

## Moscow presses for aid to stem regime's crisis

BY GEORGE BUCHANAN

Moscow is pressing Washington and its imperialist allies to provide the Soviet Union with massive economic aid in the vain hope that this will stem the crisis of the bureaucratic regime.

Both Moscow and Washington fear the political, social, and economic consequences of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the signs of resistance by the working class to continued assaults on its rights and living standards.

The Soviet ruling caste is promoting the idea of a "Grand Bargain" with Washington and its imperialist allies, through which, in return for massive financial aid, Moscow would promise to take further steps in privatizing the Soviet economy.

The Soviet regime faces a combination of challenges: growing demands for independence by oppressed nationalities; refusal by working people to continue to endure political repression and a worsening social crisis; and a deepening economic catastrophe across the country. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev met with leaders of various republics in late May in another attempt to hold together the disintegrating country, while

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## New International fund goes over top — \$85,481 raised!

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The New International Fund has gone over the top! The drive concluded with \$85,481 collected — \$10,481 above the original goal of \$75,000.

The final funds have arrived just as three more issues of the magazine are about to come off the press — the inaugural issue of *Nueva Internacional*, in Spanish, and reprints of issues no. 1 and 2 of *Nouvelle Internationale*, in French.

Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of readers — from Brussels, to Reyjavik, to New York — workers and farmers around the world will be able to study these issues and the future ones planned.

This is what inspired contributors as the June 1 deadline approached. In France, for example, supporters found that they had raised their goal in francs, but with fluctuations in the exchange rate, they were short of the amount needed in dollars. Several new contributors stepped forward, and the entire dollar amount was raised. Supporters in Britain, faced with a similar drop in the pound, raised additional monies at the end to achieve their goal.

In Newark, New Jersey, supporters held a fund-raising rally June 1. Following a talk by Francisco Picado, a Socialist Workers Party leader and member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU), a collection was taken that fell just \$49 short of the \$1,055 needed. Chairperson Pattie Sanchez appealed to everyone present to dig once more into their pockets so Newark would go over the top. Another \$79 was raised on the spot.

Every dollar contributed is well worth it. *New International*, and its sister publications in Spanish and French, arm workers and

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## Affirmative action target of civil rights bill debate

BY JAMES HARRIS

On June 5, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a Democratic-sponsored civil rights bill. The 273-158 vote was 15 short, however, of the two-thirds majority needed to override an expected presidential veto. The next step is for the bill to be debated and discussed in the U.S. Senate.

President George Bush has fought against the bill's passage. Decrying the use of quotas, the administration is in fact pressing a campaign against affirmative action itself.

Aimed at combating discrimination in hiring and promotion, education, housing, and loans, affirmative action is a conquest of the civil rights and women's rights struggles. It helps break down divisions created among working people under capitalism.

By joining in or refusing to combat the administration's attacks on quotas, many members of Congress and officials in Black and women's organizations have opted to sidestep any defense of affirmative action.

"We have produced a bill that makes quotas illegal, and which gives white workers, black workers, women and men, religious minorities, and the disabled access to the courts to enforce their rights," said Rep. Richard Gephardt.

### Quotas 'unlawful'

Ralph Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, said Bush's assertions that the measure is a "quotas bill" turn "the truth upside down."

Molly Yard, President of the National Organization for Women, said in a written statement, "In fact, the Act is not designed in any way to impose quotas. . . . By discouraging employers from maintaining discriminatory practices, the Act actually is an anti-quota bill, which can help eliminate unlawful quotas that keep women and people of color and others from receiving fair treatment."

Despite these protestations the administration and opponents of the measure are continuing their attacks.

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Israeli security forces round up Palestinians.

## Israeli settlements block Washington's 'peace' plan

BY GEORGE BUCHANAN

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and President George Bush have publicly singled out Israel's continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank as the main obstacle to a "peace" conference between Tel Aviv and Arab governments in the Middle East.

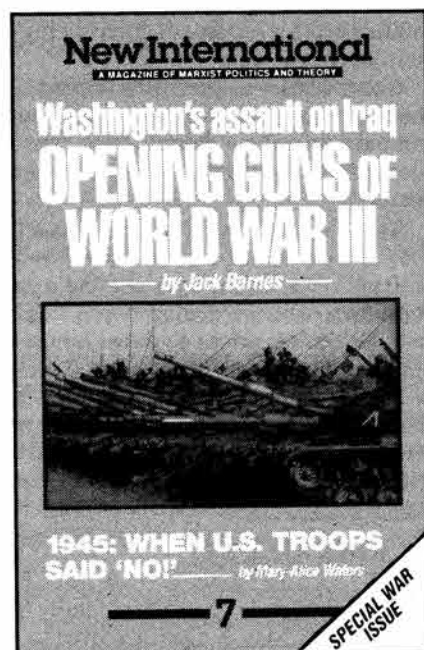
The heart of the "solution" which Washington seeks to bring about in the Middle East is recognition of Israel by Arab governments, particularly those of Syria, Jordan,

and Saudi Arabia. The U.S. rulers hope to achieve this via a conference at which Israel will make sufficient concessions to allow these Arab governments to claim that something was gained for the Palestinian people in the process. But continuing new Israeli settlement on Palestinian land makes this virtually impossible.

"Nothing has made my job of trying to find Arab and Palestinian partners for Israel more difficult than being greeted by a new settlement every time I arrive," Baker complained to a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee after his fourth trip to the Mideast to

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### Inaugural issue of 'Nueva Internacional' available for orders

Luis Madrid, editor of *Nueva Internacional*, has announced that the inaugural issue of the Spanish-language Marxist magazine will be printed the week of June 24. The 368-page issue features the article "Opening Guns of World War III," as well as "1945: When U.S. Troops Said 'No!'" and "Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War." The cover price is \$13.00.

Michel Prairie, editor of the Marxist magazine in French, *Nouvelle Internationale*, announced that reprints of issues no. 1 and 2 are coming off the press that same week. Issue no. 1 contains the articles "Communism and the Fight for a Popular Revolutionary Government: 1848 to Today" and "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today." Issue no. 2 carries the article "The Coming Revolution in South Africa" and "The Freedom Charter" of the African National Congress.

Both issues of *Nouvelle Internationale* are being reissued with new ads and four-color covers. The cover price is \$11 each.

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# Debate over bill aims at affirmative action

Continued from front page

"Despite everything that's gone on, the long term trend, I think, is against the bill as it's now seen. I think people are not in favor of more lawsuits," said Republican House Leader Newt Gingrich after the House approved the bill. "I think small businesses are desperately frightened by the idea that the trial lawyers will have a huge advantage in threatening to take them to court unless they settle out of court, and I think that quotas are anathema to most Americans."

Civil rights organizations have also backed off from defending numerical quotas as a method of implementing affirmative action, while expressing dismay at the Bush administration for worsening race relations. No groups have put forward a plan of mass mobilizations or education in defense of affirmative action. Their efforts are instead focused on the legislative process.

John Jacob, head of the National Urban League, said, "Quotas were a phony issue from the day they were first raised. Long experience with anti-bias laws, regulations, and court decisions never led to quotas."

"We refuse to be intimidated," Jacob stated. "And we urge the members of Congress to resist the campaign of lies and fear

waged against this moderate, necessary civil rights legislation."

The comments of Jesse Jackson, nonvoting senator from Washington, D.C., took on a patriotic tone. "I never thought I would see a president, one who unified the nation... as commander-in-chief in the Gulf, take the lead, and with passion, move to divide the nation along lines of race," Jackson told a breakfast meeting of reporters, according to the June 6 *Christian Science Monitor*.

In order to fight back, Jackson said, "Democrats must have a battery of Patriot missiles: racial justice, gender equality, and fairness."

## Steelworkers' affirmative action fight

The importance of affirmative action as a tool working people can use to make up for the inequalities imposed by the employers was demonstrated by a fight waged by the labor movement in the late 1970s.

It resulted in the June 1979 Supreme Court decision in *Brian F. Weber v. Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation and United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO*.

Weber, a white lab technician for Kaiser Aluminum in Gramercy, Louisiana, sued to overturn an affirmative-action plan at the plant negotiated by the United Steelworkers

of America (USWA). He claimed that he and other white males were victims of "reverse discrimination."

Weber's complaints then have a familiar ring today. In an interview with the *New York Times* in 1978, Weber said, "It's not desegregation any more. They've crossed over into taking our jobs. I guess if I was Black I'd do the same thing. The thing that bugs me the most is Black guys with chips on their shoulders for something that never happened to them. The guys that were really discriminated against are beyond their working years."

With this approach, Weber attempted to use civil rights laws to win his suit.

The stakes in the case were high, especially since the court had struck down affirmative-action quotas at a California medical school in its ruling in support of Allan Bakke a year earlier. A ruling overturning affirmative action in the workplace would have deep repercussions throughout society, affecting equality on the job and in hiring, training, and promotions. The Steelworkers union stated at the time that it alone had affirmative action agreements covering nearly 1 million workers.

A decision in favor of Weber, unlike the *Bakke* case that preceded it, would have been seen as a direct attack on the Steelworkers union — which had negotiated the affirmative action program — and more broadly on organized labor. The members of the court did not feel that they were ready to take on this force.

Instead, the Supreme Court ruling in the

Weber case was that private employers can legally "adopt affirmative action plans designed to eliminate conspicuous racial imbalance in traditionally segregated job categories."

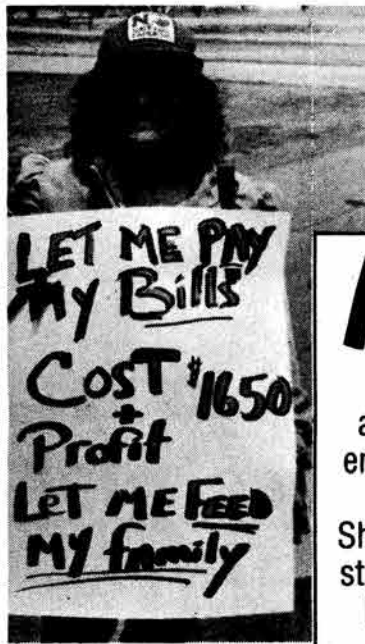
Written by Justice William Brennan, the court decision said that "it would be ironic if a law triggered by a nation's concern over centuries of racial injustice... constituted the first legislative prohibition of all voluntary, private, race-conscious efforts to abolish traditional patterns of racial segregation and hierarchy."

Steelworker's member Andrew Pulley worked at U.S. Steel's Gary Works in 1979 and was the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago. In a statement on the victory in the case he said, "The ruling class is not at all eager to let the truth out about the Weber case. For the first time the big guns of labor — the Steelworkers, Auto Workers, Machinists, AFL-CIO — joined forces with Black and women's organizations to defend affirmative action."

"The unions must be ready to meet every new attack," Pulley said. "To begin with, we should launch a big educational campaign to explain what was at stake in the Weber case and what has been won. We should take the offensive in upcoming negotiations to expand affirmative action programs and take new steps toward job equality."

"This is the way to heal the divisions which sap labor's strength. This is the way — the only way — to ready labor's armies for the battles ahead."

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Editor: GREG McCARTAN

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Editorial Staff: Seth Galinsky, James Harris, Cindy Jaquith, Roni McCann, Janet Post, Judy Stranahan, Peter Thierjung.

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## New York dairy farmers protest

BY ANGEL LARISCY

ALBANY, New York — Dairy farmers in New York are organizing events across the state to protest the low price they receive for milk.

Farmers receive only \$10.80 per 100 lbs. of milk. They sell raw milk to processing companies that in turn sell milk to retail outlets. The current price to dairy farmers is a one-third drop since last December and is well below the estimated cost of between \$15 and \$16 to produce this amount of milk. As a result farmers are going deeper into debt. Hundreds could lose their land.

Chanting, "What do we want? A fair price! When do we want it? Now!", some 30 farmers and supporters gathered at Crowley's milk processing plant May 24 to publicize their fight.

Many farmers worked until 3 a.m. of the previous night to be able to take time off for the protest.

Organizers of the action reported that protests also took place in three other cities in New York, as well as in five other states: South Carolina, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Idaho.

The farmers were joined at the protest by Greyhound striker Bob Woods and unionists from the Solidarity Committee of the Albany-Capital District area. One unionist pointed out that for every farm that goes under, seven workers in other sections of the economy lose their jobs.

Woods said he supported the farmers' fight "because we're all workers in this country and have to make a decent living. The rich keep getting richer and the poor keep getting poorer."

Anna Pereira, from Deerfield, has a farm with 100 cows, run only by herself and her husband. "It's the farmers and the average consumers who are getting ripped off," she said. "When the prices go down for us, they don't go down for the consumers."

John Hathaway, from the Empire State Farm Alliance, said plans were being made for further protests in New York and for a national action in Washington, D.C.

BY JOHN STUDER

KNOXVILLE, Iowa — Two dozen farmers, unionists, and supporters of family farmers protested May 3 against moves to take away the farm of Danny and Vicki Ubben. The Ubbens work 320 acres near Columbia, Iowa.

Two years ago, Danny Ubben bought the farm for \$160,000 from Charles Burroughs. Ubben paid \$30,000 up front and agreed to annual payments of \$15,665. Since buying the property, he has heavily invested in building up a hog herd.

