Presenting the resolution, Cuban ambassador Bruno Rodríguez called on Washington to immediately halt the war training on

Vieques. In addition, the resolution demands the return of land occupied by the U.S. Navy and an end to the arrests and harassment of anti-Navy protesters, as well as the release of six longstanding pro-independence political prisoners currently in U.S. prisons.

The adoption of the resolution was considered a particular victory in light of heavy behind-the-scenes lobbying by the U.S. government against it. In the end, only the representatives of Chile and Papua New Guinea announced that they would not "participate" in the adoption of the resolution, but they did not vote against it.

With the exception of a handful of speakers who spoke in favor of statehood, and a legislator from the ruling Popular Democratic Party (PPD) that backs Commonwealth status, those testifying connected the devastating effects of the U.S. military's occupation of Vieques with the more than 100 years of U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico.

"For anybody who could not understand the colonial problem of Puerto Rico, Vieques has provided the simplest and most dramatic example: the fact that the United States, consciously and completely ignor-

ing our will, has insisted on a course of action that clearly causes harm to Puerto Ricans," said Maria de Lourdes Santiago, vice president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), in her testimony.

Despite broad opposition by the residents of Vieques, Santiago said, Washington continues to occupy most of the island, using it as a bombing range and ammunition depot since World War II, destroying the livelihood of fishermen, contaminating the environment, and contributing to a higher-than-average rate of cancer among residents.

Vanessa Ramos, speaking on behalf of the Association of American Jurists, pointed to the use of depleted uranium shells by the U.S. military. "This ammunition has been used on Vieques not only in preparation for interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo, but it was also tested [by Washington] before going to the Persian Gulf War and Iraq," she added.

Many speakers condemned the rough treatment by U.S. authorities of demonstrators arrested for entering the restricted bombing range in acts of civil disobedience. They pointed out the disproportionate sen-

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Socialists register integration into struggle

Conference charts course to build branches in workers districts, strengthen political

Continued from front page

Active Workers Conference, where the integration of politics with a lively discussion of Marxist program and theory was greater than that seen at such a gathering in a number of years.

Barnes discussed three interconnected ways that are necessary for the Socialist Workers Party today to act on these opportunities. In response to the increased openings among working people for building the communist movement, the party has taken steps to base its local units in workers districts in cities as well as small towns around the country.

The SWP leader noted that each branch of the party must work over the next several months to become a workers district branch, not just in name but in fact. Building a branch in a workers district provides communists with a stable political base, a secure foothold in the working class from which to reach out to developments in politics and the unions in the wider city and region, he said.

This means organizing regular sales tables and weekly Militant Labor Forums, building up a subscription base within the district, and ensuring that the Pathfinder bookstore is well-stocked and open at publicized hours.

Secondly, Barnes said, having effective

branches in workers districts will deepen the proletarianization of the party only if its members are simultaneously organizing regular communist political work on the job and through the party's union fractions—the units of communist workers in selected industries and unions.

Thirdly, he added, by acting along these lines, the communist movement can and will recruit to its ranks, if its members deliberately follow up with revolutionary-minded workers, farmers, and youth they meet in the course of sales and other political work. The Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists are involved in a joint campaign to double the membership of the YS.

An international gathering

Some 380 people attended the Active Workers Conference. Among them were socialist workers in unions that organize the garment, meatpacking, and coal mining industries around the country, as well as members of the auto workers union in Detroit. Also participating were Young Socialists members, organized supporters of the communist movement, and communist workers from Australia, Canada, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Twenty-six people were attending their first such gathering, and more than 60 were under the age of 30.

The conference featured major talks by Jack Barnes and SWP National Committee member Mary-Alice Waters, which took up a number of the broad political questions and party-building opportunities facing the communist movement; two panel sessions with a range of speakers, followed by discussion from the floor; and a concluding session featuring summary remarks by Barnes and Waters.

Conference participants had a chance to delve into a range of topics in seven classes. Classes on "Communists and the transformation of nature," "The birth of Bolshevism," and "The Jewish question: The working class and the fight against anti-Semitism" drew lively back-and-forth discussion. A class in both English and Spanish on "The organizational principles of the SWP" attracted a number of young and new participants eager to learn about how the organizational structure of the communist party, and the loyalty and discipline of its members, flow from its proletarian character.

The discussion at the classes on



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters speaks at final conference session.

"Twenty-two years of the Iranian revolution: The place of Pathfinder books in the world today," and "The hidden history of the workers and farmers government in Algeria, 1963–65" showed a widespread desire to learn about these revolutions. In their talks, Barnes and Waters both emphasized the need to reconquer the lessons of these and other revolutionary triumphs and defeats of our class.

An integral part of the conference was the showing of three films. *The Battle of Algiers* dramatizes the revolutionary struggle in Algeria against French colonial rule. *Salt of the Earth* depicts the 1950s battle to unionize zinc mines in the Southwest, led by Mexican-born workers. A special feature was the documentary *Terrorists in Retirement*, which tells the story of immigrant Jewish garment workers from Eastern Europe who joined the resistance to the Nazi occupation in France during World War II and were betrayed by the Stalinist Communist Party.

On the final day of the gathering an SWP national trade union leadership meeting took place, along with a meeting organized by the leadership of the Young Socialists, and workshops involving Pathfinder Reprint Project volunteers.

The Reprint Project organizes some 150 supporters of the communist movement in converting to electronic form the 350-plus

Pathfinder titles. More than 80 people attended the workshops, which covered different aspects of the project, including proofreading, indexing, formatting, and graphics, as well as online book promotion—a new area of responsibility.

The Young Socialists organized a meeting for its members—including those present from Canada, the United Kingdom, Iceland, and Sweden—and conference participants of YS age, including those not yet members of the communist movement. The meeting, attended by 30 people, discussed the movement-wide campaigns to build participation in two international events—the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange in late July, and the World Festival of Youth and Students scheduled for Algeria in August—and to double the membership of the Young Socialists by the end of August.

During the conference, three participants—two from the United States and one from Canada—decided to join the Young Socialists. Another decided to become a candidate member of the SWP. The formation of a new YS chapter in Pittsburgh was also announced.

The Young Socialists decided to organize socialist summer schools in all cities where there are YS chapters, in collaboration with SWP branches.

Wider hearing for revolutionary ideas

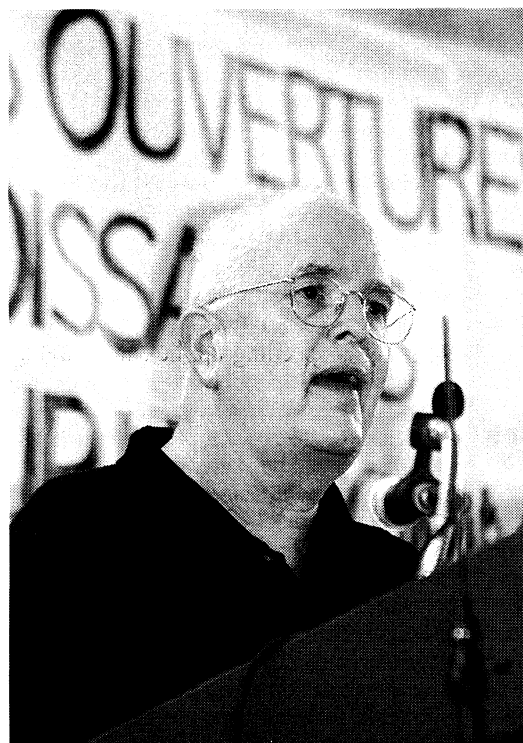
The major presentations to the conference noted the resistance among workers and farmers to the employers and their government, and the continuing development of a vanguard layer of fighters who are forging links with each other as they go through experiences in struggle. This resistance is "strengthening, toughening, and widening," said Mary-Alice Waters, speaking on "The Cuban Revolution and Building the Revolutionary Communist Movement in the United States." Communist workers are getting to know many of these working-class and farm fighters.

Waters cited the example of one West Virginia miner who bought the *Militant* from a socialist worker. "He liked the paper, he said, not because it was radical, but because it told the truth," she explained.

Combative workers often tell their friends about the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister paper, *Perspectiva Mundial*. These experiences have a cumulative effect in broadening the reach of the communist movement and strengthening its ties with fellow proletarian fighters.

So far this year, Waters reported, sales of Pathfinder titles have increased 60 percent over the corresponding period in 2000, as the communist movement has begun to tap into the opportunities for sales and promotion of revolutionary literature.

Another step forward is the fact that volunteers in the Pathfinder Reprint Project have taken on new responsibilities for book production and promotion, in conjunction



Militant/Eric Simpson

SWP national secretary Jack Barnes gave talk at conference on "In Defense of Bolshevism."

Meeting marks progress for Capital Fund

BY MAGGIE TROWE

OBERLIN, Ohio—The Active Workers Conference registered substantial progress in raising capital for the socialist movement's Capital Fund, which finances the long-term book-producing capacity of Pathfinder's printshop.

"Since the beginning of this year, 56 sup-

porters of the communist movement have responded to the growing political openings by contributing \$627,377 to the Capital Fund with amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$275,000," said Dave Prince, the Capital Fund director, at the opening session of the conference. Contributions included \$83,000 from a bequest, \$78,000 from an

accident settlement, and \$275,000 from a trust fund. "Anyone who can make a capital contribution of \$1,000 or more from bequests, trust funds, accident settlements, or other sources should consider making a pledge to the fund," he said.

In his summary report to the conference, Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes pointed to the importance of the Capital Fund. It contributes substantially to the ability to purchase needed printing and bindery equipment—machinery that is as safe or safer than the equipment it replaces, and that lowers the skill level required to operate it, allowing for a wider range of socialist workers, in terms of age and physical strength, to take a volunteer stint in the printshop.

Barnes reported that a longtime supporter of the communist movement who died recently left his estate to the Capital Fund. This contribution of more than \$400,000 will make possible the purchase of a new three-knife machine to trim Pathfinder books, replacing equipment built in 1954, and other needed new bindery equipment.

As contributions kept coming in during the course of the gathering, Prince made several progress reports. By the end of the conference, 15 contributors had contributed an additional \$91,500.

to continue to issue new books, such as *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, the newest addition to the political arsenal of the working-class vanguard. The French-language translation of that book, already out in English and Spanish editions, came off the presses in time for the conference.

The increased sales of Pathfinder books, the political leverage they give the communist movement in the world, and the need to study the political lessons contained in them to help build a party of worker-bolsheviks were central themes of the conference.

Contributions are due by July 1. Checks should be written to Pathfinder and sent to Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

Pathfinder Fund rises to \$113,000

BY MAGGIE TROWE

OBERLIN, Ohio—Supporters of Pathfinder Press pledged almost \$10,300 to an "Over-the-Top" fund at a June 16 rally that capped the final session of the Active Workers Conference. Of that amount, some \$3,680 was paid on the spot.

Betsy Farley, a socialist and coal miner from Pennsylvania who made the appeal for contributions, explained that with the success of the \$100,000 Pathfinder Fund—which had surpassed the initial goal, reaching nearly \$103,000 on the eve of the conference—supporters of the publishing house could take advantage of the international gathering by increasing the total contributions to the fund even further.

The fund makes it possible to keep in print more than 350 Pathfinder titles, and

es of working people

al work in unions, recruit to movement

with their drive to digitize all Pathfinder titles. At the same time, the workers in Pathfinder's printshop have taken steps to sharply increase productivity. "We are proletarianizing the production and use of the books," said Waters.

The "Pathfinder army" has produced 60 new reprints and 14 new titles since last summer's Active Workers Conference. Eleven of the new titles have been printed since January, she said.

Communist workers have found real interest in books such as the newest Pathfinder title *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, by Jack Barnes, which not only point to the example of Cuba's socialist revolution but offer the perspective of making a revolution in the United States.

In setting up literature tables on the streets of New York's Garment District and other parts of the city, socialists have discovered the popularity of books and pamphlets containing the speeches of Thomas Sankara, particularly among French-speaking workers from Africa. Sankara was the central leader of the 1983-87 revolutionary government in Burkina Faso, in West Africa.

Pathfinder plans the rapid publication, in French and Spanish, of a couple of pamphlets containing speeches by Sankara, to be available for sale and promotion at the upcoming world youth festival. Work will also begin on a new French-language edition of *Thomas Sankara Speaks*.

The publisher is also planning editions of several basic pamphlets by V.I. Lenin, the principal leader of the Bolshevik Party and the October 1917 Russian Revolution. The leaders of the Stalinist movement in the United States have largely abandoned

any such publishing program as they shed their fraudulent claim to the mantle of Lenin, Marx, and other communist leaders.

Building workers district branches

Waters described the efforts of members of the Brooklyn, Garment District, and Upper Manhattan branches of the SWP in New York to build workers district branches. Communists in each of these three areas have begun to build up a base of subscribers to the socialist press as well as participants in the weekly Militant Labor Forums.

The New York branches' experiences were featured in the panel discussions that were part of the conference, entitled, "Following the Lines of Working-Class Resistance: Expanding Opportunities for Communists Today."

"Tens of thousands of workers come into the Garment District in midtown Manhattan each day," said Dan Fein, a volunteer in the Pathfinder printshop. Regular street table sales as well as selling at plant gates of garment shops are organized within a few blocks of the branch hall and Pathfinder bookstore, located in the heart of the district. "Native-born and immigrant workers and young people have attended the Friday night Militant Labor Forums or visited the bookstore after meeting us at these tables," he said.

Members of the Upper Manhattan branch sold 30 subscriptions in the final week of the circulation drive, said panelist Jacob Perasso, a branch member and the organizer of the Young Socialists National Executive Committee. "A number who subscribed said they had bought copies of the



Militant/Dave Wulp

Young socialists in particular used the book offers to expand their Marxist libraries

Militant or *Perspectiva Mundial* at previous tables," he noted, emphasizing the cumulative effects of their political work.

Response to socialist press

Frank Forrestal, a miner and member of the United Mine Workers union in Pittsburgh, and Arrin Hawkins, a worker in a meatpacking plant in Chicago organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW), illustrated the opportunities that exist today to promote the socialist press among co-workers in the course of talking socialism and acting alongside them to strengthen the union.

Over the past year, said Forrestal, 15 co-workers at the mine where he and fellow socialist coal miners work have subscribed to the *Militant*. The workers are engaged in a constant tug-of-war with the company over safety questions, he said, noting, "The biggest protection for workers is that they look out for each other."

Hawkins gave the audience a detailed account of how she approached co-workers on the last day of the international circulation drive in her workplace. During one break, two workers she spoke to decided to take out subscriptions. Thanks to this political work on the job, the local UFCW fraction made all its goals in the subscription campaign.

Some co-workers have also expressed interest in joining Hawkins on the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange trip to Havana in late July. Their interest grew after attending a meeting at the local UFCW union hall, where union member and socialist Joel Britton and dairy farmer Randy Jasper both spoke about their recent trip to Cuba to participate in meetings organized by leaders of Cuba's small farmers organization.

Jerry Gardner, a member of the Reprint Project Steering Committee in the San Francisco Bay Area, described to the Active Workers Conference participants the response by project volunteers to the growing demand among vanguard workers and farmers for revolutionary literature. The flow of newly digitized titles available for reprinting is speeding up, he said. Having achieved their goal of digitizing 50 percent of Pathfinder's 364 titles by May 1, the volunteers are aiming to hit the 75 percent mark by July 1—a rate of seven per month.

A handsome eight-panel display on the work of the project attracted the attention of conference participants. Additional displays at the back of the conference hall showed the activity of Young Socialists members and chapters, sales of the books and newspapers, and—under the title of "Increasing Productivity"—the printshop volunteers at work. A special display featured the Maritime Fund, a project established to document the activity of communist seafarers in the 1940s and '50s. An appeal to win new contributors to the fund was featured at the conference, and 16 new people made pledges.

The displays were mounted around book sales tables, which advertised a number of special offers, including discounts on titles related to the classes, which sold well. *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, in

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'We need a revolution in the United States'

BY RÓGER CALERO
AND ROMINA GREEN

OBERLIN, Ohio—"The most important part of the conference was being recruited to the Young Socialists," said Janice Smith, one of the two youth who joined the YS and one of 26 participants attending their first Active Workers Conference. Smith, a student from Vancouver, Canada, explained, "The conference was a decisive factor in joining." A worker from Los Angeles also decided to become a candidate member of the Socialist Workers Party.

John Howenstein, a 20-year-old student from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, met socialists who had set up a table of revolutionary literature on campus and became interested in working-class politics because of his experiences working in factories during school breaks. "Bosses have a way of dehumanizing you," he said. "I realized how little we are treated like human beings." Howenstein was among the 5,000 people who participated in the Rally for Justice and Workers' Rights in Columbia, South Carolina, in defense of five longshoremen indicted by the state on felony charges of inciting to riot as part of an anti-union assault.

"I see a lot of problems with the way people are treated under capitalism," said Layne Mostyn, 19, from Columbia, Maryland, who also went to the rally to defend the Charleston Five. "I believe there should be a revolution in the United States," she continued. Mostyn also participated in a march in defense of women's rights in Tucson, Arizona, and in actions against rightist vigilantes who have rounded up immigrants and turned them over to the INS Border Patrol.

The conference was "a chance to see those you read about in the *Militant* and talk to them about what they've been doing," was one thing Liz Wayman, 23, liked about the gathering. Wayman, a student at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, was particularly interested in the panel presentations during the conference. "I especially liked hearing from YS member Roberta Black about the struggle at the Long Prairie meatpacking plant in Minnesota." Black

and other participants at the conference are currently involved in a fight to win a contract at Dakota Premium Foods, a meatpacking plant in South St. Paul.

Drew Cheduhar works in the cafeteria at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. He said he is attracted to the Socialist Workers Party because it points to the need to emulate the Cuban Revolution in the United States as well as by the work of party members in basic industry who are "in the thick of the class struggle in the United States today." He said, "I like the party's approach toward building a worker-farmer alliance and the fact that its members came to Iowa because of the meatpacking struggles."

One of the panel presentations about how socialist workers are involved in the fight against police brutality was given by Osborne Hart, mayoral candidate for the Socialist Workers Party in Detroit. Hart spoke about the significance of the events in Cincinnati, Ohio, in response to the killing of Timothy Thomas, a 19-year-old Black youth, by the cops.

"The fights against police brutality are important because they show that it's not just isolated families trying to do something," said Kadiyatou Scere, 22, a student at the University of Minnesota, and member of the Africana Student Cultural Center there. She was unable to attend a march against police brutality in Minneapolis that she had heard about on the radio but did attend a Militant Labor Forum in St. Paul where two brothers of the victims spoke.

Scere had traveled to Senegal, West Africa, and said she had "learned how capitalism continues to exploit the raw materials of semicolonial countries and exports to them higher-priced finished goods, maintaining the economic dependence of these countries." She said she returned to the United States looking to see how she could get involved to change this situation.

"I became radical through the class struggle in Laredo, Texas, and growing up under the conditions there," said Francisco Gómez, 29, a meatpacking worker in Los Angeles. He met the Socialist Workers Party in Los Angeles while at the Latin American Book Fair "looking for Che

Guevara's writings on the economy." Gómez has been active in various labor and other struggles in Los Angeles together with the SWP and has contributed a number of articles to the *Militant*. During the conference he decided to become a candidate member of the party.

Among the international guests was Ingvar Bildt, a 22-year-old baker from Gothenburg, Sweden. Bildt first met the Young Socialists three years ago at a Pathfinder table at the Gothenburg Book fair at a time when he was looking for answers to broader political questions. "What really interested me," he said, "was reading some of Leon Trotsky's works, such as *The Revolution Betrayed*," a scientific work describing the impact on the Soviet Union of the policies of the counterrevolutionary Stalinist regime. Trotsky was a central leader of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik Party. When asked about his plans after the conference Bildt responded, "Join the Young Socialists and build a chapter in Gothenburg."

Attend the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange

Havana, Cuba: July 22-30

- ❖ Join the July 26 celebration to commemorate the 48th anniversary of the launching of the Cuban revolutionary struggle
- ❖ Discuss with young people in Cuba the history of their revolution and steps being taken today to advance the fight for socialism, and share experiences of struggles being carried out by workers and farmers in both countries



Participants in workshop at the 1996 U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange

For information contact the Youth Exchange Information Center, American Indian Learning Resource Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455, (763) 443-8730; e-mail: youthxchange01@yahoo.com; or visit the website: <http://youthxchange01.8m.com>

Ontario rally defends public school funding

BY ROSEMARY RAY
AND JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Four hundred people rallied at the Ontario Legislature here May 31 to protest moves by the right-wing Conservative government to turn over funds allotted for public education to private religious and academic schools. Many of the students, teachers, and unionists present saw the planned expansion of state funding of private education as a threat to the fundamental right of working people to public education.

"Bill 45 is just a cash register for [Premier Michael Harris's] corporate friends," high school science teacher Madis Tambre said. "Business doesn't want an educated workforce."

Bill 45, which the Conservative government of Premier Harris wants to ram through the Legislature by June 28 before the summer break, proposes a far-reaching change to the Ontario education system. If passed, the new law would take effect at the beginning of next year. By 2006 it will allow up to Can\$3,500 in tax credits on Can\$7,000 in tuition paid for every child a family enrolls in a private school (Can\$1 = US 66 cents).