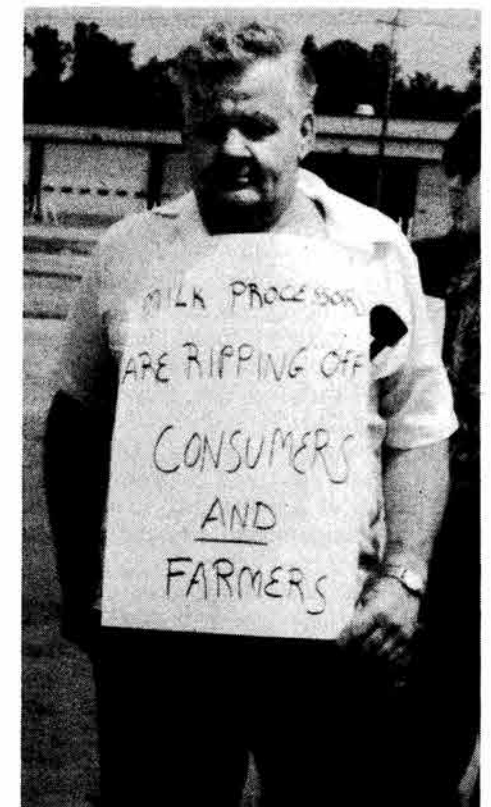
Ubben told supporters at a meeting at St.

Anthony's Catholic Church that he discovered there were fewer tillable acres than had been promised after he took possession of the farm. Too much herbicide had been spread by a previous farmer, reducing the yield. Because of these factors and two years of poor weather, Ubben paid only \$9,000 in 1990.

The Ubbens — with the aid of leaders of the Iowa American Agriculture Movement (AAM) and Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (ICCI), a group that advocates justice for family farmers — presented a proposal for restructuring the payments to Joseph Johnston, Burroughs' lawyer, April 17. Two days later, Johnston said Burroughs was not interested in any renegotiation and that the "dispute" was being referred to mediation, a legal move preliminary to seizing the farm.

Carol Nearnmeyer, vice-president of the Iowa AAM, led the protesters to the lawyer's office to seek a discussion on a way to allow Ubben to continue to farm. Among the farmer's supporters were representatives of ICCI, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 433, and a rural church group.

The lawyer at first allowed the delegation into his office, but later called the police to have them removed.



Militant/Angel Lariscy  
Dairy farmer at May 24 protest. Hundreds of farmers could lose their land due to a sharp drop in the price paid for raw milk.



# Filipino students meet as debate on U.S. bases heats up

BY MARGARET JAYKO

MIAG'AO, Panay, Philippines — The sprawling University of the Philippines campus outside this small village was the site of the Eighth Regular National Congress of the League of Filipino Students (LFS). More than 80 delegates attended from all over the 7,000-island archipelago that is the Philippines.

Due to the long and unpredictable boat-rides most participants had to make — delegates from the capital city of Manila had to travel 27 hours, for example — the congress opening was delayed a day. It took place May 27-30.

Nathaniel Santiago, outgoing LFS national chairperson, gave a keynote speech reviewing the organization's activities and outlining the challenges it faces. Santiago is currently facing six counts of legal charges for his political activities. He is deputy secretary-general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), a coalition of anti-imperialist organizations.

The congress occurred as public debate was intensifying over whether the government of President Corazon Aquino should extend the treaty with Washington maintain-

ing two large U.S. military installations — Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station. The current pact expires Sept. 16, 1991. The LFS is an active participant in the popular fight to get rid of the bases.

Delegates also condemned the government's decision to continue paying off its \$28.6 billion foreign debt to imperialist bankers while the workers and farmers here slide into ever greater poverty.

The impact on Filipino and world politics of the Arab-Persian Gulf war and the upheavals in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were discussed throughout the conference.

International guests gave greetings to the congress, as well as educational presentations on major questions of world politics.

Greg Rosenberg, national chairperson of the Young Socialist Alliance of the United States, told delegates his organization's central activity for the past nine months had been campaigning against imperialism and its war in Iraq.

Washington's real goal in going to war, said Rosenberg, was to impose a U.S.-run government on that country and gain greater control over the region's oil resources. The U.S. rulers seized on the Iraqi regime's illegal



Militant/Greg Rosenberg  
Delegates to national congress of League of Filipino Students. They met as the public debated whether the Philippine government should allow U.S. bases to remain.

occupation of Kuwait to mount its war drive and eventually slaughtered some 150,000 civilians and soldiers in carrying its military assault through to the end.

## No 'new world order'

But far from achieving the political goal of a more stable, U.S.-dominated Middle

East, Washington now faces more instability in the region. Rather than building a "new world order," Rosenberg said, the U.S. ruling class is desperately trying to shore up the declining international capitalist system.

Rosenberg also described the YSA's involvement in struggles against the deepening economic and social crisis in the United States. He pledged the YSA would use what the delegation learned from the LFS to help win support in the United States for the fight to get the U.S. bases out of the Philippines and to cancel the Philippine foreign debt.

Janet Roth, a leader of the Young Socialists of New Zealand, told the congress that the imperialist government in New Zealand introduced a sweeping antiunion law at the same time that it sent military aid to the U.S.-led alliance in the Gulf war. Her organization was involved in the fight against the war as well.

This is a very difficult time for fighters against imperialism, said Steven Gen, who attended the conference from Hong Kong on behalf of the Asian Students Association Secretariat (ASA). "The Aquino and U.S. governments are poised to agree to a continuation of the U.S. military presence," Gen said, giving Washington "unlimited freedom" to intervene in the Philippines and the rest of the Third World.

The "collapse of Eastern Europe has isolated many of us," the ASA leader said. The Gulf war signals "renewed vigor of imperialism and its stooges in the Third World."

Two members of the Manila chapter of the General Union of Palestinian Students attended the congress. They solidarized with the fight against the bases and the foreign debt.

Greetings to the congress were read from the All India Students Federation, International Union of Students, Bangladesh Student League, Marquere University Union in Australia, and the Palestine Democratic Youth Organization in Manila.

# Minnesota Curtis event a big success

BY BRUCE KIMBALL

AUSTIN, Minnesota — On May 26, 100 people from Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota attended a fundraising hog roast and picnic near here sponsored by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

In addition to unionist, farmers, and students, nearly 50 farmworkers from southern Minnesota migrant labor camps turned out for the event.

"I came here because people need to meet each other and defend each other," explained one farmworker, José. "Mark's case is very important."

The details of the frame-up and jailing of Mark Curtis on false rape and burglary charges were new to some at the hog roast. But they were inspired to hear about the young, fighting unionist framed up by the Des Moines, Iowa, police. At the time of his arrest, Curtis was active in defending immigrant coworkers from Mexico and El Salvador under attack from immigration authorities. Curtis and the immigration workers were employed at the Swift meat-packing plant in Des Moines.

Many of the farmworkers related their own struggles for justice with the situation surrounding Curtis and were quick to extend their support. At least a dozen endorsed the case while attending the picnic.

Four students came to the hog roast from Mankato State University; some had recently joined the Young Socialist Alliance. They had first heard about Mark Curtis when a national leader of the YSA spoke at their campus. Two carloads of people drove from Omaha, including two young men who are stationed at the air force base there.

Supporter Amy Husk said in an interview that "some weeks ago, as the hog roast was being planned, several of us began to travel to the migrant camps with bilingual leaflets and information about this event. The camps were already full with people who had come from Texas and Mexico to pick asparagus for canning companies in the area. Many indicated interest.

"So," she said, "the day of the hog roast we organized teams to go to the camps. They went door-to-door, reminding people of the picnic and informing new people of the event and of Mark's case."

The result? One camp sent a caravan of several cars and another camp sent 15. Later, several other cars of farmworkers arrived, having made the hour-long trip on their own. "It took a lot of preparation and work," Husk pointed out, "but people are attracted to this fight. They want to help out."

The program at the event featured Priscilla Schenk from Des Moines, who recently

made a two-week tour of Mexico for the Defense Committee. The tour was hosted by the Committee for Defense and Promotion of Human Rights in Mexico City. She and another supporter of Curtis visited 23 unions and organizations.

"We have a common struggle against speedup, safety violations, and wage cuts on the job, as well as against growing attacks on us by the police and the government," she said of working people in the United States and Mexico.

Schenk said she met Ford workers near Mexico City who have been forced into a strike by Ford management. Ford responded by hiring armed thugs to work in the plant, who injured eight workers and killed one. Now, she said, the union is still fighting to get workers' jobs back.

She also met a peasant leader of the Authentic Labor Front who was framed up and arrested for rape. A month later, the charges were found to be fabricated by the police.

"Both of these groups," she said, "along with 14 others, endorsed the Mark Curtis Defense Committee."



Militant/Sylvia Giesbrecht  
Preparing the spread of food for hog roast fundraiser.

In the discussion following Schenk's presentation, several farmworkers pointed to their own struggle for justice. "What can you do if you are being victimized by your very own company?" one asked.

"We have to begin with solidarity and mutual support," she said. "There are no automatic tactics for winning justice. But the defense case for Mark Curtis is an example for everyone who is struggling against the company and the police."

A group of farmworkers later explained some of the terrible living conditions and injustices they have to suffer.

"We were shorted nearly 200 pounds of asparagus each last week," explained Juan, who said that equals a day's pay. Farmworkers here receive no receipts for day-to-day totals, and have to rely on the company to keep records of their work. The method of payment — in cash — also makes it difficult to prove a need for social services.

Others told of high rents, the lack of safe drinking water or clean laundry water, and deductions for needed working gear. Injuries and health problems result from the intensive labor they perform as well. On the day of the picnic, a Sunday, many had already put in four hours in the fields.

The event raised \$750 for the Defense Committee. One new farmworker-supporter made arrangements to show the Spanish version of a video about Curtis' case at the camp where he lives.

# French government hit by protests of immigrant workers, transport unions

BY GEORGE BUCHANAN

Unemployment in France grew by 1.3 percent during April, which means that the number out of work has risen by 105,000 since the beginning of the year. This brings the official unemployment rate to 9.4 percent.

The announcement of these figures coincided with upheavals on May 25 and 26 among youth in several immigrant communities of Paris and other cities.

Following one such confrontation with police, an 18-year-old Moroccan high school student, Aïssa Ilich, died in police custody. Police had refused to pass on his asthma medication, which his parents had attempted to deliver to him in jail. Banners at protests that followed Ilich's death said he and others before him had been murdered because they were from North Africa. The signs likened the local police to Hitler's Gestapo.

Meanwhile, 200 hunger strikers who have been denied the right of asylum in France vowed to continue their several-week-long protest. The decision came after the French government said it would allow them to stay in the country for three months while it re-evaluated their requests, but avoided saying they would have the right to work in France.

Ten thousand demonstrated in Paris in support of the hunger strikers May 25. Kurds, Turks, and people from Mali, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau, as well as French-born supporters, chanted, "Papers for the refugees" and "No to a bolted Europe."

France has also been rocked by strikes among transport workers. Most of the Paris subway system was struck on May 31, and workers on the national railroad and the main domestic airline also stopped work for two days.



## Massive protests continue against U.S.-backed S. Korean regime

Tens of thousands of students and workers in Pusan demanded President Roh Tae Woo resign June 2. They gathered at a rally closing a three-day commemoration of the founding anniversary of Chondahyop, the national student alliance. Pusan is South Korea's largest port city.

In Seoul, Chung Won Shik, the new prime minister, was physically expelled from the Hankook University campus by hundreds of protesting students. The press reported that Chung was grabbed by the collar and escorted to the main gate.

Roh ordered a crackdown June 4 in retaliation and more than 360 students were rounded up in one night. Two days later, police rearrested 72-year-old Rev. Moon Ik Hwan, one of the most prominent opponents of the South Korean regime. Hwan had been released from prison in October 1990 after serving a seven-year jail term for visiting North Korea.

## N. Korea denounces campaign to label it a nuclear threat

False charges by Washington that North Korea is on the verge of developing nuclear bombs "are enough to make a weasel blush with shame," said a May 31 commentary in the North Korean official daily *Rodong Sinmun*, according to Reuters.

The daily denied recent reports in the U.S. "paid media and some publications of South Korea and foreign countries" of a possible underground atomic test or accident in North Korea. "We have no intention to develop them [nuclear weapons], nor have the need nor capacity to manufacture them," *Rodong Sinmun* said.

Washington has demanded North Korea allow international inspection of its nuclear power facilities. In a June 1 interview with Japan's Kyodo news agency, North Korean President Kim Il Sung said it is "unreasonable for the United States to raise the question of nuclear inspection while keeping a large stock of nuclear weapons in South Korea." Some 1,000 U.S. nuclear weapons are currently stationed in South Korea.

## Algeria's government declares emergency, postpones elections

The Algerian government declared a state of emergency June 5, postponed parliamentary elections scheduled for the end of the month, and called out the army to quell growing antigovernment protests. Armored vehicles were dispatched to the poorer neighborhoods in Algiers, the capital, where the opposition Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) has its base of support.

A day earlier, riot police opened fire on a protest and killed at least five people, including a 14-year-old boy. The police violence was a failed attempt by authorities to break a general strike in its eleventh day.

The strike was called by the FIS, which heavily defeated the ruling National Liberation Front (NLF) in local and regional elections a year ago. Protesters are demanding early presidential elections and changes in election laws that favor the NLF's holding on to power.

## Stalinist rule shattered in Albania

The June 4 resignation of the Communist Party-dominated government brought an end to 47 years of rule by Albania's Stalinist party. A country of 3.5 million, Albania borders Greece and Yugoslavia.

A four-week general strike and massive demonstrations in Albania's capital, Tirana, forced the government's resignation. On leaving office, Prime Minister Fatos Nano announced a "nonpartisan" interim government would be formed and new elections would be scheduled.

The leadership of the recently formed Union of Free and Independent Trade Unions, which had mobilized hundreds of thousands of workers in the general strike, said it would recommend going back to work as soon as the new government took office.

# Communist League in Britain holds third conference

BY RICH PALSER

BARNESLEY, Britain — One hundred and three delegates and guests from nine countries attended the Third Constitutional Conference of the Communist League, held here May 4-7.

In addition to delegates elected by the Communist League's branches in London, Sheffield, and Manchester, fraternal delegates represented Communist Leagues in Canada, Iceland, Sweden, France, and New Zealand; and the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

Opening the conference discussion on "The working-class campaign against imperialism and war," Communist League Executive Secretary Jonathan Silberman said that "the Washington-London-organized carnage in Iraq is among the most monstrous in the history of modern warfare."

Following on the heels of the first massacre of the war — the bombing and invasion of Iraq that culminated in the massacre of tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians fleeing Kuwait — came the second massacre of the Kurds, Shiites, and others rebelling against Hussein's rule.

"The first massacre," he said, "was carried out by imperialism with the complicity of Baghdad. The second was carried out by Baghdad with the complicity of imperialism."

In the months during the embargo of Iraq leading up to the bombing and invasion, the Communist League campaigned through its branches and industrial union fractions — getting out the facts about the war drive, explaining why imperialism would launch a bloody military assault on the Iraqi people, and pointing to how working people by fighting against the imperialist war drive could strengthen their resistance to the employers' offensive at home as well.

As an organization of working-class fighters in Britain, the League discussed with coworkers, youth, and others why the billionaire ruling families of Britain were responsible for the war along with their cohorts in Washington.

## 'One international class'

"We explained that the working class can only defend its interests," Silberman said, "if we see ourselves as one international class, whether in Britain, the Middle East, Africa, or elsewhere."

Through campaigning, the party expanded the sales of the socialist press and Pathfinder books, sought to recruit to the League, and took steps forward in building a proletarian party.

In the opening months of the war drive, he said, "it took time and a political discussion for us to get onto a campaign footing. We found we were under war pressure — the pressure to deny what was happening before our very eyes. We had to turn ourselves to the political challenges posed by the rulers' drive to war and put campaigning against it at the center of all our political work."

"In so doing," he said, "we learned something new — what it means to be a campaign party. Organizing ourselves to join in building protest actions against the war, reaching out to young people interested in politics, and bringing the big questions posed by the war into our discussions on the job and in the unions have transformed the Communist League. These activities have strengthened us politically and taken us deeper into the working class."

In the lively discussion at the conference, delegates explained their experiences — discussing the war with coworkers, fighting management attempts to prevent the circulation of antiwar literature, and defending coworkers who suffered racist harassment.

Two delegates talked about their experience in building and being a part of a contingent of 120 coal miners at a major antiwar demonstration in London. In addition to sales of the *Militant* in coal mining areas, participation in defending the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) from a government assault on the union's leadership, and work in the miners union in solidarity with the Cuban revolution, delegates said the experiences gained through the war point to the progress made

in the League's goal of deepening its work in the NUM.

## Employer offensive at home

In a report to the conference on "Communist experiences in the labour movement," League leader Pete Clifford explained that the party campaign against imperialism and war was possible because the working class remains at the center stage of politics in Britain, despite the 15-year-long retreat of the labour movement in the face of the employer and government offensive.

"British imperialism came out of World War II the weakest of the 'victors.' The post-war period of relative capitalist expansion," he said, "slowed in the early 1960s and by the end of the decade Britain's ruling families and the then Labour Government embarked on a drive against the living standards of working people."

The only way for the employers to achieve this goal though, Clifford said, was through a frontal attack on the unions.

Resistance to the early stages of this offensive moved industrial workers and their unions to the center stage of politics for the first time in decades. But in the course of the battles of the early 1970s, many workers found that due to the decades of the union officialdoms' course of collaboration with employers and the government the unions were far from the kind of fighting organizations needed to combat the assault.

"At the center of this corrosion was seeing politics as securing and supporting a Labour Government — not the political mobilization of working people," the League leader said.

This perspective was pushed more and more after the defeat of the Conservative Government at the hands of a strike by mine workers in 1974.

## Bogus 'social contract'

Far from acting to reverse or halt the antilabor drive, the newly elected Labour Government "drew the union bureaucracy into taking responsibility for the offensive through the 'social contract', an agreement to hold back wage rises in the interests of the British 'nation,'" he said. "Under the banner of 'national unity' the capitalist class was able to continue their offensive against the unions."

This assault coincided with the first worldwide capitalist economic recession since the 1930s and the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam.

In 1979, the Thatcher government was elected, and sought to take advantage of the labour movement's retreat under the "social contract" framework to push forward that assault through mass unemployment, antiunion laws, and attacks on welfare provisions and democratic rights.

But, Clifford said, "Britain's ruling families are a long way from achieving their goal of breaking the backs of the unions."

"For example, last year one of the main employers' organizations called for a postponement of wage rises — in effect, a wage freeze," he said. "But to date, only 10 percent of the firms claimed to have implemented this. In spite of their efforts to keep the rise in wages below the inflation rate, they remain marginally above 9 percent. Inflation is below 7 percent."

"For the employing class, the only way out of their sharpening problems is to remove the capacity of workers to fight, break the power of the unions, and increase their competitive advantage relative to their imperialist rivals to the degree possible. This is why the British government closely allied itself with Washington in the assault on Iraq," he said.

Clifford noted the inability of the employer-government assault to break the unions is at the heart of the failure of what became known as the "Thatcher era" after the reign of Conservative Party Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

## Significance of miners' strike

The clearest indication of this was the course and consequences of the 1984-85 miners' strike, "the most important attempt by the unions to reverse the retreat," he said. "Because the labour officialdom refused to



Militant  
**Jonathan Silberman, Communist League leader, said Iraq carnage was 'monstrous.'**

organize adequate support for the deep-going battle, the strike was defeated. But it marked a sharp break in labor's course and helped to point a road out of the retreat.

"The rank and file leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers that were forged through this strike — led by Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield — fought for the strikers to see all political and social questions as something the union should address. This was true with developments in Britain and in the world class struggle as well — from South Africa to Nicaragua to the United States," he said.

Instead of seeing the coal industry, the government, or the country as "ours" — as promoted by the Labour leaders — the coal miners fought their way into seeing the world in terms of "us" and "them" — a class-divided world between the vast majority of working people and a minority of the employers.

The battle that the NUM waged continues to haunt Britain's ruling families. "But the unions are still being weakened and the pressure to retreat hits the National Union of Mineworkers as sharply as it does other unions," he said.

In five years some 100 pits have been closed and 134,000 jobs eliminated. Yet total coal output has dropped only 17 percent. A bonus system has been used to divide miners amongst themselves. Overtime work by underground miners has tripled in the last five years. Bonus and overtime account for a full 46 percent of wage packets.

"As with workers in other industries, miners are pressured to turn away from seeing themselves as part of the fighting leadership of their class in the world, toward seeking to defend 'our' industry and 'our' jobs against 'unfair competition,'" the League leader said.

## Downturn in strikes

In 1990 there were 1.9 million working-days lost through strikes in Britain, compared to 12.9 million on average each year in the 1970s, and 7.2 million average each year in the 1980s.

"Today, when workers consider strike action," Clifford said, "at the back of their minds is what happened to the miners and then the printers at Wapping. These were both long strikes which ended in defeat and, for many, the loss of their jobs."

"In light of such experiences of strikes which failed to shut down production, or lead relatively rapidly to a settlement that strengthens the unions and opens space of the ranks to step forward," he said, "most workers are convinced of arguments of the officials against a fight course. But there is a wide-ranging discussion about how to respond to employer attacks. This year there have been twice as many strike ballots as last year; and when the officialdom gives an opening many have taken it."

In the discussion delegates explained their experiences during the recent railworkers strike at the Manchester Piccadilly railway station. Delegates explained the big challenges the strikers faced and how they fought to win the union and solidarity without overestimating what was possible.

"The strike didn't win its demands but the union was strengthened through the experience," one delegate said. "Five workers sub-

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# Court's ruling aims at further limiting access to abortion

**As with other decisions, working women are target of attack on abortion rights.**

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

Starting in July, medical personnel at family planning clinics receiving federal funding will be required to tell patients who request information on abortion that "the project does not consider abortion an appropriate method of family planning."

Under the case *Rust v. Sullivan*, the U.S. Supreme Court May 23 upheld federal regulations barring employees of federally financed family planning clinics from all discussion of abortion with their patients. The only exception is when a pregnancy places the woman's life in "imminent peril." A number of clinic officials have said they would discontinue accepting federal funding rather than comply with the ruling.

"Poor women will die if *Rust v. Sullivan* is allowed to stand, and with this decision the death knell for the right to abortion and birth control for all women is tolling ominously," said Molly Yard, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), in a public statement released May 23.

Kate Michelman, executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), termed the ruling "an enormous shock, far worse even than we feared, and undeniable evidence that the 'chill wind' blowing from this Supreme Court threatens our most fundamental inalienable rights and liberties."

Some 4,500 clinics annually receive \$150 million in federal funding. Planned Parenthood, which challenged the counseling ban on behalf of a New York clinic, receives \$37 million in federal funding alone.

These clinics serve nearly 4 million women each year who are overwhelmingly low-income. One-third of the clinics' patients are teenagers.

"It's an outrage," said Jeanine Michael. "It's like Big Brother. It's making professionals — physicians and counselors — mouthpieces for the government." Michael is director of The Hub, a Planned Parenthood clinic located in the South Bronx of New York. Most of The Hub's patients are Black and Latino. A fifth of its budget comes from federal funding.

As well as a serious blow to a woman's right to convenient access to abortion, the ruling is another example of the probing efforts by the employing class and their government to curtail all abortion rights.

## Majority defends abortion rights

A majority of the U.S. population favors a woman's right to choose abortion. In fact, a 1988 Gallup poll found that 66 percent of those questioned were opposed to withholding federal financing from clinics that provide abortion counseling. Twenty-seven percent approved.

A wave of columns and editorials began appearing in the big-business press immediately following the court's decision, reflecting disagreements within ruling circles over how far and how fast to push action aimed at limiting abortion access.

A May 24 *New York Times* editorial opposed the court's ruling and called on Congress to pass legislation overriding the federal regulations on clinic counseling.

In response to the Supreme Court decision, though, most proabortion rights groups are simply focusing on electoral and lobbying efforts, especially pressing Congress to adopt measures that would override the court's decision on abortion counseling.

"Activists across the country must take immediate action to demand that Congress remedy this threat to women's lives, before even one woman is sent away from a federally funded clinic with inadequate or misleading medical information and before the Court delivers the final blow to *Roe v. Wade*," said NOW's Yard.

"We call on all activists to mount demonstrations, pickets, and other direct action at congressional offices to demand that Congress pass the Family Planning Act of 1991 and the Freedom of Choice Act," said Patricia Ireland, NOW's executive vice president.

"The prochoice political and electoral

mandate is more compelling than ever. Because the Supreme Court will not protect our fundamental right to reproductive choice, Congress must do so by passing the Freedom of Choice Act and establishing a national standard of protection for our right to choose," explained Michelman.

The Freedom of Choice Act would in most cases prohibit states from restricting abortion. Although submitted in the past, the bill never made it to the floor of Congress. Two measures overturning the ruling and allowing abortion counseling have been introduced in the House and Senate.

Planned Parenthood is also lobbying Congress and has placed full-page newspaper ads asking for the passage of congressional legislation.

The Bush administration had campaigned hard to have the federal regulations banning abortion counseling enforced, and Bush has made it clear he would veto legislation that protects such counseling.

## British Communist League holds conference

Continued from Page 4

scribed to the *Militant* during the strike and eight are subscribers today. As one put it: "Before this strike I was living in a bubble, now I can see outside of it."

Such experiences, Clifford pointed out, show the willingness to fight among working people today. Future struggles will help show the way forward in transforming the unions into fighting instruments of the working class.

Rejecting the framework of supposed common "national" interests of the employers and working people in Britain — pushed through the big-business media, the union officialdom, and the government — is essential in order to chart a working-class course in the world. This was brought into sharper focus by the imperialists' Mideast war.

## War extension of domestic policy

The devastation brought upon the people in Iraq was simply an extension of the domestic policy of the ruling families in Britain, Clifford said. Imperialism is marching toward more such wars and sliding toward a worldwide depression.

Millions of working people in semicolonial countries are already suffering the effects of the economic crisis of the capitalist economy. They, along with millions more inside the imperialist countries, will resist the wars and employer assaults at home in the years ahead.

"This is the working-class line of march — to resist and organize to take power out of the hands of the warmakers," he said.

"As long as there is no truly independent working-class political action, no party of labour based on the unions, we'll face the framework set by the capitalist politicians," Clifford said. "Such a party of labour would be independent of the needs and concerns of the capitalist parties and uncompromisingly champion the needs and interests of the working class and its allies instead."