Opponents of the move point out that law allows the state to cut \$7,000 from public schools for every \$3,500 refunded to a parent who moves a child to a private school. This would amount to some \$300 million or more being taken away from an education system already gutted by massive cutbacks over the past decade.

Supporters of the legislation argue that since a separate Catholic school system is already funded by the government then it is only fair for all religious schools to receive public funds. State funding of Catholic schools is imbedded in the 1867 Constitution Act, which was the legal framework for the formation of the Canadian federation.

In 1985 the Ontario Liberal government expanded what was then a partial subsidy of Catholic primary and secondary schools to 100 percent funding. The Liberal Party, which is the official opposition, says it is opposed to Bill 45.

At the present time 42,000 students in Ontario attend religious schools and another 60,000 are in private academic institutions.

About 2.2 million students are in the public education system, including those in the separate Catholic school system.

The move represents an about-face by the Conservative government. Sixteen months ago, Ontario education minister Janet Ecker warned that aid to private schools would undermine public education when she rejected a resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Commission calling on Ontario to aid all private religious schools since it already funds a Catholic school system.

"Complying with the UN's demand... would remove from our public education system at least \$300 million per year, with some estimates as high as \$700 million," she said.

The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools has already spent \$175,000 to lobby the government in support of Bill 45. It is now mounting a \$500,000 public campaign to ensure Bill 45 becomes law. The Canadian Jewish Congress also supports the legislation.

Broad opposition

A broad range of organizations is mounting a counterattack against the legislation. In addition to the union-based social democratic New Democratic Party that called the May 31 action, the list includes the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Ontario Public School Boards Association, Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Ontario Public School Bus Association, the parents group People for Education, Ecumenical Study Commission of Ontario's largest Protestant churches, Elementary School Teachers' Federation, and an ad hoc coalition of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian parents.

"We oppose tax rebates to private schools while removing resources to public education," Karen Braithwait from Parents of Black Children told the May 31 rally. "We want an inclusive, anti-racist public system, which we expect to be of the highest quality."

High school student Dane Loo told the chanting crowd, "In the last years we have suffered from the loss of extracurricular

activities as well as recently because of the disruption of school during the strike of workers employed by the school district, which was a result of Harris refusing to make funds available for the proper operation of our schools. The tax credit plan is simply stealing from public taxes."

A speaker from the Canadian Arab Federation said the "majority of Muslim students go to public schools. There are already high rates of poverty in society. Do we want our children to live in ghettos and underfunded schools with second rate education?"

"Every union member has a stake in pub-

lic education," Ontario Federation of Labor president Wayne Samuelson told the rally. "The education system belongs to the people, not to Mike Harris. The government has no right to sell it."

"Kill the bill," chanted the protesters repeatedly.

Placards proclaimed: "RIP public education," "Stand up for quality education together," and "No money for private School\$."

Rosemary Ray is a garment worker, John Steele is a meat packer and a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Dockworkers in New Zealand demand single contract for all

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—"I've been working here 26 years, and this is only the second time we've been on strike," said a unionist on the picket line at this city's waterfront. Some 250 workers, members of the Waterfront Workers Union who are employed by Ports of Auckland, staged a 24-hour strike June 22.

The "wharfies," who have been without a contract since December, are fighting for a single collective agreement covering all dockworkers.

One handmade sign on the picket line demanded that all workers be made permanent. At present the unionized workforce is divided into two categories: "casuals," who earn \$12.50 an hour, and "permanents," who can earn up to \$11 an hour more. (NZ\$1=US 41 cents).

"They want to create a labour pool that can be turned off and on," Denis Carlisle, the union's Auckland branch president, was quoted as saying in the June 22 *New Zealand Herald*. "We'll end up with a labour pool of \$14 wharfies."

The union has said it will continue its

campaign by carrying out a 48-hour strike beginning June 28, and a one-week strike beginning July 4.

The Auckland action comes in the wake of a series of pickets by Waterfront Workers Union members at several South Island ports over recent months, protesting the loading of logs by timber company Carter Holt Harvey using nonunion casual labor. That dispute remains unresolved.

In another development, the Council of Trade Unions has condemned what it called the "very minor" sentence given to company manager Derek Powell, who drove through a picket line at the port of Lyttleton in December 1999, killing union supporter Christine Clark. A jury had found Powell guilty of manslaughter, but in sentencing him to only nine months of periodic detention the judge also placed blame on the picketing workers. It was "dangerous" if freedom of movement on the roads was interrupted by pickets, he said, and Powell's claim that he failed to stop because of fear was "understandable."

Terry Coggan is a member of the National Distribution Union in Auckland.

New Zealand university students protest government cutbacks

BY STUART NEEDHAM

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand—More than 3,000 students and staff members at the University of Canterbury rallied here May 25 to protest inadequate government funding of post-secondary education. The rally, which made national headlines, followed the budget proposal made by the Labour Party-led coalition government of Prime Minister Helen Clark the previous day.

Students have organized protests throughout the country over the past decade targeting university administrators and successive governments for cutbacks in education spending and steep increases in student fees. The protests have included student occupations of university buildings.

For the May 25 protest, however, the University of Canterbury administration shut down classes for the afternoon in support of the student action. Students from two other Christchurch campuses—Lincoln University and the Christchurch School of Medicine—also attended the rally.

The government has offered university and other post-secondary institutions a minimal 2.6 percent increase on their basic grant for 2002 provided they keep student fees at their current level. This follows last year's budget, which was widely considered inadequate. If the universities refuse the fee-

freeze deal, they will lose not only next year's increase, but also access to a US\$16 million research fund and a 2.3 percent funding increase already promised in exchange for freezing fees this year. University administrators assert that the deal will leave them millions of dollars short of what they need. But if they refuse it, they say they will have to raise fees by more than 20 percent and instigate further cutbacks.

University and other post-secondary courses were virtually free for most students in this country before so-called "free market" and "user pays" policies that began in the late 1980s under the Labour Party government in power at that time. Since the early 1990s, government funding per student has fallen more than 25 percent. An official scheme of interest-bearing student loans to help pay for course fees and living costs was established by the National Party government in 1992. Currently about 320,000 current and former students owe a total of more than US\$1.6 billion on student loans.

Other changes to the education system over the last decade have encouraged universities and other post-secondary institutions to compete with each other for student enrollments because funding from the government is based on how many students they have signed up.

Student leaders have pointed out that this has led to an increasing percentage of university funds being spent on competitive advertising and sponsorship deals, rather than on teaching and research.

University of Canterbury Students Association president Jarrod Gilbert told the May 25 rally that the action was the start of a campaign to increase government spending on education.

Stuart Needham is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Christchurch.



Dockworkers picket entrance to Fergusson container terminal at the Auckland, New Zealand, wharf during 24-hour strike June 22.

S. Korea: workers hold national strike

BY RÓGER CALERO

Thousands of South Korean workers went out on a nationwide strike June 12, called by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). The unions are demanding that the government stop austerity measures, end layoffs, institute a 40-hour workweek, and grant wage increases and labor law reforms.

Union officials estimated that some 50,000 workers from 126 companies joined the first day of the strike. South Korea's two main airlines are among the hardest hit by the walkout. By refusing to work, flight attendants and ground crews at Asiana Airlines and pilots at Korean Air Lines forced the airlines to cancel 407 of their 555 scheduled flights.

Workers from the petrochemical and synthetic textile industries have also joined the action.

The KCTU issued a call for another nationwide strike for July 5.

The South Korean rulers are concerned about the impact of these stoppages on foreign investment and on their profits. The Korean Employers Confederation has called on the government to take tough measures.

"If unions and workers act illegally, and if they act violently, then it will invite police action," said South Korean president Kim Dae Jung. The government has claimed that the strike is illegal since the workers did not go through arbitration required under industrial legislation.

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Fighters for justice in Georgia expose brutal killing by cops

BY RACHELE FRUIT

VALDOSTA, Georgia—"I'm on the war-path now. I will not sit still until we get some relief." Those were the words of Frances Sesler as she spoke to a June 10 meeting here of the People's Tribunal, an organization formed to fight police brutality, at the Church of Pine Hill. Around 50 people attended the event.

Sesler's son, 27-year-old Demitres, died after being shot six times in the back by Minneapolis police on the morning of April 2.

Sesler and her husband Clyde made the four-hour trip from their farm in Brooksville, Florida, to the Tribunal meeting with her sister and several Tampa-area residents who support their efforts. Much of Sesler's testimony recounted the lies and abuse that she and her family have been confronted with at every turn in their attempt to gather the facts of the case.

From the coroner to the sheriff's office to city hall to the congressman's office and the Justice Department, "no one wants to talk to you," Sesler said. "They even gave me a phony case number." But, she said, "I do not intend to sit around and let my baby's death be in vain."

According to Hennepin County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Roseann Campagnoli, the cops who killed Demitres Sesler—Brandy Steberg and Jason King—were in the area of the shooting investigating a break-in at a nearby business when a Jeep Cherokee drove by. Campagnoli told the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* that the cops began to chase the vehicle, and claimed to have seen a long-barreled gun. The cops allege that when the car stopped in an alley, Demitres, who they say was a passenger, jumped out with the shotgun. Then, they say, King fired from outside the squad car and Steberg fired while still sitting in the driver's seat. According to Campagnoli's report, the driver sped off after the shooting, and was believed to have fled on foot.

Frances Sesler told those gathered at the People's Tribunal meeting that none of this story makes any sense to her. Demitres had left home a few minutes before the shooting, driving his own car to work, she said, and "I don't believe there was any other driver."

Among those who have come forward to help, she said, is a man who says he saw the police frisking a young Black man outside a car that meets the description of Demitres's car. This took place on a bridge near his house. "How the vehicle got to the alley where they claim it stopped, I have no idea. And if he was waving a shotgun at them, how is it that he was shot six times in the back?"

The Sesler family was not able to see Demitres's body for several days and not until after it was embalmed without their permission. "They destroyed evidence right there," Frances Sesler said. "The coroner said that they do not call the next of kin to identify the body, and when I insisted on making an identification, I was only allowed to look at a mug shot taken after the shooting."

Minutes after Demitres was killed, two policemen arrived at his house and demanded of his companion to be let in. They held her and her baby, the daughter of Demitres, under virtual house arrest until others arrived

with a search warrant. They proceeded to ransack her house, took papers and documents that belonged to Demitres, and for six hours refused her requests to call Frances Sesler to let her know that her son may have been killed.

"Now every time I see a cop, I get so aggravated. They are supposed to be upholding the law, and here they are—they make the laws and then they break them. Steberg and King belong off the force and in prison."