Clifford said that rather than being an example of such a party, the Labour Party "is a party of capital that operates in the working class. As the crisis of imperialism has sharpened, the Labour Party's tactical differences with the Conservative Party over domestic policy has narrowed."

## Building the League

Reporting on how the Communist League can build on its experiences campaigning against imperialism and war, Communist League leader Marcella Fitzgerald said, "The course of the imperialist war brought politics into the mines, the mills, the factories, and the rail depots with an intensity we have not experienced since we have been constructing industrial union fractions."

"This heightened political situation accelerated what we could do through the fractions," she said, "and put them to the fore in a way that was not previously possible."

"It was apparent why proletarian parties build fractions of communist workers in the industrial unions and don't just have individual comrades in lots of different unions," she said.

"It took us a stage further in constructing a party that functions through the dual struc-

The recent Supreme Court decision follows one nearly two years ago that ruled state governments could set restrictions on abortion rights. This year alone, at least 220 bills restricting abortion have been introduced in some 45 state legislatures.

Fourteen states have been reviewing legislation that would outlaw abortion. The Louisiana state legislature voted June 4 to ban abortion except in cases where pregnancy results from rape or incest. The veto-proof measure would send doctors who perform abortions to prison for up to 10 years, with fines of up to \$100,000.

This year, 23 states have discussed bills to require parental notification or consent. On May 28, the Nebraska legislature passed such a bill, bringing the total number of states to 33 that have such requirements. Bills that would require women to notify or get consent from their husbands before obtaining an abortion were introduced in five state legislatures in 1991.



Militant/Jim Levitt

Protest in Seattle in 1989 to defend abortion rights. Such mobilizations have been key to winning and defending a woman's right to choose.

tures of rounded political branches and national union fractions and which places international collaboration at the center of its work."

Summarizing the conference, Silber-

man reported that during the three-day meeting, two conference guests asked to become provisional members of the Communist League and two had asked to become active supporters.



## PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

JUDY STRANAHAN

**Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes the works of working-class and communist leaders who have made central contributions to the forward march of humanity against exploitation and oppression. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.**

*The Eastern Airlines Strike: Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists and Gains for the Labor Movement*, published by Pathfinder, is spurring interest among unionists and others who want to learn more about the story of this important battle and the lessons in it for forging a fighting labor movement.

Machinists Local Lodge 1759 in Washington, D.C., puts out a newsletter called *Flypaper*. The June issue includes an article by Emily Fitzsimmons and Janice Lynn, two local union members, about the book.

Lynn reports that seven books were sold before this issue of *Flypaper* came out and hopes the appearance of the article will prompt more sales. She said that a former Eastern mechanic who now works at United Airlines has been spreading the word about the book.

In Baltimore, Winston Rubie, president of International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 846, is encouraging members to get a copy. "I have just read a book published by Pathfinder Press covering the history of the Eastern Airlines strike. This book also contains certain inferences to a Political Ideology that may be unacceptable to some of us. However, the facts and opinions on the issues at EAL [Eastern Airlines] are pertinent and informative," Rubie wrote in a memo to all members.

Mike Baumann regularly distributes the *Militant* to airline workers at the Newark airport. He recently took along a copy of *The Eastern Airlines Strike*. A flight attendant hurrying to catch a bus told him, "I've read that book. It's by a guy who worked for Eastern at La Guardia." She was referring to Ernie Mailhot, who was strike staff coordinator for IAM Local Lodge 1018 at New York's La Guardia Airport, and is one of the authors of the book. The flight attendant said she got the

book from a coworker.

Retired IAM Grand Lodge representative Bill Schenck took along 15 copies of the book when he went to the North Carolina State Council of Machinists meeting June 1-2 in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. Fifty-five unionists were present. All 15 copies were snapped up by participants.

Militant supporters in Detroit who work at Northwest Airlines and are members of the IAM have been showing the book to coworkers. So far they have sold 15 copies.

In Britain, National Union of Mine-workers member Jim Spaul reviewed Pathfinder's *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations* for the March issue of the *Yorkshire Miner*.

In the review, entitled "Cuba's lone voice in the United Nations," Spaul presents a brief synopsis of Washington's war drive against Iraq and the allied invasion. "Throughout this time, Cuba has been the sole voice in the United Nations to speak out clearly and consistently against the U.S. war preparations," Spaul writes.

"The full record of Cuba's opposition to a U.S.-led war is contained in this new book from Pathfinder."

"It is essential reading for anyone prepared to weigh the arguments for opposing the war in the Gulf," he explains.

"In a speech to the people of Cuba, included in the book, President Fidel Castro summarizes the consequences of war being launched: 'Failure to attain a political solution would be a defeat for humanity.'"

"Anyone who opposed the war and who wishes to limit those consequences would do well to read the book," Spaul concludes.

Pathfinder recently received a letter from a GI stationed in Saudi Arabia who said he had read Pathfinder's *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* "twice" and wanted to know "if you have any books on black history you can spare." He added, "Thanks for putting out such a good book."



# Ravenswood strike: union faces challenges

## Aluminum company presses union-busting drive against Steelworkers

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

RAVENSWOOD, West Virginia — Members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 5668 here have been locked out of Ravenswood Aluminum Corp. (RAC) since Nov. 1, 1990, after they rejected the company's "last offer" contract that included wage and work rules concessions.

Union members at picket shacks along the highway leading to the plant said they had given concessions to the company in previous years. "But if the company is making money, we should be able to get our share," said one picketer.

"If RAC's successful in doing what they're doing to us, then other bosses who are watching this fight will get the idea they can drive the union from their work site, too," he continued. The others present nodded at his comments.

As testimony to the unionists' determination and unity, the locked-out workers proudly point out that only 8 union members, out of 1,700, have crossed the picket line.

RAC sells aluminum to a number of large

companies including General Motors, Ford, General Dynamics, American National Can, Continental Can, and Budweiser. RAC also shipped aluminum to the Middle East for use by the U.S. military during the war against Iraq.

Nearly half of the union members have more than 30 years seniority at the plant, formerly owned by Kaiser Aluminum Chemical Corp.

### Company, courts, and cops

In their fight against the company's premeditated union-busting drive, USWA members have been up against court injunctions, the cops, and an array of company strike-breaking methods.

The courts granted company requests for injunctions against the union, limiting picketing to four strikers per location. The union now rotates picket shifts at two locations, one-and-a-half to two miles away from the plant.

In the woods near the picket shacks the company's private security force maintains regular surveillance from vans, complete

with video camera equipment.

RAC hired 1,100 scabs, most of them since January, and considers them the permanent workforce. While the initial scab recruiting came from out of state, large numbers are now from West Virginia.

After seven months on the picket line and with the company making headway on resuming full-scale production, the battleground now takes the form of whether or not the company will be able to permanently operate the aluminum plant as a profitable nonunion operation.

The rank's mobilizations have garnered important solidarity from other unions in the region. In the town of Ravenswood, with a population of 4,200 people, very little support could be drummed up by the company for its union-busting efforts.

### Previous concessions

The current dispute began well before the November 1990 contract expiration. Jim Bowen, USWA District 23 director, said in an interview with the *Parkersburg News* that \$4.50 in wage and benefit reductions were granted Kaiser in 1985.

Steelworker officials openly cite their help to Kaiser in winning huge concessions from the workforce as an example of their willingness to work out a deal with RAC.

"We went through the concessionary package," Bowen said. "In 1988 we negotiated again with Kaiser and we got many of the monies paid back to the people from their investment into keeping Kaiser out of bankruptcy, which we did without question."

He also cited the union officials' and company's willingness to extend earlier contracts beyond expiration dates as the kind of collaboration that had previously existed.

As in other unions, this framework of accepting concessions in the face of company cries of poverty left the Steelworkers in a weakened position to confront the drive opened up by management in 1990.

In the months leading up to the contract expiration last fall, the company turned the plant into a fortress, complete with barbed wire fences and boarded up windows. Ads were placed in newspapers for replacement workers.

Union members here say concession demands on wages for 1991 alone totaled \$1.85 an hour. Safety also remained an issue. Five workers had died in the plant over the previous 18 months. One 17-year employee, Jimmy Lee Rider, suffered a fatal heart attack in June 1990 while working forced overtime in the plant's aluminum potroom, where the temperature can go above 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

Although the union officialdom offered to extend the old contract with the company, RAC refused. Management ordered the unionists out of the plant within an hour after the contract expired November 1.

### 'Running it all'

Twenty minutes later, "we were basically running it all," Emmett Boyle, chief executive officer of RAC, claimed in an interview with the *Parkersburg News*.

But he admitted that "running it all" meant the 450 salaried workers and 100 scabs had to work 12-hour shifts, seven days a week. "A holding action," he called it. "You can only do that so long." The company hired more scabs, all of whom were living in the plant 24 hours a day.

Responding to the company's new moves, the ranks strengthened the picket lines and mobilized others to support them. Some local merchants stopped selling products to RAC. Boyle responded with letters to local businessmen, saying their support for the union would be "self-defeating."

By late November, the company declared an impasse in contract negotiations and sent out letters to workers indicating that they should return to work for the remaining jobs.

The local responded by holding a support rally in Charleston, West Virginia, December 30. More than 5,500 people turned out for the event.

The real jump in hiring scabs came in January and February when the company began bringing in 50 to 75 new workers per week.

Sensing that the company's actions posed



Militant/John Charbonnet

**April strike-support rally. Unionists showed they wanted to fight attack by Ravenswood Aluminum Corp.**

a life or death situation for the local, union members responded by beefing up their picket lines. Women and other family members in increasing numbers began showing up at plant entrances.

### Rolling roadblocks

Union members and their families and supporters began carrying out "rolling roadblocks" as a way to try and block access to the plant and disrupt production.

Up to 200 cars, vans, and pickups traveling bumper-to-bumper at slow speeds made five-mile circles along the highway that leads to the plant. Rotating in three shifts, the unionists began the caravans at 5:30 a.m. and ended at 8:00 p.m.

It was here that the courts and the police joined in most decisively to block the unionists' attempts to mobilize their forces against the growing use of scabs.

Cops issued hundreds of traffic citations to participants. On February 8 Circuit Judge Fred Fox handed down a string of rulings against the union. He told the state police they could close the highway if they deemed it necessary and warned that anyone not following his orders would be charged with obstruction of justice and contempt of court.

Fox also demanded that the union's picket rosters be made available to state police upon request. On March 14 Fox banned the rolling roadblocks and threatened more arrests if they continued.

But unionists resisted the judge's rulings, holding another 200-car caravan two days later. The union eventually complied with the court order and the rolling roadblocks were ended.

Solidarity rallies organized by the local drew 1,200 in early March and 5,000 in late April. The broad range of unions at the events show that even greater solidarity could be garnered for the fight.

### Production rises

According to the union, the plant currently fabricates 17 million pounds of aluminum each month. Previous production levels were 55 to 75 million pounds per month.

Company spokespeople have told the press that production levels in the plant are "high." This could not be verified as RAC officials refused to comment despite repeated calls to company offices.

One sign of progress being made by the company is its recent announcement that it would open up the plant's fourth and final potline. Potlines convert aluminum ore, known as alumina, into molten aluminum.

The four potlines at the plant have not been

## International fund for Marxist magazine goes over the top

Continued from front page

farmers to prepare for and act on developments in the world class struggle.

*New International* no. 7 on the "Opening Guns of World War III," for example, provides a Marxist perspective that enables readers to understand the proposed new NATO rapid deployment force, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's plea for an economic bailout by the imperialist powers, the sharp

blows to democratic rights by recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, the spreading rebellions in debt-racked Africa, and the need for communist leadership to organize the toilers on a world scale.

Organizing the fund helped bring forward workers looking for this kind of guide to action. In Montréal, a sewing machine operator who belongs to ACTWU attended a fund-raising rally for *New International*. She went back to her shop and collected \$10 from coworkers to help the publishing project as well as making her own contribution. Today she is a volunteer proofreader for *Nouvelle Internationale* and the French-language quarterly *L'internationaliste*.

Pete Steventon, president of the Bentley Colliery branch of the National Union of Mineworkers in Britain, recently addressed

### NEW INTERNATIONAL FUND

Original Goal: \$75,000  
Total Collected: \$85,481!



a New International Fund rally in Barnsley. He told the audience that last year, visiting South African miners had purchased a set of the first six issues of *New International*.

"Now they're two issues short," he noted, appealing for participants to buy two sets of issues no. 7 and 8, one for themselves, and one for miners in South Africa.

What coal miners in Britain and South Africa see in the magazine is the same as what attracts readers who are industrial workers in the United States. As one 30-year-old Northwest Airlines worker in Atlanta said on being shown *New International* no. 7: "I've got to have this!"

Supporters who work at Northwest combined circulating the magazine with raising funds for its continued publication, collecting \$45 from three coworkers toward the fund.

Half the Atlanta *New International* goal in the current circulation campaign, in fact, has been sold on the job — four members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, four United Steelworkers of America members, three United Auto Workers members, two members of ACTWU, and one member of the International Association of Machinists have purchased the publication there.

Two veteran socialists in Des Moines, Iowa, both long-time backers of the defense effort for jailed unionist Mark Curtis, summed it up when they sent in their check for \$100: "We want to be where the action is."

Dave Hurst in Newark, New Jersey; Katy LeRougetel in Montréal; Rich Palser in London; Maceo Dixon in Atlanta; and Kevin Dwire in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this article.

## Scoreboard

Area	Goal	Paid	% of Total
Houston	1,500	2,141	143%
Twin Cities, Minn.	1,750	2,455	140%
San Francisco*	5,000	6,217	124%
Greensboro, N.C.	750	897	120%
Miami*	1,600	1,862	116%
Washington, D.C.	1,250	1,430	114%
Chicago*	3,100	3,544	114%
Price, Utah	600	685	114%
Detroit	2,100	2,362	112%
Los Angeles	6,000	6,547	109%
St. Louis*	2,500	2,675	107%
Salt Lake City*	2,500	2,670	107%
Boston	1,500	1,592	106%
Des Moines*	1,100	1,154	105%
Omaha, Neb.	750	785	105%
Atlanta	2,300	2,402	104%
Birmingham, Ala.	1,750	1,808	103%
Philadelphia	2,000	2,061	103%
Austin, Minn.*	1,000	1,025	103%
Cleveland	1,600	1,639	102%
Newark*	4,300	4,401	102%
Phoenix	750	764	102%
New York	7,000	7,052	101%
Charleston, W. Va.*	1,900	1,910	101%
Morgantown	1,250	1,255	100%
Seattle	2,250	2,250	100%
Pittsburgh*	2,350	2,350	100%
Baltimore	900	877	97%
Albany, N.Y.	350	300	86%
San Diego	1,000	795	80%
<b>TOTAL U.S.</b>	<b>62,700</b>	<b>67,905</b>	<b>108%</b>
Canada Total	4,250	4,442	104%
Montreal	1,529	1,640	107%
Toronto	1,370	1,379	100%
Vancouver	791	821	104%
Other	560	602	108%
New Zealand Total	3,011	3,040	101%
Auckland	770	790	103%
Christchurch	1,286	1,274	99%
Wellington	955	901	94%
Other		75	
Britain Total	6,500	6,597	101%
London	1,850	2,160	117%
Manchester	1,600	1,600	100%
Sheffield	1,600	1,530	96%
Other	1,450	1,307	90%
France	1,000	1,000	100%
Belgium	747	733	98%
Australia	500	460	92%
Sweden	1,000	900	90%
Iceland	300	100	33%
Other		304	
<b>TOTAL OVERALL</b>	<b>80,008</b>	<b>85,481</b>	<b>107%</b>

\*Raised goal during drive



# 'Militant' subscriptions keep pouring in

BY SETH GALINSKY

Subscriptions keep pouring in as the *Militant* heads into the final days of the international circulation drive to win new readers of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, and *L'Internationaliste*.

New readers were attracted by the *Militant*'s ongoing coverage of the recent Supreme Court decisions restricting democratic rights, battles of workers to defend their union and living standards, the struggle in South Africa against apartheid, and the deepening crisis of the bureaucratic regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

A target effort is set for the last three days of the drive — **June 13-15** — to make a final push in the seven-week effort.

New York supporters of the socialist publications are organizing a "count-down" to get every single subscription possible before the end of the drive. New York teams went to Albany and Syracuse to visit dairy farmers protesting the low prices they receive for milk from processors. Similar reports indicate all areas are organizing to get every subscription possible in the last effort of the drive.

Members of the Young Socialist Alliance in Birmingham, Alabama, are setting up a sales table every Friday night at Five-point South, an outdoor fountain where hundreds of young people gather each week to listen to music or just hang out. The table has gotten "a great response," one supporter says.

Newark, New Jersey, *Militant* readers organized a team to the southern part of the state, including the area around the Fort Dix military base. They sold 7 *Militant* subscriptions and 23 single copies, including some to GIs at base housing before being told to leave by military police.

Newark supporters are also calling sub-



Militant/Marina Sitrin

## Selling the 'Militant' in California

scribers to see if they want to renew. One young Black woman who decided to extend her subscription as a result of the calls asked to be invited to the upcoming convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

One of the biggest advances during the last week was from supporters in ten industrial unions who sold 122 *Militant* subscriptions to coworkers during the eight-day target effort, doubling their previous high. Members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union sold more subscriptions in one week than in all the previous weeks of the drive combined.

## From Our Mail Bag

Dag Tirsén, from Stockholm, Sweden, writes that supporters there organized a re-

gional team to Borlänge, the site of one of the main steel mills in the country.

"A high school was the first stop," Tirsén notes. "Students gathered around a table we set up in the main hallway and fired off question after question about what is going on in the world today. One student bought the pamphlet by Che Guevara, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*."

"The team set up a table outside the Domnarvet steel mill and later in the day visited a refugee camp in Rämshyttan, where 400 people, mostly from Iran and Iraq, live."

## Just Off the Fax

Supporters in St. Louis, which has been near the top of the scoreboard, won 14 new subscribers in the Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky coalfields in just one week. This includes five members of the United Mine Workers of America.

Ellen Haywood writes: "While selling at an Exxon mine entrance in southern Illinois, a *Militant* team was invited to visit the homes of two miners. One of the miners had bought the paper a year ago. When the team visited him, he and his wife decided not only to subscribe, but to buy the *New International* on 'Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism.'"

## Just in Time

The latest issue of the quarterly magazine in French, *L'Internationaliste*, has just come off the press in time for the final three-day effort to sell subscriptions to the socialist publications.

The June-July issue of the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, out for a week now, has been well-received. It carries articles on El Salvador, Korea, police brutality, and the continuing U.S. war drive.

## From our Business Office

Half a dozen volunteers have been making sure that the new subscriptions are entered into the computer and readers get their papers right away.

"It's been tremendous," said volunteer Ethel Lobman. "We got a huge pile of subs in just the last couple of days. A lot of the new readers are students at college campuses and unionists."

The final scoreboard for the sales drive will be published June 25. Any subscriptions received in the *Militant* business office by midnight June 21 will be included.

We encourage *Militant* salespeople to send in letters and faxes recounting some of their best experiences in the drive.

## New Pathfinder catalog opens door to revolutionary ideas

BY JOHN RIDDELL

Pathfinder has announced publication of its 1991-92 catalog, which contains a complete listing and descriptions of all Pathfinder books and pamphlets.

"Working-class fighters, youth, and others around the world with a thirst for radical ideas will find this catalog a timely weapon," commented Rich Stuart of the Pathfinder office in New York.

"The catalog opens the door to the lessons of 150 years of struggle for workers' rights, national liberation, and socialism," Stuart added.

Described in the catalog are no less than 227 titles, written by revolutionary fighters from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels to Malcolm X and Fidel Castro. Included among these are titles published in six languages, including Spanish and French.

Most of Pathfinder's authors are portrayed on the catalog's front cover, which features a picture of the six-story-high mural painted on the side of the Pathfinder Building in New York.

"Take Washington's war against Iraq," Stuart said. "A page in the catalog features books on the struggle against this and other imperialist wars."

"Alongside books on the Mideast war are books on the revolutionary struggle during the Vietnam war and World War II. Also included here are related issues of the magazine *New International*, including issue no. 7, which focuses on the Mideast war. Another featured Pathfinder title describes the struggle against imperialism and war as led by V.I. Lenin during World War I," Stuart continued.

The catalog also includes information about how to join the Pathfinder Readers Club, whose members receive a 15 percent discount on all Pathfinder titles as well as higher discounts on selected titles.

Members of the Readers Club can receive a free copy of the catalog at any Pathfinder bookstore.

Copies of the Pathfinder catalog will be available at Pathfinder bookstores and literature tables around the world. See page 12 for the address of the bookstore nearest you.

The catalog is available for \$0.25 a copy from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.



## Selling the press to unionists

Union	%Sold	Militant (Goal)	Sold	New Int'l (Goal)	Sold
<b>UNITED STATES</b>					
ACTWU	43%	46	20	30	0
IAM	41%	143	58	87	3
ILGWU	50%	20	10	10	1
IUE	60%	42	25	25	10
OCAW	28%	50	14	55	6
UAW	54%	87	47	32	13
UFCW	62%	93	58	35	9
UMWA	152%	33	50	19	5
USWA	63%	90	57	50	20
UTU	66%	65	43	50	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>86%</b>		<b>575</b>		<b>338</b>
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>					
MTFU	50%	6	3	6	0
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>86%</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>5</b>
<b>BRITAIN</b>					
AEU	13%	15	3	11	2
NUM	39%	18	7	15	4
RMT	50%	32	18	22	4
TGWU	50%	8	4	3	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>86%</b>		<b>63</b>		<b>44</b>
<b>CANADA</b>					
ACTWU	0%	7	0	2	2
CAW	44%	9	4	10	2
IAM	29%	14	4	8	2
USWA	6%	16	2	11	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>86%</b>		<b>40</b>		<b>26</b>
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>					
NZEW	50%	4	2	3	0
NZMWU	70%	10	7	5	0
FTWU	20%	10	2	3	0
UFCW	71%	7	5	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>86%</b>		<b>27</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>SWEDEN</b>					
FOOD WORKERS	0%	6	0	0	0
METAL	60%	5	3	3	0
TRANSPORT	0%	1	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>86%</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>3</b>

## Sales Drive Scoreboard

Areas	The Militant			Perspectiva Mundial		New Int'l*		L'inter*		Total	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
<b>UNITED STATES</b>											
Austin, Minn.	50	44	88%	10	12	20	20	2	1	82	77
Price, Utah **	50	39	78%	9	8	25	19	2	0	86	66
Seattle **	89	63	71%	33	19	75	71	3	0	200	153
Salt Lake City	105	69	66%	18	19	50	47	2	0	175	135
Twin Cities, Minn.**	115	75	65%	15	13	60	54	2	0	192	142
Birmingham, Ala.	85	55	65%	8	0	43	34	2	0	138	89
Greensboro, NC	50	31	62%	10	5	34	24	2	0	96	60
St. Louis	100	61	61%	5	0	48	35	2	1	155	97
Baltimore	66	40	61%	10	5	31	22	3	0	110	67
Omaha, Neb.	65	39	60%	10	11	18	19	2	0	95	69
Charleston, WV	60	34	57%	5	1	30	35	2	1	97	71
Des Moines, Iowa	98	54	55%	15	13	35	38	2	0	150	105
Phoenix **	30	16	53%	10	7	30	26	1	0	71	49
Philadelphia	60	30	50%	21	3	56	22	2	0	139	55
Newark, NJ	110	53	48%	40	19	140	82	10	6	300	160
Morgantown, WV	65	31	48%	5	1	40	35	2	0	112	67
Chicago	130	61	47%	30	15	70	73	5	0	235	149
Detroit	80	37	46%	8	6	40	35	2	1	130	79
Atlanta	70	31	44%	10	3	55	60	2	0	137	94
Boston	100	44	44%	25	13	50	48	10	5	185	110
Washington, DC	80	35	44%	13	11	50	52	2	1	145	99
Los Angeles	150	65	43%	80	38	124	118	3	2	357	223
Miami	67	28	42%	25	5	45	37	15	3	152	73
Pittsburgh	75	31	41%	3	4	40	44	2	1	120	80
San Francisco **	150	62	41%	70	29	150	106	5	1	375	198
New York **	200	81	41%	75	44	200	119	15	3	490	247
Houston	65	23	35%	20	5	35	40	2	0	122	68
Cleveland **	85	26	31%	10	5	50	36	2	0	147	67
Albany, N.Y.	15	2	13%	2	0	10	0	0	0	27	2
Ft. Madison, Iowa	5	1	20%	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1
Louisville, KY	3	0	0%	0	0	4	0	0	0	7	0
<b>U.S. TOTAL</b>	<b>2,473</b>	<b>1,261</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>1,351</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4,832</b>	<b>2,952</b>
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>											
MTFU	10	8	80%	3	4	22	13	0	0	35	25
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>BRITAIN</b>											
Manchester	50	39	78%	5	0	45	40	2	0	102	79
Sheffield	50	33	66%	3	1	75	79	2	1	130	114
London	100	55	55%	15	3	90	67	5	0	210	125
Other Britain	2	2	—	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	3
<b>BRITAIN TOTAL</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>CANADA</b>											
Vancouver	65	43	66%	15	15	60	56	5	2	125	116
Montreal **	70	27	39%	15	17	75	67	35	14	195	125
Toronto	80	23	28%	30	10	50	57	5	0	165	90
<b>CANADA TOTAL</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>FRANCE</b>											
ICELAND	5	0	0%	5	0	5	0	15	0	30	0
MEXICO	30	14	47%	1	0	12	11	1	0	44	25
NEW ZEALAND	0	0	0	15	6	0	0	0	0	15	6
Other	6	7	117%	1	0	1	3	0	0	8	10
Auckland **	45	35	78%	3	1	45	37	1	1	94	74
Wellington	53	39	74%	1	1	30	16	1	0	85	56
Christchurch	43	26	60%	1	2	30	23	1	0	75	51
<b>N. Z. TOTAL</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>PUERTO RICO</b>											
SWEDEN **	2	0	0%	10	2	1	0	1	0	14	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,120</b>	<b>1,632</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>2,228</b>	<b>1,858</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>6,261</b>	<b>3,932</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>		<b>2,773</b>	<b>86%</b>		<b>636</b>		<b>1,916</b>		<b>172</b>		<b>5,384</b>
<b>DRIVE GOALS</b>	<b>3,225</b>			<b>725</b>		<b>1,950</b>		<b>200</b>		<b>6,100</b>	

\* Single copies of *New International*; subscriptions to *L'Internationaliste*

\*\* Raised *New International* Goal



# Moscow presses for massive aid to stem regime's deep crisis

Continued from front page

keeping the apparatus and the authority of the central government in Kremlin hands.