There were four fatal shootings by Minneapolis police last year, and the shooting of Demitres Sesler was the second in less than a week. A few weeks later Minneapolis Sgt. John Pielow on April 28 killed Efrain Depaz, a 21-year-old Mexican worker, who police falsely claimed had a gun. Frances Sesler told the People's Tribunal, "Efrain couldn't speak English and was 50 percent deaf. The cop approached his car with his gun drawn and shot him in the neck." She said that they told his brother Fidel, "Oh, well—accidents happen." She added that three of the most recent victims of police killings in Minneapolis were mentally retarded. Alfred Sanders, a Black worker, was killed a few months earlier with 37 rounds of bullets.

Frances Sesler referred to several other cases. "Nathaniel Brazill, a 14-year-old child who shot his teacher, was sentenced to life in prison. He had his whole life in front of him, but it's over now. But they are trying to give the cop in Cincinnati who killed Timothy Thomas nine months in jail. What kind of justice is there in that? And what about the Klansman in Birmingham who killed four young girls in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in 1963? It took 38 years to bring him to justice. They let him live his whole life."

"I know there's a lot of work ahead of me," continued Sesler, "and I am so appreciative that I am not in this alone. Other people are coming forward, and there have been marches and meetings up in Minneapolis to protest the killings of both Efrain and Demitres."

In a telephone interview on June 20, Ron Edwards, longtime civil rights advocate, a former chairman of the Minneapolis Civil Rights Commission, and member of the executive committee of the Minneapolis



Militant/Eric Simpson

Frances Sesler addresses 1999 Florida meeting of Black farmers fighting discrimination by U.S. Department of Agriculture. On June 10 she spoke at People's Tribunal in Valdosta, Georgia, about her son's death at hands of Minneapolis police and her efforts to win justice.

NAACP, said that he has filed more than 200 cases over the past 30 years on police killings, police brutality, and other violations of civil rights.

"I am quite disturbed by the treatment of Mrs. Sesler by the authorities here," stated Edwards. "It is one of the most disrespectful things I have seen in more than 40 years. The FBI refused to open an investigation, the Assistant U.S. Attorney, himself an African American, sat across the table from her and did nothing. Obviously, the federal authorities felt that they needed time to let the cover-up take place."

Several participants at the People's Tribunal meeting who came from Atlanta circulated photographs that they took the day before at the June 9 Rally for Racial Justice and Workers' Rights in Columbia, South Carolina. Gladys Williams, from the South Georgia Vegetable Producers Cooperative, encouraged the young people at the meeting to consider participating in the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange in Havana July 22-30. Six of the activists signed up to learn more about going.

The People's Tribunal was formed in September 1998 in response to the arrest, beating, and subsequent death in his jail cell of

Willie Williams. His brother, Mosel Williams, explained to this reporter that the police have never acknowledged their responsibility for his death even though "the autopsy report said that the cause of death was a blunt force tremor to the head" and that "he suffered a broken neck, broken arm, two teeth knocked out, and bruises all over his body." The family "filed charges against the police, and we are still working to bring the case to trial." The Tribunal has organized sustained protests to show that "we are not giving up."

Rev. Floyd Rose, president of the Tribunal, told the meeting, "We have to believe in our ability to get things done. People who are oppressed must accept responsibility for getting rid of their oppression." Rose reported that the Tribunal members are involved in efforts to remove the Confederate battle flag from public places. As a result of large protests the state legislature decided to replace it, but the new flag has not yet been distributed. He also introduced a woman who is fighting discrimination at her job with the Department of Public Works.

Frances Sesler said, "When we come together as a group we can accomplish a lot. We can be the strength for each other in times like this."

Seattle protesters demand: prosecute killer cop

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

SEATTLE—Chanting "No justice, no peace! No to racist police," and "Hey, hey, ho, ho, police brutality has got to go!" more than 350 people marched here June 6 to protest the killing of Aaron Roberts by city cops.

After a rally at the New Hope Baptist Church the protesters took over all four lanes of a major street while marching to the site where Roberts was killed several blocks away. One Black youth wore a sign with a bull's-eye on it and the words: "This is how the police look at me." Marcus Golden, another protester, told this reporter the police "keep overstepping their bounds. The other day they were harassing some young Blacks and when I tried to help they wouldn't give me their badge numbers. They're getting worse." Drivers stuck in traffic waved and honked their horns in support.

Aaron Roberts, a Black resident of the city's Central District, was killed May 31. Police claim they stopped Roberts because he was driving erratically, citing his backing out into traffic from the Collins Gold Exchange where he had stopped to buy cigarettes. They say Roberts grabbed and held officer Greg Neubert's arm and drove forward and then backwards. Officer Craig Price managed to get into the passenger side of the car, the cops claim, where he shot Roberts to save his partner.

At another protest meeting of about 200 at the New Hope Baptist Church June 9 several Black residents of the Central District said that Neubert and Price are regulars in their area and have a reputation of harass-

ing and brutalizing Blacks. Neubert had earlier arrested Roberts in January 2000.

As to the claim that Roberts was driving erratically, a number of people explained that the cops know the only way to drive out of the small parking spaces in front of the Collins Gold Exchange is to back out into traffic. Julius Collins, the owner of the store, also said this was the usual way his customers leave the parking lot. Many people, including in letters to the editor published in one local paper, have also questioned how Roberts could hold onto the cop while steering and shifting gears.

The local press has come to the defense of the police and presented the cops' version of events as fact. An article by Black columnist Robert Jamieson Jr. titled, "Don't Cry Wolf in Police Shooting," is particularly despised by many calling for justice for Roberts. Jamieson said of Roberts: "He did not die because he was racially profiled, or because the two white officers he crossed paths with last week had a racist agenda. The 37-year-old Seattle man died at the hands of police for actions that any reasonable person would call ill-advised: Confronted by police for a legitimate cause—driving in a wild fashion—Roberts used his Cadillac as a weapon."

An article in the June 6 Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, however, reported that in 1996 Neubert had accused another Black man of having used a car to try to run him down. The cop testified that the driver went over a planting strip between the street and the sidewalk in an attempt to hit him. At the trial

the defense lawyer for the accused brought in a city arborist who showed that this could not have happened since there were trees in the strip. The charges were dropped after Neubert's lie was exposed but he was never charged with perjury.

In 1995 Neubert shot an unarmed person he said was a suspected drug dealer. The cop said the man had a cigarette lighter in his hand that he mistook for a gun. An internal police review and inquest found this shooting justified.

At least five protests and community meetings have been held in the nine days since Roberts was killed. Another meeting is planned at the First AME Fellowship Hall sponsored by the NAACP.

A year ago there were a number of other protests in Seattle's Black community against the cop killing of David Walker, a mentally ill Black man. A large group of police were following Walker as he skipped down the street holding a knife. The cops claimed they had to shoot Walker because he made a move towards them. A news video of the killing did not show this.

Since 1980, 33 people have been gunned down by Seattle police, some 42 percent of whom were Black, many from the Central District. This is in a city with a less than 10 percent Black population. Since 1996 the cops have killed eight people, five of whom were Black.

Ernest Mailhot is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 81.

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Socialists hold Active Workers Conference

Continued from Page 9

three languages, and *Too Many Babies?* a pamphlet by Joseph Hansen debunking the myth of overpopulation from a scientific, Marxist standpoint—part of the reading list for the class on “Communists and the transformation of nature”—were the most popular titles among the 400 books sold during the conference.

To help the local Pathfinder bookstores expand their stock, a special post-conference sale offered them and other distributors the wide range of remaining books and pamphlets at a 75 percent discount. Conference participants purchased some 1,700 items for their local bookstores through this special sale.

On one of the panels, party supporter Sarah Gates of Seattle reported the growth in supporters' contributions to the national finances of the SWP. In the year to May, she said, some \$265,000 was contributed, almost \$16,000 more than the goal set at last year's Active Workers Conference.

Socialist coal miners also reported on efforts to raise their individual weekly contributions to the party to more than \$100.

Expanding working-class vanguard

A number of speakers described picket lines, protests, and political meetings they had taken part in. Omari Musa of Pittsburgh recounted joining other socialist workers and youth in a June 9 action called by the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in Columbia, South Carolina, in which 5,000 people rallied to defend five framed-up dockworkers in Charleston.

Musa said that garment workers, Teamsters, Steelworkers, and other unionists converged on Columbia, met each other, and exchanged experiences. Socialists, who are already known by many of these vanguard workers from their own struggles, were able to naturally join in these discussions, promoting revolutionary literature and introducing fighting unionists to one another.

Garment workers in Frackville, Pennsylvania, who were recently on strike against Hollander Home Fashions, joined strikers from the Up-To-Date Laundry in Baltimore on the speakers' panel of a Militant Labor Forum organized recently in Philadelphia, reported John Studer, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). The workers described their struggles and exchanged views on broader political questions. The forum “combined the work of communists in the party's organizing committee in Allentown, Pennsylvania, who built solidarity with the



Omari Musa of Pittsburgh (at mike) described how workers from different struggles converged June 9 at Columbia, South Carolina, rally to defend framed longshoremen.

Hollander strike, with the institutions of our branch,” he concluded.

Martha Bonilla, one of the UNITE workers who struck Hollander in Los Angeles in March, spoke at the conference and described the unionists' solidarity and determination in face of police harassment of their picket line and the company's use of scabs and security guards. The workers emerged stronger from their 10-week struggle, she said.

Rachele Fruit, a union meat packer and member of the SWP Organizing Committee in Tampa, described how individuals involved in fights against police killings have been forging links with each other, from Florida to Minnesota to Georgia, and the role of socialists in facilitating those links and helping broaden the horizons of the fighters involved.

Police racism also helped to spark a rebellion in late May in the English city of Oldham, near Manchester, reported Communist League (CL) members from the United Kingdom attending the conference. These cops have cracked down on Asian youth who have mobilized to defend their community against rightist thugs. The strong showing in the recent elections of the ultrarightist British National Party in Oldham illustrates how political polarization has deepened there.

Polarization marked the election results in Northern Ireland too, explained CL members from London. It was seen in the strong gains by Sinn Fein, which is leading the fight to end British rule in the north, and in the continuing fragmentation of the right-wing pro-British parties.

Changes in the working class

In his talk, titled “In Defense of Bolshevism,” SWP national secretary Barnes referred to a December 1998 report he had given to a joint YS and party conference in Los Angeles—a speech that is published as “A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics,” the first chapter of the Pathfinder title *Capitalism's World Disorder*. That 1998 report noted the end of a years-long political retreat and tangible signs of a rise in resistance by workers and small farmers. A vanguard layer was developing, and the communist movement in the United States had to take steps to become part of it.

The conference showed the results of beginning to act along that political course, said Barnes. How the communist party tests the expanding political opportunities explained three years ago is becoming less algebraic and more concrete today.