The agreement they reached proposes turning control of many industries over to the republics; promises republics a greater degree of sovereignty; and includes a new ban on strikes. Prior to this, miners in Siberia had stayed out on strike for two months, demanding the resignation of Gorbachev's government and ignoring central government declarations that their strike was illegal.

Four of the republics of the Soviet Union (Georgia and the three Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) have already unilaterally declared independence from the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile the economic crisis of the Soviet Union is accelerating. In his June 5 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in Oslo, Gorbachev described his country as a system on the edge of disaster.

## Production plunging

A range of statistics bear this out. Gorbachev earlier acknowledged that Soviet economic output had dropped by 10 percent since January of this year alone. The United Nations European Economic Commission predicted that unemployment in the Soviet Union will rise from the 2 million it reached in 1990 to some 5.3 million this year.

George Kolt, an analyst at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, estimated with alarm that Soviet inflation in 1991 "could easily exceed 100 percent." The Soviet economy "is disintegrating and could be on the way to a disaster of historic proportions," he said.

International Monetary Fund officials estimated that the Soviet Union would need \$20 to \$30 billion in foreign loans and credits to stay afloat in 1991.

In the midst of this crisis, those with connections to the Communist Party are scrambling to take advantage of their positions to line their pockets by getting a piece of the new businesses being established. A former leader of the Komsomol (Young Communist League) told the *Washington Post*: "The times we live in now, it's complete wildness — hardly any rules apply. . . . The opportunities for business are growing, but the opportunities for corruption are even wider."

The economic collapse in the Soviet Union has the same roots as the political and economic crisis that has been taking place throughout Eastern Europe in recent years. Decades of bureaucratic planning and pillaging of these countries' economies by a privileged layer in society have led to economic stagnation. Attempts to introduce "free market" methods into a system based on nationalized industry and planning have not slowed the crisis, but



Striking miners in the Soviet Union

instead have heightened social inequality and differentiation in the working class.

## Workers took to streets

In the context of this crisis workers came into the streets along with other forces to overthrow hated Stalinist-led regimes throughout Eastern Europe.

This process has continued unabated. The latest case is Albania, where the Stalinist party that ruled with a tight grip for 47 years has collapsed following a general strike and massive demonstrations.

Washington and its allies, as much as Gorbachev and the bureaucratic caste he represents, fear the "destabilizing" consequences of such struggles and the inability of the regime to freeze Soviet working people out of politics through repressive measures and police-state tactics. Recognizing their common interests, Gorbachev is appealing to the imperialists for large-scale aid to deflect the inevitable explosive struggles.

On May 29 Gorbachev's economic advisers, including Yevgeny Primakov and Grigory Yavlinsky, presented U.S. President George Bush with a new plan for introducing market reforms, based on a scheme now agreed to by government ministers from all the Soviet republics, except Estonia and Georgia.

Unlike the earlier "Shatalin plan" — which proposed creating a market economy within "500 days" — this scheme has a longer time frame and places substantial control of the process (including the right to issue export licenses — now a function of the central government) in the hands of the republics.

Parallel with the presentation of this plan, Gorbachev and his advisers have also sought massive financial assistance, which they see as necessary to guarantee its successful implementation. Primakov sought \$250 billion in loans from the International Monetary Fund, while Yavlinsky worked with a team of Harvard University economists to put together a reform scheme — which has become known as the "Grand Bargain" — based on receiving aid on a similar scale.

## Washington seeks end to aid to Cuba

The U.S. rulers have been furiously debating the merits of providing such assistance. Some argue that it should be rejected outright, allowing Gorbachev to be cast aside as other rulers in Eastern Europe have been. Others see the Soviet rulers' cry for help as a chance to extort further concessions: most importantly, further reductions in the Soviet armed forces and the cutting of all assistance to Cuba. Secretary of State James Baker stated this position in discussions with Soviet officials.

These divergences parallel those among the rulers of the other imperialist powers. When Gorbachev sought such assistance during his April visit to Japan, he came away empty-handed. Germany's rulers, on the other hand, have been more open to offering Gorbachev financial help.

Ruling circles in imperialist countries have taken stock of the disaster facing German imperialism. Despite early claims that the unification of Germany would result in an economic miracle and boost German imperialism, Bonn has poured vast sums into the east with no end in sight. Production there fell in 1990 by almost 30 percent from 1989 levels.

In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Gorbachev pleaded for financial aid

to help avert a "social and political explosion" in the Soviet Union. Such aid would enable Moscow to make even more "constructive and significant" contributions to "the emerging new order," he said.

Following Gorbachev's appeal and the presentation of his latest "reform" plan, Bush reversed his earlier opposition to inviting Gorbachev to the upcoming London meeting of the seven leading capitalist countries, where the proposals will be discussed further.

Despite their doubts that efforts to bail out Gorbachev's crisis-ridden regime will work, many of imperialism's leaders see no alternative but to pour out massive amounts of money to help prop him up, because they fear even worse consequences from masses of Soviet working people in motion.

# U.S. pressures Cuba, demands to inspect its nuclear plant

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Washington is stepping up its pressure against the Cuban revolution by making an issue of Cuba's construction of a nuclear power plant and with demands on Moscow to cut aid to the island country.

U.S. Sen. Connie Mack of Florida is Washington's point man in raising the specter of Cuba becoming a nuclear threat to the United States.

"The Cuban nuclear plant may pose the biggest single threat to the lives of Americans since the [1962] Cuba missile crisis," Mack said in a statement to the press May 29. He claimed the facility did not meet U.S. safety standards and would not be licensed to operate if it was located in the United States.

The State Department followed up Mack's assertion by demanding that Cuba open its facility to international inspection to allay its "safety concerns."

The big-business press was quick to seize the issue to stir anti-Cuba propaganda and some raised the prospect of a Chernobyl disaster just a few miles from Florida's coast.

"Fidel Castro's Cuba, which already flouts world opinion as a sponsor of state terrorism, is in the process of becoming a renegade nuclear nation as well," said an article in the June 3 *Christian Science Monitor*.

Paul Leventhal, president of a Washington-based institute on nuclear power, claimed, "It would be Iraq all over again," in the June 4 *Wall Street Journal*. He was referring to U.S. government claims that Iraq would use its nuclear power facilities to build atomic weapons, a charge that was used to help justify Washington's war and bombing assault on that country.

To bolster its campaign against Cuba, the big-business media trotted out a Cuban who defected to the United States three months ago. Jorge Oro, the former head of Cuba's office of geological survey, according to the *Journal*, claimed that only a tiny handful of managers at the Cuban nuclear facility are qualified to work there.

"All these allegations are politically motivated with the goal of presenting Cuba as a menace to the U.S.," Ariel Ricardo, the spokesperson at Cuba's Interests Section in Washington, D.C., told the *Journal*. "It's the U.S. which has organized invasions, assassination attempts, and economic blockades against us."

Cuba, which currently has no functioning

nuclear power plants, is constructing two reactors at a site 250 miles south of Key West, Florida. The *Monitor* reported that the facility is scheduled to go on line in 1993. With declining shipments of crucial Soviet oil, Cuba is being forced to consider alternative fuel and energy sources.

Not all U.S. officials agree that Cuba's reactors are a threat. Harold Denton, an official of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission who managed the Three Mile Island nuclear accident crisis, said the Soviet-designed reactors being built in Cuba are much safer than the reactor that caused the accident at Chernobyl.

While saying the Cuban reactors do not meet U.S. requirements on some standards, Denton pointed out they exceed other safety requirements. Cuba is reportedly also seeking to obtain high-technology instrumentation and control systems from Germany or France.

Other U.S. officials have downplayed Cuba's capacity to produce an atomic bomb as a result of having the reactors. One official, who asked the *Journal* not to identify him, said the issue was nothing to get excited about.

On June 3 *El Diario/LaPrensa* in New York reported that the Cuban government was discussing the possibility of obtaining help from the International Atomic Energy Agency to assure the optimal functioning of its facility when it is completed.

On May 31, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker laid before a high-level Soviet delegation the conditions, including demands for political concessions, that need to be met for Washington to extend economic aid to Moscow. High on Baker's list was cutting back Soviet aid to Cuba.

The Soviet delegation also met with U.S. President George Bush. According to a *New York Times* report, Yevgeny Primakov, who headed the delegation, discussed with Bush a "Grand Bargain," which includes halting aid to Cuba in return for a long-term economic commitment by the United States to the Soviet Union. Primakov is a chief adviser to Gorbachev.

The meetings in Washington came in the context of Gorbachev's stepped-up campaign to convince Washington and other imperialist powers to provide massive economic aid in an attempt to shore up the increasingly unstable and crisis-ridden bureaucratic regime.

**NEW**

**New International**



**CHE GUEVARA  
CUBA  
AND THE  
ROAD TO  
SOCIALISM**

Articles by Che Guevara,  
Carlos Rafael Rodriguez,  
Carlos Tablada,  
Jack Barnes, Steve Clark,  
Mary-Alice Waters

**New International no. 8**

**CHE GUEVARA,  
CUBA, AND THE  
ROAD TO  
SOCIALISM**

Articles by Ernesto Che  
Guevara, Carlos Rafael  
Rodriguez, Carlos Tablada,  
Mary-Alice Waters, Steve Clark,  
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Order from Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12 or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please add \$3 postage and handling.



# U.S., Iraqi forces repress Kurdish protests

**In March, Washington made clear it favored Hussein's victory over uprisings.**

BY SETH GALINSKY

Since the beginning of June, U.S. and allied soldiers and Iraqi forces in five Iraqi cities have repressed demonstrations by Kurds demanding autonomy.

U.S. soldiers in Zakho clashed with Kurds protesting the presence of Iraqi police. Zakho is in an area in the U.S.-controlled enclave in northern Iraq near the Turkish border. Kurds have demonstrated there three times in as many weeks.

The U.S. troops fired shots over the heads of demonstrators who reportedly overran the local Iraqi police headquarters and destroyed several unmarked police cars. U.S. and Italian military police, armed with M-16 rifles and baseball bats, also dispersed youthful demonstrators who blocked a highway in the town.

In Sulaimaniya the Iraqi army deployed tanks against Kurds and shooting was reported in Erbil and Diyabil. In Dohuk, Iraqi police and other government representatives fled the town after three demonstrators were shot dead by Iraqi forces stationed inside the headquarters of the Baath Party. Although U.S. troops are still stationed in Dohuk, Kurdish guerrillas are now the principal armed force in that city.

U.S. troops make up about half of the allied military presence in northern Iraq. Others include British, French, and Dutch forces.

## 'Protecting Iraqi police from Kurds'

"Originally our job was to protect the Kurds from these evil Iraqis," said U.S. soldier Kimberly Vasquez with dawning realization of the role of U.S. forces in the area. "Now the thing is backwards. We are protecting the Iraqi police from the Kurds."

The U.S. actions as defender of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's police are a continuation of the U.S. policy during rebellions against the Baghdad regime in March. Washington made it clear at the time that it favored a victory for Hussein over the Kurdish and Shiite uprisings.

Washington and its allies moved into northern Iraq because they feared the wider destabilizing consequences of a massive exodus of Kurdish refugees, particularly into Turkey. Their strategy has been to lure the Kurds back by providing the semblance of military protection from Hussein's thuggery, while preparing to abandon them in hope that their struggle will subside.

"We do not want Iraqi police here in Zakho," said one protestor, "This is Kurdistan." One large banner carried in a march said, "No autonomy without international guarantees."

## 'Thief, dictator, and bloodsucker'

Mustafa, a Kurdish engineer now living in Dohuk, told the *New York Times*, "For many years the world did not want to see Saddam's dirty face."

"Only now does the world know that he is a thief and a dictator and a blood sucker," he added.

Before, the Kurds had no friends, the Kurdish engineer said. "But now in Europe, even children know about us."

Some of the U.S. and allied troops in northern Iraq, which at the peak of the campaign to force the Kurds back to their homes numbered 21,500, are now beginning to withdraw.

During a tour of the U.S.-occupied enclave in Iraq May 30, Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that U.S. troops were being withdrawn "more rapidly than we had expected or could have anticipated a few weeks ago." Many Kurds are concerned that once U.S. troops leave, the Iraqi government will begin massive repression. Washington will not offer Kurds "concrete guarantees" of security, the general added during his visit, which included the area around Dohuk.

More than two million Kurds, Assyrian Christians, and Turkomans fled Iraq in March and April after massive uprisings by Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south were crushed by the Hussein regime. Living under horrendous conditions, the

refugees were scattered in the mountainous border regions with Turkey and Iran.

Allied military commanders estimate that as many as 40,000 Kurds, mostly women and children, died during the exodus, the *New York Times* reported June 2.

These estimates may apply only to some 450,000 refugees who made it to camps in Turkey and along the Turkish border, where international relief was delivered. Another 400,000 camped out on the mountain sides in the area and did not receive aid. An additional 1,500,000 refugees were in Iran or near the Iranian border.