While a working-class radicalization is not what is involved today, he said, we see the continuing development of a vanguard

proletarian layer, a social phenomenon powerful enough to show the way to young people and others who want to act against the brutality and injustices of capitalism.

Working people who have immigrated from Latin America and elsewhere have had a substantial impact on this vanguard, Barnes noted, helping to transform and strengthen the “American” working class—and not just the American working class. “The very workings of capitalism itself,” he said, “have brought into one imperialist country after another a cross-section of the world.”

A class, world approach to all questions

The communist movement must present a clear class perspective and internationalist standpoint on all the pressing political questions of the day, the SWP leader said.

The energy crisis in California—a consequence of the price-gouging tactics of the power companies—is a good example. This question must be approached not within an American framework but from the interests of working people internationally. The energy crisis, in fact, has highlighted the vast inequalities in industrialization and electrification across the planet, he said. A third of humanity has no access to modern sources of energy.

Barnes quoted V.I. Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik-led revolution, who had said in 1920, “Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country.” In the early years of the Russian Revolution, the soviets were the councils of workers, peasants, and soldiers forming the organs of political power of working people. Electrification of the countryside was crucial to maintaining the alliance between workers and farmers, Lenin insisted.

The fight to close the gap in the economic and social conditions of the toilers worldwide is a necessary step toward functioning as political equals, said Barnes. Such a fight will provide the basis to forge a proletarian-led international movement to act as a vanguard in advancing the world socialist revolution. He added that in equalizing access to power and other development, workers and farmers will need to utilize all available scientific advances. “We are champions of science,” he stated.

Communists start from the “we” of the toiling humanity of all countries, and reject any identification with the “we” of the U.S. ruling families, said Barnes. This kind of class clarity is essential today, as the employers turn up the nationalist rhetoric of

Continued on Page 13

— CALENDAR —

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Class on the Workers and Farmers Government in Algeria, 1963-65. Sun., July 8, 12:00 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland, 2nd Floor. Tel: (773) 342-1780. Sponsored by the Young Socialists.

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Celebrate the 48th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks, July 26, 1953, led by Fidel Castro—the launching of the struggle for power that led to the revolutionary victory in 1959. Sat., July 21, 8:00 p.m. 33 East 14 Street. Donation: \$10. Sponsored by Casa de las Américas.

— MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

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Chicago

The Mass Upsurge in Algeria Today and the Legacy of the 1960s Algerian Revolution. Fri., July 6, 7:30 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Socialist Workers: Working-Class Voice in the Elections. Hear John Staggs, a meat packer and Socialist Workers Party candidate for District Attorney, and John Crysdale, a garment worker, member of the Young Socialists, and SWP candidate for Controller. Sat., July 7, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 5237 N. Street. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. Tel: (215) 324-7020.

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'Water's fine'; an open border's better—In a two week period this spring, 18 people died trying to make their way from Mexico



Harry Ring

across an area of the Arizona desert. Now Pima County supervisor Raul Grijalva is trying to win financing for water and toilet sta-

tions in the trafficked area.

Dig this—"People who work for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) have a unique window on the world. They see, greet, and help people from all over the globe."—Newspaper hiring ad.

'Sorry about that'—"The University of Iowa has issued a formal apology for an experiment 30 years ago that used psychological pressure to turn orphans into stutterers. The experiment was designed by Wendell Johnson, a speech expert for whom the university's speech

and hearing clinic is named. Several of the children suffered lasting damage"—News item.

Not easy being a star—Elton John unloaded 20 cars from his collection at a London auction. The cars fetched a total of \$2.75 million. The rock star said he simply didn't have time to drive.

Taking still easy—Senator Robert Torricelli, the New Jersey Democrat who has "strangle Cuba" high on his agenda, is off to a well-oiled start in his bid for reelection. His first campaign fund-raiser brought in more than

\$675,000. In his 1996 successful bid for the Senate, he raised a reported total of \$9 million plus. So far, seven people have pleaded guilty to making illegal contributions to his initial war chest. The senator has yet to be charged.

Shouldn't breathe in short pants?—At a middle school in Devon, England, three students were expelled and about 80 others suspended for conducting a sit-in for the right to wear shorts in hot weather.

Oh well, that's different—"Pressure of work, not bigotry, may

be to blame for police racism and the targeting of ethnic minorities, research from Staffordshire University has found. It said officers stopped Blacks and Asians because they had to meet targets and police culture suggested they would get results."—The Times, London.

That should keep him in groceries—Webvan, the tottering internet grocery chain, is paying its former top dog, George Shaheen, an annual retirement benefit of \$375,000 for life. He's 56 years old. Meanwhile, 885 employees were fired. No mention of pensions.

Class nature of Eastern European workers states

With this issue we are starting a new column, "Books of the Month," to promote newly reprinted Pathfinder titles. Over the course of each month, excerpts from these titles will be published here. Selected books and pamphlets reprinted over the previous month will be offered at a special 25 percent discount to Pathfinder Readers Club members (see ad on this page).

We begin this column with an excerpt from *Class, Party, and State and the Eastern European Revolution: Evolution of a Discussion on the Eastern European Workers States, 1946-1951*, an Education for Socialists bulletin that was one of the titles

and Albania, capitalist regimes were overthrown and workers states were established through popular revolutions that grew out of the mass resistance to fascist rule, despite Stalinist misleadership. In other Eastern European countries, through the resistance of working people, the German imperialist occupation was defeated as the capitalist governments collapsed in face of the advance of the Soviet armies. Moscow installed Stalinist-led regimes and eventually, in face of hostile actions by imperialism and native bourgeois forces, organized tightly controlled mobilizations of workers and farmers that led to the overturning of capitalist property relations in those countries. Hansen argued against those who said these remained capitalist states, maintaining that they were workers states, albeit bureaucratically deformed ones. The Education for Socialists bulletin is a collection of articles that were part of that debate. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



BY JOSEPH HANSEN

The state should be regarded as expressing a relation between classes. It is a relation of coercion that takes the form mainly of a civil bureaucracy and armed forces. Through this apparatus one class coerces or

oppresses another.

The expression of this relation is not limited to a fixed form. "The forms of bourgeois states are exceedingly variegated," Lenin said. He at once added, of course, that "their essence is the same: in one way or another, all these states are in the last analysis inevitably a *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*." Similarly, Lenin continues, "The transition from capitalism to communism will certainly bring a great variety and abundance of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be only one: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*." (*State and Revolution*, p. 31.)

The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, as we all know, is based on private property in the means of production. To maintain this social relation it oppresses the working class.

The dictatorship of the proletariat begins with the elevation of the working class into a ruling class in place of the capitalists. The task of the new power is to end the social relation peculiar to the capitalist class. But this does not occur overnight. Even a model workers state is still nothing but a hang-over of capitalist society. On top of this, a workers state is forced to maintain for a time, even in the best of circumstances, bourgeois modes of distributing the national income.

We have a contradictory reality—a state that is based on destruction of bourgeois property forms and the nationalization of

economy but which still retains vestiges of capitalism.

When this state eventually begins to wither away as the productive forces expand and all danger of a capitalist restoration vanishes, then we can first begin to speak of socialism, the lower stage of communism. If we call a workers state "socialist" it is more because of its aims and tendencies than what it is when it first emerges from the womb of capitalism.

A workers state is a *transitional* state, transitional between capitalism and socialism.

A healthy workers state carries this transition through as rapidly as possible by extending the revolution along the international spiral. But history has forced us to include in our general category a workers state that is not healthy, one that is retrogressing toward capitalism. This degenerated workers state, spilling over the frontiers fixed at the close of World War I, has upset capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe and given rise to formations that are pretty much replicas of the USSR. Their fate is intimately bound up with that of the Soviet Union. If the USSR must be included in our general category of a workers state, I do not think it is incorrect to include Yugoslavia and the other Eastern European countries where the capitalists have been displaced as the ruling class.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

reprinted in June. The excerpt is from an article written by Socialist Workers Party leader Joseph Hansen in 1950 titled "The problem of Eastern Europe."

In this article Hansen joined the debate in the world communist movement at that time about the class character of the governments established in Eastern European countries after World War II. In Yugoslavia

Socialists hold Active Workers Conference

Continued from Page 12
their aggressive foreign policy.

The unfolding conflicts between the U.S. billionaires and their rivals in Europe are central to world capitalist politics, he said. The recent description of the United States as a "hyper-power" by spokespeople for French imperialism is an accurate observation of Washington and its course, as U.S. president George Bush pushes ahead with the development of a so-called National Missile Defense system aimed ultimately to give the Pentagon a first-strike nuclear advantage, and treats the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and Kyoto treaty on global warming as the dead letters they are.

Issues like the death penalty, said Barnes, must be approached as class questions. In the United States and other capitalist countries, communists call for the abolition of this instrument of ruling-class terror.

However, he said, communists support the right of the revolutionary government of Cuba to use the death penalty as a necessary class weapon to defend the rule of workers and peasants in face of U.S. imperialism.

The current debate around "free trade" calls for a similar method, he said. Class-conscious workers are for an end to trade barriers by the U.S. and other imperialist governments, which are used by the capitalists in those countries to shore up their prices and profits. But in semicolonial nations, which are oppressed by imperialism, we do not rule out the need for protectionist measures to defend the living conditions of workers and farmers.

Barnes explained that communists oppose U.S.-led trade pacts such as the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement, which Washington tries to use to assert its domination over the Americas and to counter its European and Japanese rivals. Cuban president Fidel Castro's call for a plebiscite on the FTAA to be held in Latin

American countries is an effort to educate and mobilize working people in the region in opposition to imperialist domination, and to highlight how workers and farmers should have the power to vote on fundamental economic decisions that affect the lives of millions.

Building the Young Socialists

A number of speakers at the conference pointed to the opportunities to build the communist movement. The campaign by the SWP and the YS to double the membership of the Young Socialists by the end of August provides a framework to advance this goal.

Coming out of the Active Workers Conference, communist workers and Young Socialists returned to their areas prepared to turn toward helping to build the biggest and broadest delegations possible to the July 22-30 Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange and to the August 8-16 World Festival of Youth and Students.

In working to maximize the participation of youth in these two events, Waters noted in her summary remarks, communists will meet many who will be interested in Pathfinder literature, the socialist press, and in joining the Young Socialists.

Jack Willey, who has been part of the YS delegation to international meetings to prepare the world youth festival—and who had arrived at the conference directly from a visit to Western Sahara by members of the International Organizing Committee (IOC) for the youth festival—illustrated this point. At a recent preparatory meeting of the IOC held in Algiers, a youth leader from South Africa, who bought a number of titles, urged him to "bring a lot of books to the festival," Willey reported.