Most of the Kurds who headed toward Turkey have now returned to Iraq. U.S. officials stated that only 50,000 Kurds remain in Zakho or along the Turkey-Iraq border. The last refugee camp in Turkey was closed June 1. However, hundreds of thousands of Kurds are still camped along the Iraq-Iran border.

The leaders of the main Kurdish guerrilla organizations have continued to press their demands for an autonomous region in north-

ern Iraq in negotiations with Hussein.

According to Massoud Barzani, who is head of the Kurdish Democratic Party and cochairman of the seven-member Iraq Kurdistan Front, an "agreement in principle" has been reached on a general amnesty for all Kurdish guerrillas, the return of Kurds to the more than 5,000 towns and villages that were destroyed by the Hussein regime in the 1970s and 1980s, the rescinding of laws that restrict the rights of Kurds, and the incorporation of Kurdish guerrillas and representatives into the army and government in Kurdistan.

## Negotiating over Kirkuk

The biggest difference in the negotiations has been over the control of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. The Hussein government forcibly removed many Kurds from Kirkuk as part of a campaign to Arabize the area over the last two decades. Arab families from southern Iraq were brought in to work in the oil refineries.

Kurdish leaders have been demanding

that Kirkuk be part of an autonomous Kurdistan and that at least a portion of the oil profits be reserved for development there. The Iraqi government refuses to agree to this.

Attempting to break out of its international isolation, the Iraqi government has pressed for an end to United Nations Security Council economic sanctions, which are compounding the devastation caused by the U.S. and allied bombing during the war.

Iraq asked government ministers at the June 4 OPEC meeting to pass a resolution requesting that the UN lift restrictions on Iraq's sale of oil so that the war-devastated country can get hard currency for importing food, medicine, and other basic necessities.

The OPEC leaders, pleased with the elimination of a major competitor, rejected the Iraqi request. OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and the United Arab Emirates have increased their sale of oil since the start of the Gulf War, greatly increasing their profits.

# Israeli settlements policy blocks Washington's Mideast 'peace' plan

Continued from front page

try and put together the conference.

In a related development, Washington voted in the United Nations Security Council May 24 to condemn Israel's continuing deportation of Palestinians from the occupied territories. This is the third time in six months that Washington has joined in Security Council condemnations of these expulsions.

Bush has also made appeals in letters to the Middle East governments he wants to see attend the conference. To satisfy the demand of the Syrian government that the United Nations be involved in the conference, Bush advanced the idea that a UN observer be allowed to attend it. At the same time, to satisfy the Israeli government's insistence that the UN have no role in any such conference, Bush proposed that this same observer have no speaking privileges.

In his letter to Syria, Bush held out the prospect of regaining the Golan Heights — territory stolen by Israel from Syria in the 1967 war. To Jordan's King Hussein, he suggested that "settling" the Palestinian problem would heighten the chances for his regime's stability.

## Divisions among Israeli rulers

On a visit to Paris June 5, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said that he thought a Mideast conference could quite likely take place in the next few weeks. Levy also agreed to the European Community (EC), Israel's largest market for exports, having a role in the conference. However, other Israeli leaders including Housing Minister Ariel Sharon have opposed any such role by the EC.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir stressed that the main concession made by Israel is that it "is willing to discuss limited autonomy for West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians one day," the *New York Times* reported.

In the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza live 1.7 million Palestinians. Just over 1 million of them live in the West Bank, where the Israeli government has begun a project to build 12,500 homes for some 50,000 Jewish settlers over the next two years. This will expand the current West Bank settler population by 50 percent.

Hand-in-hand with the building of settler homes in the West Bank has been the continuing outright seizure by Israel of valuable land, including orchards and farms, from Palestinians. The Israeli government used the 40-day curfew period imposed on Palestinians, after January 15 during the war against Iraq, to survey and mark out the tracts of land to be taken.

A total of 7,500 acres has been seized in this way since the war, on the pretext that the Arab families farming the area do not have legally registered ownership titles.

Israel is also proceeding with plans to expand its settlements in the Golan Heights, where 100,000 Arabs once lived when the area was within Syrian borders. With the exception of 10,000 Druze villagers, all of the Arab residents fled during



Israeli soldiers harassing Palestinians. Refusal of Tel Aviv to stop new settlements in West Bank and Golan Heights is cited by Washington as obstacle in imposing its hoped-for "peace" plan.

the 1967 war. There are now some 10,000 Israeli settlers living there. The Israeli settlements are heavily subsidized to ensure their survival.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has said that 1,200 housing units are now being built in the Golan, and a similar number are planned for the following year, with the aim of doubling the population of Jewish settlers there. Many of those being moved there are new arrivals from the Soviet Union.

## Pentagon stockpiles matériel in Israel

Despite its talk of aiming to bring "peace" to the Middle East, Washington belies its own statements with its continuing military support for Israel.

A U.S. donation of 10 F-15 fighter planes and funding for development of a new Israeli missile has just been announced.

F-15 planes were among those used by Israel in stepped-up attacks against Lebanon in recent days. One such attack near the port of Sidon on June 4 killed 7 people and wounded 36, including 12 schoolchildren. Israeli radio boasted that these were the most extensive attacks in nine years.

Washington has also begun stockpiling ammunition and military spare parts in special bunkers in Israel for its own use in any conflict which might break out in the region. Israel will be able to use the stockpiled material if authorized by Washington.

According to the *New York Times*, plans for this stockpiling were made "years ago," but the matériel was not brought in because of fears that neighboring Arab countries would see it as provocative.

Soon after the suspension of the massive bombing of Iraq, Washington announced it wanted the rulers of Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states to agree to similar storage of U.S. war matériel in their countries. But three months later and after numerous visits by high-ranking U.S. officials, Washington has still not won agreement from the Saudi government.

As the *New York Times* explained: "The equipment depots might also reduce the time it takes to prepare for any conflict. It took five months of intensive buildup by air and sea before the Pentagon believed it had enough matériel in the region to fight the war [against Iraq]."



# How Navajo miners defeated antiunion law

ELLIE BETH BRADY  
AND STEVE MARSHALL

KAYENTA, Arizona — Native American coal miners struck a blow for unionism last fall with a successful campaign to overturn the Navajo Nation's "right-to-work" law.

In October, at its capital in Window Rock, the Navajo Tribal Council voted 34-33 to repeal the antilabor statute. The victory marked the first time in 25 years that an existing right-to-work law has been revoked in the United States. Twenty-one states have similar legislation which bars unions from organizing "closed shops" — contractual language that requires all employees in the bargaining unit to belong to the union.

The law, which forbade unions from enforcing closed-shop contract agreements, had been on the Navajo books for three decades. It was imposed in 1958 by U.S. government officials — purportedly to ensure jobs for Navajos. The tribal Council retained the right-to-work clause when it enacted a labor code in 1984. The law, called the Navajo Preference in Employment Act, also includes affirmative action provisions. These are included in union contracts negotiated by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

Some 1,000 workers at three mines and a pipeline on the Navajo and Hopi reservations are organized by the UMWA. Peabody Coal, the largest U.S. coal company, operates the Kayenta and Black Mesa mines near here; the Black Mesa Pipeline Co. slurries coal to a power plant; and Pittsburgh & Midway, a Chevron Oil subsidiary, operates the McKinley mine in New Mexico on the eastern edge of the reservation.

Each year the miners produce nearly 18 million tons of coal.

Eugene Badonie, president of UMWA Local 1924, runs a shovel at the Kayenta Mine.

## Origins of campaign

"The idea surfaced way back, 15 years ago," Badonie said of a campaign against the antilabor stipulation. "Since the Navajo Nation was built on concepts of democracy, self-government, and sovereignty, the UMWA members realized that if we pushed we could repeal this law."

"The law was used against us then — it was turning our own people against us, getting them to drop out of the union," he said. "It became a big matter after the 1987 strikes."

Peabody and P&M forced the UMWA to strike the three mines in 1987. "The companies really wanted to clamp down on organized labor," Badonie recalled. "They took out full-page ads, accusing us of compulsory unionism and trying to use the high unemployment to our advantage."

The Navajo Tribal Council initially backed the companies; Navajo police joined state troopers to escort strikebreakers into McKinley. But UMWA-led protests at Window Rock forced the council to pull the cops back, and the union won a contract shortly thereafter.

The McKinley miners reinforced the strikers at Kayenta and Black Mesa, without interference from the Tribal Council. They took what Badonie calls the "necessary action" to stop Peabody's coal production and forced it to sign a contract.

The joint actions strengthened the union, but also left a number of nonunion miners at each mine. Since then the union has been working to convince these workers that their



Militant/Steve Marshall

Navajo cowherders near Kayenta mine on Black Mesa, where Peabody Coal mines one of world's richest coal reserves. Native American miners successfully campaigned to overturn Navajo Nation's "right to work" law.

interests lie with the UMWA.

"It's difficult sometimes, especially out here," explained Badonie. "There's the language barrier (some Navajo miners speak only Dine). We try to explain what the union is and how it helps them." Most have rejoined. Badonie estimates 99 percent of the Kayenta miners are union members, with similar figures for Black Mesa. McKinley has a higher number of nonunion miners.

The union also began organizing against the right-to-work law. "The first page of our contract with Peabody calls for a closed shop," explained Badonie. "But the contract also says that the laws of the Navajo Nation take precedence."

Beginning about two years ago, he continued, the "rank-and-file members started going out. They went to government officials, to their houses, to the chapter meetings (chapters are units of local government). They told them about the union, what it does for the Navajo people."

"We used the example of the stock-reduction program and the tremendous impact it had on Navajo people," he said, referring to the U.S. government decision in the 1930s that Navajo lands were "overgrazed." At that time range agents slaughtered half the sheep herds, devastating the Navajo economy.

## Wage labor or unemployment

"Now the pattern of subsistence is different," continued Badonie. "What we've got

now is jobs — wage labor — or unemployment. This is no time to have legislation that forbids unions and self-determination."

During this same period a governmental crisis in Window Rock opened up some space for the union.

Tribal Chairman Peter McDonald's administration collapsed in scandal in 1989, and other aspiring politicians showed a sudden interest in the labor movement. Leonard Haskie, the interim tribal chairman and a candidate for the new post of tribal president, appointed a former UMWA official as his labor liaison and called public hearings on the Navajo labor code.

"We went to all the hearings," said Badonie, "three, four, twenty of us. But the officials had their minds made up; they never listened to us."

"They held one meeting in Phoenix — it was posted as a public hearing, but they didn't allow our members in. It was just for the 'big five.'" These are the biggest companies on the reservation and include Peabody, P&M, and Mobil Oil. At the meeting some council members offered to support right-to-work in return for financing for their projects.

Badonie said that "the Human Services Committee voted to keep the law. They 'encouraged' us, in a giggling manner, to lobby the tribal council itself. It was really a dare."

"That was our one chance left. We had a meeting of leaders from the locals and de-

cided to put all our effort into it. We visited the council at their homes. We spent time in Window Rock, and after the shift at McKinley 20, 30, or 40 union members would come to the council chambers every day," the mine worker said.

The miners took their campaign to the community with leaflets and bumper stickers. They petitioned in both English and Dine at the Navajo Nation fair, held informational pickets at government offices, and reached out to newly organized hospital employees for support.

The Tribal Council's vote to repeal the right-to-work law puts the challenge of union organizing on a new footing.

Badonie said the UMWA members will continue to discuss the union with their co-workers who haven't joined; he and another officer visited each nonmember at Kayenta one Saturday several weeks ago. Badonie also said that union miners commonly refer to the nonmembers as "scabs."

The locals are also discussing plans with international officials for a grievance against the companies to enforce the closed-shop contracts.

Badonie explained that the campaign to repeal right-to-work strengthened the UMWA on the reservation. "More members are involved in the union, they're more aware of it." The union is forming committees to discuss with the membership the perspectives for a new contract in 1993.

# A century of plunder of Navajo and Hopi

BY STEVE MARSHALL

KAYENTA, Arizona — Some of the world's richest bituminous coal reserves lie under a mesa near here, owned — technically — by the Navajo and Hopi tribes.

Indian reservations were not planned that way a century ago. In fact, it was in order to drive the Native Americans off usable land that army officers waged a war of extermination against them.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), a military agency, concentrated the survivors in the deserts, swamps, and mountains "reserved" for them by the capitalist government in Washington.

The reservations appeared to be the most wretched tracts of land on the continent. And for a long time, they were.

But underneath the Navajo and Hopi territory lay the Grants Mineral Belt: immense reserves of oil, gas, uranium, and coal. The Navajo and Hopi peoples, after decades of racist oppression and suffering, found themselves atop vast mineral wealth whose development could benefit their impoverished communities.

It appeared to some that a measure of justice might arrive, along with a trace of irony, on the Indian reservations.

Oil was discovered on Navajo lands in 1922.

Standard Oil set out to steal it, and assigned the BIA to organize the job. The agency found

five agreeable Navajos and appointed them a "Business Council." This body became the Tribal Council — the governing body of the Navajo tribe. As late as 1970 the council was run directly by a BIA official.

The BIA created a "Hopi Tribal Council" in 1934.

The looting of the reservation proceeded briskly. Generous leases to energy companies were executed by the BIA and routinely approved by the Tribal Councils.

Black Mesa, high above the Arizona desert, covers one of the world's biggest coalfields. It is also one of the most profitable to mine, since the coal is low in sulfur and close to the surface.