The conference ended with an enthusiastic rally that raised an additional \$10,000 to the \$103,000 already collected for the international Pathfinder Fund (see article on page 8).

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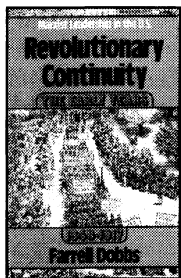
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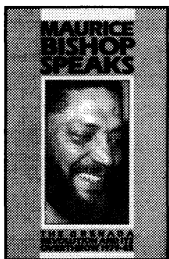
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A miscarriage of justice

Working people in the United States have an important stake in demanding that the frame-up convictions of five Cuban citizens in a U.S. court be thrown out. The trial was a miscarriage of justice. The U.S. government used it both to smear the Cuban Revolution and to go after the rights of working people here.

The arrest and trial of the five was accompanied by a propaganda barrage in the big-business media that sought to convict the Cubans in public opinion. Victims of police brutality and other government attacks know these methods all too well. Much of the "evidence" produced by the government—obtained by breaking into private homes over the course of several years—was what the FBI claims it recovered from computer hard drives and radio transmissions. These break-ins are in line with a drumbeat of encroachments over the past decade on Fourth Amendment protections against illegal search and seizure—in our homes, cars, and locker rooms.

Despite these illegal break-ins, the prosecution did not prove the original charges of "stealing military secrets." Like Wen Ho Lee, whose frame-up by the U.S. government on charges of passing nuclear bomb secrets to China eventually shattered last September, the Cubans were kept in solitary confinement for more than a year and a half prior to the trial. These spy scares target not only the defendants but are aimed at intimidating opponents of U.S. government policies and justifying assaults on democratic rights.

The five Cubans and the Cuban government acknowledge they were collecting information on rightist and terrorist groups who, with the complicity of Washington, are responsible for attacks and provocations against Cuba. The Cuban revolutionary government has made it clear it will not stand by while these outfits plan, organize, and launch assaults against their country. The defendants and their lawyers did an effective job of exposing the extent and character of these actions through court testimony.

The U.S. ruling class, with its four-decade-long bipartisan policies against the Cuban Revolution, is responsible for creating the rightist outfits that operate on U.S. territory and carry out attacks against the island. These terrorist groups have been one aspect of Washington's wide-ranging war against the Cuban Revolution, which has included a mercenary invasion, war threats, an ongoing economic embargo, a drive to politically isolate the

country in the world, and assassination attempts of government leaders. The U.S. government also maintains a travel ban that denies the right of most U.S. residents to visit Cuba.

Washington's policy of aggression against revolutionary Cuba has been conducted under every single Democratic and Republican administration since the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959. The hand-off from the Clinton to the Bush administration in the case of the five Cubans was seamless. The reason for this implacable hostility by the U.S. ruling class is that Cuban working people and their revolutionary leadership have refused to be bought off, intimidated, or derailed from their battle to free the country from the tentacles of imperialism, open the fight for socialism, and extend active solidarity to revolutionary fighters around the world.

Not only did the U.S. government have a direct hand in establishing the various counterrevolutionary Cuban-American groups, it knows their every move. Just as U.S. police agents honeycombed the Ku Klux Klan in the 1960s, they are deeply rooted in the rightist Cuban-American outfits in Florida. Just as U.S. agents knew beforehand of the 1963 Birmingham church bombing that killed four Black girls and many other KKK terrorist actions, there is nothing the anti-Cuba groups do that Washington doesn't know about, help plan, and often suggest through its agents. Although the power and reach of the counterrevolutionary forces in Florida has diminished in face of the continuing strength of the Cuban Revolution, they remain a threat both to Cuba and to the rights of working people in the United States, including Cuban-Americans.

The frame-up trial and trampling of justice in the federal court in Miami is not an aberration—it is how imperialist justice works in the USA. The fatal shooting of Amadou Diallo by cops in New York and of Timothy Thomas by police in Cincinnati—that's how imperialist justice works. Holding people in jail on secret evidence and deportations without the right to even an administrative hearing—that's how imperialist justice works. Frame-ups of fighting unionists such as the Charleston Five dockworkers—that's how imperialist justice works.

Working people here need to join with Cuba in demanding the release of these five political prisoners in U.S. prisons, and in opposing the attack on democratic rights their conviction represents.

Government in Cuba reponds to spy convictions

Continued from front page

It says were encoded messages copied from computer hard drives of the defendants and short-wave radio transmissions the government claims took place between Cuba and the defendants.

The judge denied a defense motion to move the trial outside of Miami even though several potential jurors—Cuban-Americans and Latinos in particular—asked to be disqualified for fear of recriminations if they voted "not guilty."

The big-business media in the Miami area all but convicted the five of spying before the trial began and kept up a steady stream of articles and editorials trying to bolster the government's case and to portray the trial as fair—even though not a shred of evidence was produced of "military secrets" supposedly stolen by "spies."

'U.S. assault against Cuba'

The statement in *Granma* defends the five Cubans as patriots and prints a message from them "to the American people," stating that they "are the victims of a terrible injustice." In the letter the imprisoned Cubans say, "Our tiny nation, which has heroically survived four decades of aggressions and threats to its national security, of subversion plans, sabotage, and destabilization, has every right to defend itself from its enemies who keep using U.S. territory to plan, organize, and finance terrorist actions breaking your own laws in the process."

With media fanfare, the FBI arrested 10 people in 1998 and announced it had discovered a "Cuban spy network" in Florida. Those arrested were charged with trying to "infiltrate" the U.S. Southern Command, passing U.S. "military secrets" to Havana, and "infiltrating" and "disrupting" Cuban-American groups—right-wing outfits that seek to overthrow the revolutionary government in Cuba. The charge of "conspiracy to commit murder" was added later.

In an interview with CNN reporter Lucia Newman shortly after the 1998 arrests, Cuban president Fidel Castro said, "Yes, we have sometimes sent Cuban citizens to infiltrate counterrevolutionary organizations, to report on destructive actions against our country, and I believe we have the right to do so as long as the U.S. government tolerates" efforts on its soil to launch terrorist attacks against Cuba.

Defense's case

This was the stance taken by the Cubans in their defense at the trial. They were able to present extensive evidence to the court about the character and scope of the counterrevolutionary activities. Among the witnesses called by the defense were a former member of Alpha 66 who founded Commandos F-4, groups that have been responsible for armed attacks against Cuba and defenders of the Cuban Revolution in Miami.

The defense also put on the stand retired Air Force colonel George Buchner, who testified that National Security Agency records show that the Brothers to the Rescue planes were indeed inside Cuban airspace in contradiction to U.S. government statements.

The defense called to the stand another U.S. official and a Cuba military officer who said the U.S. government had been warned about a number of terrorist operations, including the Brothers to the Rescue activities. In addition, in response to defense questioning under cross-examination, Brothers to the Rescue leader José Basulto admitted he "broadly supports exile groups bent on overthrowing Fidel Castro violently."

The effectiveness of these defense efforts moved Ramón Saúl Sánchez, head of the rightist Democracy Movement, to urge opponents of the Cuban Revolution not to appear on the witness stand since the defense attorneys had turned the tables, putting them on trial instead of the defendants.

An article in *Granma* says that of the 10 arrested, five "were collaborators and friends who were unable to resist the terrible pressures and threats exerted on all the detainees." Of those five, four were from married couples with children who were told by U.S. authorities, according to the *Granma* report, that they faced "long prison terms, possibly life sentences, and that they would lose paternal authority over their children" if they did not cooperate with the prosecution. The five plea-bargained and received lesser sentences and the prosecution used their testimony in its case.

Granma noted that the U.S. government had "not been able to break the [other] prisoners," despite 17 months of solitary confinement, the severity of the charges levied against them, interrogations, and offers of lighter sentences. The government imprisoned the wife of one defendant for three months to bring maximum pressure to bear on him."

Speaking at a June 23 televised roundtable discussion, Castro said the five Cubans who had been convicted should be considered "political prisoners, prisoners of the empire." Noting that Washington never admits holding political prisoners, Castro added that the U.S. rulers "never consider Puerto Rican *independentistas* as political prisoners, those who have only committed the crime of loving their homeland, their nation, their culture, and aspiring to control their own destiny, for which they have fought many years."

Elections in United Kingdom

Continued from Page 16
the Thatcher years.

"The Conservative Party was extreme and prejudiced on social issues—asylum, homosexuality, the family," wrote Alice Miles in the June 6 *Times*, noting another aspect to their inability to reverse their electoral decline this time around.

Nick White, a former Vauxhall car worker who had been transferred to another General Motors company after an unsuccessful fight against job cuts, explained that while he didn't vote he hoped the Conservatives "will be out for many years to come."

The Labour government is "making it harder for working people, but the Conservatives only care about the rich—they look after their own," said car worker Andy McLoughlin, who voted Labour. The decline of the Conservative Party could also be seen in the wide backing given Labour by the big-business media, including for the first time by the *Times* and the *Economist* magazine.

Editors for the *Economist* wrote they advocated a vote for Labour, even though "our instincts remain closer to [Conservative Party leader] William Hague's," because Blair "hints that he favours real structural reform in health, education, and welfare, including greater use of private provision." It also cautions that to do this Blair would have to change. "A timid Blair has dominated the first term," the editors pointed out. The *Times* also warned Blair that in his plans to reform the public services he "may find himself the victim of unaccustomed unpopularity; it will take all the steel he possesses to stick with the course he believes to be right."

Despite some serious assaults on health and education provisions, the last four years of the Labour government have fallen well short of the capitalist class's need to cut into the social wage. Between 1999 and 2000 the UK was

the only major imperialist country that failed to reduce public spending as a proportion of its gross domestic product (GDP). Currently the UK spends 40 percent of its GDP on public services compared to 30 percent in the United States.

The Blair administration says it aims to step up this assault through attacks on health care, education, and welfare. "Teachers, doctors, nurses...will be affected. Their unions are bound to resist," warned Mary Ann Seighart in an opinion column in the *Times*.

Since the election, Labour leaders have signaled their intention to accelerate their anti-immigrant attacks. New Home Secretary David Blunkett said the government will aim to increase the number of deportations of people seeking asylum from 8,900 last year to 30,000 by next March.

The shift to the right by the capitalist parties gave the fascist British National Party (BNP) some wind in its sails. In Oldham, where the cops initiated attacks on Asian areas, the rightist outfit polled 16 percent of the vote, its highest in a parliamentary election. The BNP called for "Belfast style segregation" of the town.

Uncertainty over London's stance toward the European currency came to the fore immediately after the election. The *Financial Times* said the most important task facing Labour is "Britain's entry into the eurozone." The *Times* warned Blair that to do this would "open a war on a second front" at home and recommended he focus on the "reforms to the public services, the professions, and the welfare and criminal justice systems." The differing views of these two leading pro-business papers reflect the divisions and uncertainty that wracks Britain's rulers in response to their declining influence in the world.

Pete Clifford is a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

SPECIAL OFFER—\$10

CUBA and the Coming American Revolution

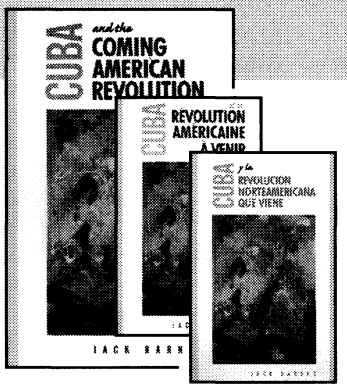
by Jack Barnes

There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba — Fidel Castro, March 1961

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution is about the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made.

Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. **In English, Spanish, and French.**

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.



Struggle for freedom in Western Sahara

Continued from front page

tury ago. In 1884, the Spanish throne proclaimed Western Sahara a protectorate. Spanish colonial domination was codified a year later at the Berlin Conference in which the imperialist powers of Europe carved up Africa among themselves. Since then the Sahrawi people organized revolts, protests, and other resistance against the Spanish colonizers.

The first urban anti-imperialist movement emerged in 1967 with the founding of the Organization for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Oud ed-Dahab, two regions that make up Western Sahara. The movement was violently suppressed and many of the Sahrawis murdered by the Spanish authorities.

In 1973, a young anticolonial fighter, El-Ouali, led a group of Sahrawi students and drew together Sahrawis from the surrounding region to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro, or Polisario in Spanish, to fight for national independence. The Polisario Front launched a guerrilla war against Spanish rule.

Two years later, the governments of Spain, Mauritania, and Morocco signed the Madrid Accords, in which the Spanish rulers ended their direct control of Western Sahara and turned over the upper two-thirds of the country to the Moroccan regime and the lower one-third to Mauritania. Although Western Sahara was no longer a direct colony of Spain, the Spanish imperialists maintained political and economic domination over the region.

The largest phosphate deposits in the world are in the Saharan city of Bu Craa. Under the accords, Spain was given a 35 percent stake in the Bu Craa phosphate mine, which remains a source of tremendous profit—and in imperialist interest in who controls this country.

Another decisive factor in denying the people of Western Sahara their self-determination was the “dangerous” example the Sahrawi liberation fighters—who were carrying out a determined struggle against Spanish imperialism—set for other working people in Africa and the Middle East. The imperialist powers of Spain, France, and the United States, which feared this example in a country of about 200,000 inhabitants, poured billions of dollars into the coffers of the Moroccan and Mauritanian regimes to help prop them up and bolster their military occupation of Western Sahara.

Repression by Moroccan regime

In 1975, the same year the Madrid Accords were signed, the Moroccan monarchy launched the “green march” in an attempt to crush the independence movement. Tens of thousands of chauvinist supporters of Moroccan king Hassan II, backed by 20,000 troops from the Royal Forces Army, invaded Western Sahara and established settlements.

Hundreds of Sahrawis who refused to publicly acknowledge the king of Morocco were murdered, and some 80 percent of the people living in the Saharan capital city, El Aaiun, were driven out of the country and into refugee camps in Algeria. The military, funded largely by Washington, carried out napalm bombings against the Sahrawi population. Today, close to 200,000 Sahrawis live in the refugee camps in the middle of the Algerian desert.

Brehim Dahi, a member of the Association of Family Members of Sahrawi Prisoners and Disappeared, explained to international guests during the June visit that some 2,000 Sahrawis have been “disappeared” during the struggle against the Moroccan occupation. The Moroccan regime refuses to give any information about the number of people who have been imprisoned, tortured, or killed fighting for independence. This strategy is also carried out against those struggling against the monarchy inside Morocco. The government has only confirmed holding one Sahrawi prisoner of war.

In spite of brutal repression, the Polisario Front continued the independence struggle against Morocco and Mauritania and dealt blows to those pro-imperialist regimes. They carried out sustained attacks on the Zouerate iron ore mine in Mauritania and the railway connected to it, reducing output in 1978 to only a quarter of the prewar levels.

A year later, with an unpopular war absorbing one-third of Mauritania's budget and an increasingly demoralized army, the Mauritanian government was overthrown in a coup. The new regime renounced its claims



Militant/Jack Willey

Mohamed Abdel Aziz, center, secretary general of the Polisario Front and president of the Democratic Arab Republic of Sahara, meets with representatives of the International Organizing Committee for the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students, who participated in a solidarity visit with the independence struggle of Western Sahara.

to Western Sahara and soon recognized the government-in-exile of the SADR, led by the Polisario Front. The Moroccan government moved in to occupy the remainder of Western Sahara.

The Polisario Front also attacked the Bu Craa phosphate mines and other parts of Moroccan-occupied Sahara. The Moroccan government in Rabat has answered this resistance by building a series of walls totaling 2,000 kilometers in length around the main cities and towns in Western Sahara to try to stop the Polisario Front from advancing their struggle. Thousands of Sahrawis live outside the walled-off areas in the liberated zones of the country controlled by Polisario.

In 1989 the Polisario Front and the Moroccan regime signed a cease-fire agreement brokered by the United Nations. According to the pact, Sahrawis in occupied Western Sahara, in the liberated zones, and in the refugee camps would vote in a referendum on two choices: integration of their country with Morocco or independence.

“From the moment the agreement was reached, the Moroccan government began to violate the cease-fire,” said Salem Besir, the head of parliament of the SADR. “In spite of the fact we have the right to inde-

pendence, we respected the cease-fire and UN referendum to try to solve this conflict peacefully. When it was clear that the entire people wanted independence, democracy, and an end to autocracy, Morocco began obstructing the cease-fire.”

Among other moves, the Moroccan government demanded that 120,000 of its citizens take part in the referendum vote in order to rig the outcome. It also moved thousands more settlers from Morocco to Western Sahara.

“Holding the Ujsario congress comes out of the need to respond to the people's anger and frustration after 10 years of a cease-fire that has gone nowhere,” said Besir. “Our people are pressing the Polisario Front to go back to war. Our army is ready. The Polisario Front threatened to break the cease-fire April 7 after a group from France asked permission from Morocco to enter our country but refused to consult our government. This was just one of too many examples of open defiance of our right to sovereignty and pretending that we do not exist. We are not going to stay in the desert of another country forever, relying on others for aid. We have our land, our homes, everything in Western Sahara.

“The Moroccan government, when it invaded our land in 1975, said it would finish the job that Spain failed to do. They said they would defeat the Polisario Front in three days. When they met resistance and found no support in Western Sahara, they tried to blame Algeria and other countries for supporting our struggle. Twenty-six years have passed and we're still here, undefeated.”

International solidarity

From its founding, the Polisario Front has reached out to win solidarity for the right to Saharan independence. Several organizations, especially in Spain, where the largest concentration of Sahrawi immigrants live, work to spread knowledge and support for their struggle. Since the founding of the Democratic Arab Republic of Sahara in 1976, many governments around the world have officially recognized the government-in-exile. Algeria has provided schooling, military training, and economic aid to the Saharan people.

During the visit to the refugee camps, Juan Carlos Frómata, a leader of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, addressed one of the meetings. “It gives me pride to have the opportunity to be part of the events around the Ujsario congress. We will continue to offer our modest contribution to your struggle by providing university education in Cuba for Sahrawis to study education and medicine as part of the Cuban Revolution's unconditional support for your struggle.”

Metu Moustafa, 25, is part of the generations born and raised in the refugee camps. Her father is one of hundreds of those “disappeared” during the guerrilla war with Morocco. Moustafa belongs to the organization of family members of prisoners and disappeared. “Life is difficult here, in the middle of an uninhabitable desert with the blazing sun and cold winters,” she said. “The fight to go back to our country is important. But more important is the struggle to free the tens of thousands of Sahrawis living under the king of Morocco.”

Demonstrations in the occupied territory are frequently attacked by the police. Moustafa explained that each week, her organization receives updates about recent arrests of freedom fighters. “What the king of Morocco does not understand is that nobody can stop us. He cannot imprison the entire population. The attempts to break our spirit keeps fueling more determination to fight back.”

UN committee backs Puerto Rico independence

Continued from Page 7

tences—up to four months of jail—imposed by federal courts for what is usually treated as a minor trespassing charge.

Ismael Guadalupe, a central leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, who himself has been arrested several times for joining protests on the island, testified while showing videos with striking footage of the arrests, including male military personnel who dragged handcuffed female demonstrators along the ground and abusively frisked them.

Edwin Pagán from Pro-Libertad, a New York-based organization, called for the release of the six current pro-independence political prisoners. The six were not part of former U.S. president William Clinton's conditional clemency order granted to 11 Puerto Rican independence fighters in 1999. Some of them have spent more than two decades in U.S. prisons.

Highlighting another expression of colonial rule, Jorge Farinacci of the Socialist Front pointed to a recent decision by a federal court in Boston reversing the ruling of a district court in Puerto Rico on the applicability of the death penalty for federal crimes, despite the fact that the Puerto Rican constitution prohibits capital punishment.

Héctor Pesquera of the Hostos National Congress described how the U.S. Navy draws millions of gallons of water a day from the Río Blanco River, aggravating the water shortages faced by many working people on the island as a result of the colonial underdevelopment of basic infrastructure.

In response, “the community has blocked [the Navy's] intake of water” from the river, said Pesquera, describing an ongoing guerrilla war between the U.S. Navy and local residents. “The soldiers come and open it

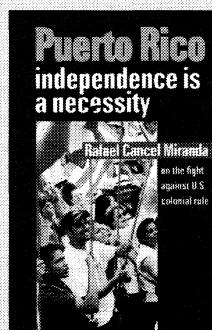
up. And the people continue to exercise their right to self-defense.”

Referring to U.S. president George Bush's announcement that the Navy will end its war exercises in Vieques in May 2003, PIP leader Santiago noted that the decision was made because Washington now feared losing the vote in a November referendum by Vieques residents, which was agreed on by Clinton and former colonial governor Pedro Rosselló.

Other speakers at the hearing included longtime pro-independence leader Juan Mari Brás, Father Luis Barrios of the San Romero Church of the Americas in Upper

Manhattan, Rosa Meneses Albizu-Campos of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, Rosa Escobar from Women for Peace and Justice in Vieques, Jaime Medina of the Working Group on Puerto Rico, and Martin Koppel of the Socialist Workers Party (see statement reprinted on page 7).

That evening, many of those testifying at the hearings spoke at a public event hosted by Pro-Libertad at Hunter College, attended by some 70 people. A featured speaker was Rafael Dausá, Cuba's alternate ambassador to the United Nations, who underscored revolutionary Cuba's consistent support to the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence.



Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity

Rafael Cancel Miranda

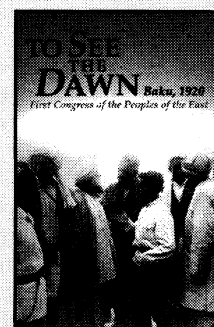
In two interviews, Cancel Miranda — one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979 — speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. In English and Spanish. Booklet \$3

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From Pathfinder

Sinn Fein gains in N. Ireland elections

BY TOM HARRIS

LONDON—Highlighting the continued weakening of British rule, the nationalist party Sinn Fein made huge gains in national and local elections in occupied Northern Ireland June 7. After the results were in, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams telephoned re-elected British prime minister Anthony Blair "to remind him that there's unfinished business here." Adams said he told Blair: "People have endorsed our vision of tomorrow—an Ireland free from the shackles of the union with Britain."

Sinn Fein leads the struggle for Irish freedom and to end the forced division of the country by British imperialism. The party doubled to four its seats in the British House of Commons and made gains in local council elections held the same day. Its overall share of the vote more than doubled, for the first time placing it ahead of the pro-imperialist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), which also appeals for votes from the oppressed Catholic minority in Northern Ireland.

Sinn Fein celebrated the defeat of a referendum in the Irish Republic on the Nice Treaty. The vote was on whether or not to incorporate into the Irish constitution the provisions of the December 2000 accord signed by leaders of the European Union (EU).

Sinn Fein had vigorously campaigned for a "no" vote as part of a Peace and Neutrality Alliance along with the Green Party, National Platform, and others. Adams congratulated Sinn Fein members who were the only ones to take "the debate to doorsteps the length and breadth of the state." The front-page headline of the June 14 *An Phoblacht*, a paper that supports Sinn Fein, read, "Three mandates for change: 4 MPs; 108 Councillors; No to Nice."

The rejection of the treaty by a 54 percent margin came as a surprise to the major EU powers and threw a wrench into their plans. It was a blow to the Dublin government and the ruling Fianna Fáil party that had urged support for the measure. The highest percentage of votes against were recorded in working-class areas, especially in the capital of Dublin. The *Financial Times* warned that Nice is a "wake-up call to [Fianna Fáil] organizers that unless they start to answer the concerns raised they may lose votes to Sinn Fein."

Prior to the vote Adams issued an appeal to cast a "no" ballot because the treaty "paves the way for the creation of a new



January march in Derry, Northern Ireland, marks 1972 killing of Irish civil rights marchers by British troops. June 7 vote registered strengthening of nationalist party Sinn Fein.

superpower, an EU Superstate with its own army dominated by the largest countries." In the new EU structure outlined in the treaty, "larger states like Germany, France, Italy, and Britain automatically treble their votes in making EU laws from 2005 while small states like Ireland only double theirs," Adams said. This "is not about [EU] enlargement. It is about further centralizing the EU, placing greater power in the hands of the larger states and allowing them to create a two-tier EU."

Adams condemned plans for the EU to field a 60,000-strong Rapid Reaction Force, which "is an army designed for war, an army to impose by force the interests of the EU or an elite within it" not only "within the EU or on its borders but up to 2,500 miles outside the EU." The statement said the military force "is not some kind of Red Cross."

Welcoming the outcome of the vote, Adams called for the Nice Treaty to be renegotiated and urged Dublin to "accept that there is concern about Irish neutrality; concern about sovereignty within Europe; and a very real concern about the development of a two-tier Europe."

Speaking June 12 in the Irish Dáil, or parliament in Dublin, Sinn Fein leader Caoimhghin Ó Caoláin said there "is a growing sense of anger and disbelief among people that their will as expressed on June

7 is being flagrantly violated by this government and the other EU governments." He cited the EU foreign minister's statement that despite the Irish rejection, "the ratification process will continue on the basis of this text and in accordance with the agreed timetable." French president Jacques Chirac called the outcome in Ireland a "difficulty" that would have to be "overcome," Ó Caoláin said.

"These arrogant pledges to proceed with Nice regardless of the fact that the Irish referendum has refused to ratify it confirms everything that we in the No campaign have said about the antidemocratic nature of the drive to an EU superstate," the Sinn Fein leader said.

Crisis among unionist forces

In Northern Ireland the blow to London's rule in the elections was compounded by a deepening of the crisis and division among "unionist" forces—those who support continued British rule.

Of the 18 parliamentary seats Sinn Fein took two from the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), which has been for decades a principal mainstay of British rule. The capture from the UUP of the seat in Fermanagh South Tyrone by Sinn Fein candidate Michelle Gildernew, 31, was one with a historical importance. Twenty years ago Bobby

Sands, the leader of the hunger strike demanding special status for political prisoners in Long Kesh prison, was elected to parliament in the district. The hunger strike in which Sands and nine others died became a spur to deepening mobilizations, and growing political activity and self-confidence among nationalists, paving the way for the series of successes in elections by Sinn Fein in recent years.

Sinn Fein vice president Pat Doherty won West Tyrone, for the first time beating the SDLP's Brid Rodgers, who is Minister of Agriculture in the devolved Northern Ireland Executive. Rodgers had received backing from the British big-business press in the vain hope that she would block Sinn Fein's advance. *An Phoblacht* reported that as "part of their negative campaigning, the SDLP had adopted a reference by the British media which labeled West Tyrone as their 'Stalingrad.' It was to come back to haunt them."

Meanwhile Sinn Fein chief negotiator and Minister of Education Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams retained their seats, gaining a larger percentage of the vote over the last election.

Overall Sinn Fein increased its share of the vote in Northern Ireland from 9.8 percent in 1997 to 21.7 percent, overtaking the SDLP. In the local council elections Sinn Fein won fewer seats than the SDLP but increased its seat total by 34 to 108, becoming the biggest party in six councils in the western part of Northern Ireland. It was returned for the second time as the party with the most seats in the Belfast City Council, leading Sinn Fein to nominate Alex Maskey as its candidate for mayor. His election was blocked however, and a unionist was elected mayor.

The UUP lost one-third of its MPs and 31 council seats. UUP leader and Northern Ireland First Minister David Trimble saw his majority cut substantially.

The rightist Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) led by Ian Paisley meanwhile gained two parliamentary seats, increasing its vote share nearly 7 percent and its seats on councils by 40. The DUP has fiercely opposed the April 1998 Good Friday Agreement negotiated by the British and Irish governments and the main political parties in Northern Ireland, including the UUP. The agreement, which was a reflection of the growing self-confidence of nationalists and the failure of nearly three decades of British military occupation to defeat their resistance, led to the establishment of an elected assembly and executive on which Sinn Fein sits.

On June 18 both Sinn Fein and UUP leaders met Blair separately for talks about the future of the Good Friday Agreement. UUP leader Trimble has threatened to resign as Northern Ireland First Minister on July 1 unless the Irish Republican Army (IRA) begins unilaterally surrendering weapons. The IRA, which waged a military campaign against British occupation, is currently maintaining a cease-fire. Sinn Fein president Adams said any so-called "decommissioning" of weapons by July 1 was unlikely. After what was described as a stormy meeting with Blair, Adams accused London of failing to "seize the nettle" over the disbanding of the colonial police force in Northern Ireland or the dismantling of British Army security posts. DUP leader Paisley meanwhile has accused Trimble of making concessions to the IRA.

In another development, London has sent 1,600 additional soldiers to bolster the occupying forces in Northern Ireland, reportedly for the forthcoming "marching season" when right-wing pro-British loyalist organizations stage dozens of triumphalist marches throughout Northern Ireland.

These "parades" are frequently accompanied by violent attacks on Catholics. Such attacks accelerated during the election campaign. In north Belfast, near the nationalist Ardoyne area, children from Catholic families were prevented from attending a local school June 20-21 by loyalist thugs amid clashes between loyalists and the police.

Behind Labour Party's victory in UK election

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON—Although the victory of the Labour Party in the June 7 elections in the United Kingdom was never in doubt, the stance of major wings of the ruling class toward another four years of a Labour government, the low turnout in the elections,

NEWS ANALYSIS

and continued resistance by working people reflect a number of important political trends.

Led by Prime Minister Anthony Blair, the Labour Party secured a clear victory, capturing 40.8 percent of the vote and 413 seats in parliament. The Conservative Party gained 31.8 percent of the vote and 166 seats and the Liberal Democrats garnered 18.3 percent of the vote and 52 seats. The result means the makeup of the parliament remains much as it was from the previous election in 1997.

The election in Scotland and Northern Ireland highlighted the further fracturing of the United Kingdom (UK). In Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein doubled its seats in parliament to four, outpolling the bourgeois nationalist Social Democratic Labour Party. At the same time the Ulster Unionist Party, the key ally of London in maintaining British

rule, lost ground to the ultrarightist Democratic Unionist Party (see article above).

The growing nationalist sentiment in Scotland was marked less in the outcome of the vote than by the fact that each of the bourgeois parties produced a separate manifesto and campaigned on behalf of Scotland. As well, parties changed their names, with Labour calling itself Scottish Labour, for example.

The resistance of working people to the employer and government offensive also burst through the election campaign period, unlike 1997, signaling what lies ahead for the Labour government. A strike by postal workers that started May 23 grew over a week to involve 15,000 union members. The action was in response to moves to change working conditions as part of the preparations by the postal service to turn part of its operations over to private capitalist companies. The *Daily Mail* complained the strikes "recall the dark days of militancy in the old-style public services."

Two days before the election hundreds of Asian youth built barricades and repelled police assaults in the Harehills district of Leeds after cops had sprayed CS gas in the eyes of an Asian man. This mobilization followed one of 500 Asian youth in the streets of Oldham May 26 aimed at defending their communities against attacks by

racists and the police.

Low turnout

There was little celebration of the Labour victory by working people, unlike in 1997. Most of Britain's trade unions are affiliated to and support the Labour Party and its election victory in 1997 marked the end of 18 years of Conservative party rule. This year many working people did not vote, putting the 59 percent turnout as the lowest since 1918. Turnout in the predominantly working-class area of Liverpool Riverside dropped to 34 percent of eligible voters and the big-business press estimated that less than one-third of 18- to 25-year-olds cast a ballot. In many areas the Liberal Democrats, a smaller capitalist party, were able to increase their vote from youth and working people by pitching their campaign as one that was to the left of Labour.

The inability of the Conservative Party to make any significant gains against Labour reflects the shift marked in 1997 as working people began to seek ways to put years of assault under the Conservatives behind them. Former Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher featured prominently as both a speaker for her party's campaign and in Labour's campaign material, which appealed for votes in order to avert a return to

Continued on Page 14