Peabody Coal leases 65,000 acres on the mesa from the Navajo and Hopi tribal councils for two mines, Black Mesa and Kayenta. The Navajo council also leases land in New Mexico to Pittsburgh and Midway for its McKinley mine. The leases were drawn up by the BIA.

Peabody's operations brutalize the indigenous peoples who live and farm on Black Mesa.

To rid the mesa of some 11,000 Navajos, coal company lawyers engineered the notorious "land dispute" at Big Mountain. "We're not in the relocation business," explained a Peabody official. "It is just an adjunct to our mining operations." It is Peabody's draglines and haul roads — not "tribal rivalries" —

that have evicted thousands of Navajos and Hopis from their homes.

The Department of Energy designated Black Mesa a "national sacrifice area" to help the coal companies resist environmental measures. The mines and the power plants they fuel disrupt the delicate soil balance on which Navajo and Hopi agriculture rely. They lower the water table for miles around — so the Native Americans now face a critical water shortage.

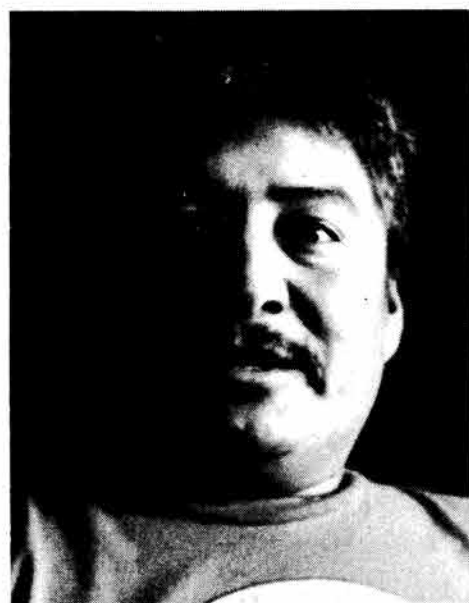
The nearby Four Corners power plant — more accurately, its toxic smoke — is the only industrial plant visible from space.

Still, Peabody claims that its "cooperation" with the Navajos and Hopis benefits the Native Americans — particularly the royalties it pays the tribes. The terms of a BIA-designed lease in 1966 were typical — Peabody paid royalties to the Navajos of 35 cents a ton, less than a quarter of the going rate. "It's just crumbs from the cracker," said one Kayenta coal miner.

And so this incredibly rich land is stalked by poverty.

Unemployment exceeds 45 percent; half the people live below the official poverty line. In 1989 two-thirds of Navajo households had no electricity and half had no flush toilets. Infant mortality, disease, illiteracy, alcoholism, and suicide far exceed the national averages.

These are the dividends that capitalism has brought the Navajo and Hopi peoples, under whose land the mineral wealth lies.



Militant/Steve Marshall

Eugene Badonie, president of United Mine Workers of America Local 1924.



# Chernobyl disaster indicts nuclear power

## Book shows mismanagement, deceit, and cynicism of Soviet regime

BY JON HILLSON

*The Truth About Chernobyl* by Grigori Medvedev. 274 pp. New York: Basic Books, 1991. \$22.95 hardcover.

On a bright spring day in 1986 fishermen on the Pripyat River awaited bites on their lines, 16 young couples in the nearby town of the same name got married, and children played outdoors during school recess.

None of them knew they were absorbing huge doses of radioactivity that had poured out of the Lenin Nuclear Power Plant earlier that morning, as the nuclear fuel at the reactor core exploded.

A lethal plume of 50 tons of the evaporated fuel — radioactive particles — arose from the wreckage. This was ten times the radioactivity released in the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima — contaminating the air, land, plants, and animals from the Ukraine north to Lapland and south to Italy.

Another 70 tons of fuel and 700 tons of

Up the rungs of authority, the initial cover-up continued, until the unavoidable is finally announced, nearly two days later, by Soviet prime minister Mikhail Gorbachev, who also understated the severity of the crisis.

### Ignorance of radiation effects

The mental inertia, sloth, delays and lies Medvedev documents only underscore the official ignorance of the dangers of nuclear power and how to treat those affected by radiation.

For example, the bedsheets for hospitalized victims of the reactor fire and nuclear burns, Medvedev notes, were not changed for new patients, who were thus further dosed with radiation.

Potassium iodide, which acts to protect the thyroid from radioactivity, was not initially given to children after the explosion, nor was it available in the plant itself.

Windows in the headquarters for research and clean-up teams were unprotected, and puffs of radioactivity, carried by breezes, passed into them.

Nerve-wracked members of the government investigating team Medvedev headed, begged him to tell them, exactly, what radiation is and how they could get back to Moscow without being exposed.

A Soviet general rushed about the disaster area trying to drum up help to load sand bags which were dropped into the radioactive cavern of the reactor to plug the spew of radiation.

The general, Medvedev writes, "came up to me with a list of applications for bonuses for the people who were going to be filling the sandbags... the whole idea seemed utterly ridiculous, but I approved it anyway." Bonuses are routinely paid to Soviet workers who toil in contaminated

## IN REVIEW

radioactive graphite blown out of the reactor further poisoned the area around the plant.

The meltdown occurred at Chernobyl on April 26, 1986.

Two weeks later, Grigori Medvedev, a Soviet nuclear engineer who worked at the reactor when it was under construction, and who had by chance visited it a month before the catastrophe, returned as the head of a government inspection team. When the team arrived he was driven through the city of Pripyat on a search for his old apartment. Once with a population of 50,000, and with many high-rise dwellings built to house the workers of the Chernobyl plant along with their families — it was now a ghost town, evacuated two days after the explosion.

Foliage was turning brown from nuclear contamination, the same color as the skin of radiated victims of nearly instant "nuclear tans."

Shirtless conscript troops, part of the clean-up operation which involved 600,000 people, basked in the sun, exposing their unprotected skin to radiation. Medvedev watched them pick up chunks of radioactive graphite, that had been rocketed out of the reactor core, with their bare hands.

Out of interviews and investigation, and equipped with his own scientific and technical knowledge, he has produced a more than terrifying account of the "nuclear accident" at Chernobyl.

### Bureaucratic mismanagement

*The Truth About Chernobyl* is an indictment of decades of bureaucratic dictatorship, mismanagement, deceit, and cynicism which governed all aspects of life, education, and scientific inquiry in the Soviet Union.

Medvedev chronicles the evolution of nuclear power, boon to and bounty for "development." He traces the initial hesitations about the particularly dangerous design for and location of the Chernobyl reactor, questions that were snuffed and disregarded by Communist Party, government, and scientific bigwigs.

He compares the near meltdown at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, in 1979, to the 1986 Chernobyl explosion — shedding new light on how close the Three Mile Island disaster came to being a nightmare of Chernobyl proportions.

He brings the reader inside reactor number four at Chernobyl for the fateful evening of April 25 and the subsequent predawn hours leading up to the explosion, as operators are driven by bosses to comply with orders for a reactor check, with safety systems down.

His insights, descriptions, sketches of key figures, along with the first-person impressions of plant workers, craft the second-by-second unfolding horror. From disbelief to denial to mounting frenzy, the unthinkable atomic convulsion begins before their frozen eyes.

Local bureaucrats immediately sought to perpetuate the fiction that the nuclear reactor core was "intact." Their lies subjected tens of thousands to needless exposure to radiation.

They sent workers to directly investigate the scope of damage, and thereby, to their deaths.



**Fifty tons of radioactive fuel spread from Chernobyl, contaminating farmland north to Lapland and south to Italy. Another 70 tons further poisoned the area near the nuclear plant.**

areas at nuclear power stations.

A couple of weeks later, "ordinary citizens" began to inquire about clean-up work, Medvedev notes, but "nobody seemed upset by the thought of radiation. They were under the impression that people working in the disaster zone were paid five times the normal wage."

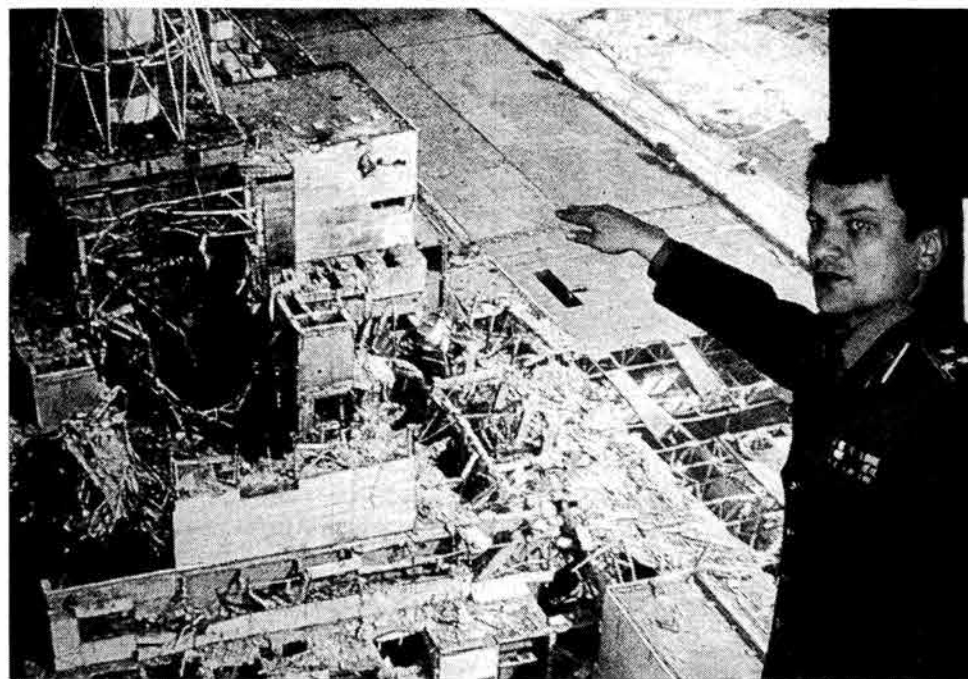
At a news conference 10 days after the blast, the chairman of the State Committee on the Use of Nuclear Power, A. M. Petrov, explained, in reference to Chernobyl: "Science requires victims."

Among such victims, described passionately by Medvedev, were local firefighters, who courageously battled to limit the reactor-building blaze, stopping the radiation-laced conflagration from spreading to three functioning reactors.

Medvedev sees hope in the capacity for the truth about Chernobyl to be told (his book was originally published in Russian in the USSR in 1989). He attributes this to *glasnost*, the policies of "openness" initiated by Gorbachev to win support for austerity and market measures among working people.

### 'Need to know whole truth'

But he is conscious that the Soviet nuclear power program continues. "The nuclear bureaucrats are not asleep," he writes, "Though somewhat bruised by the Chernobyl explosion, they are once again rearing their heads, praising the completely 'safe' power of the peaceful atom, while not forgetting to cover up the truth. All of us need the truth, the



An aerial view of the Chernobyl reactor

whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

What is known about the continuing horror of Chernobyl has come in spite of Moscow and Gorbachev and his underlings, not because of them.

On July 18, 1986, Anatoly Mayorets, the head of the USSR's Ministry of Energy and Electrification forbade discussion about the "truth about Chernobyl" to the media and the public by ministry functionaries. This command remains fully enforced today.

A 1987 high-level government order classifies as secret any information on radiation contamination and a 1988 decree prohibits medical diagnosis from connecting illnesses to radiation exposure. This bar effectively keeps local doctors, who are challenged daily with intensifying healthcare pressures, completely in the dark.

On April 30 of this year the United Nations announced that 120,000 additional Soviet citizens, most from the Byelorussian border areas contaminated by the fallout from Chernobyl will be evacuated, bringing the total number of nuclear refugees to 325,000.

Reaction to the Chernobyl meltdown spurred independence protests in the nearby Ukraine, which last year declared its sovereignty from Moscow. Out of such protests, including demonstrations at nuclear power plants, facts have emerged despite Moscow's clampdown.

### Thousands of victims

The Chernobyl Union, which groups together veterans of the massive cleanup operation, estimates 7,000 such workers have died, while 50,000 suffer from radiation sickness. (Officially, the USSR recognizes 32 deaths from the explosion, including plant workers and firemen.)

The Ukrainian Ministry of Health calculates that 60,000 children and 90,000 adults suffer "higher than permissible" doses of thyroid radiation. They are among 1.5 million Ukrainians who live in a contaminated zone of 8,000 square miles, slightly larger than the state of New Jersey. More than half of the children have swollen thyroid glands and many have impaired vision. Food and water supplies are tainted by radioactivity.

Children living in an even larger, less contaminated area, suffer from a generalized weakening of the immune system, known as "Chernobyl AIDS."

The ministry has recorded unparalleled increases in nervous disorders, blood and lung diseases among adults and children, a spiral of miscarriages and intrauterine bleeding in women and infertility in men.

Hundreds of children have been treated for baldness in Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, 80 miles from Chernobyl. The average age of leukemia victims is dropping as their number increases.

Altogether, 1.8 million Ukrainians and 2.2 Byelorussians live in areas directly affected by radiation. According to local scientists, soil radioactivity continues to increase. This year, fishing in Kiev's reservoir was prohibited.

Contamination is still found in sheep in Wales and farmland in Germany, as well as other parts of Europe.

How many tens, or hundreds, of thousands of cancer victims this will create is disputed

by scientists, with some estimates of deaths ranging as high as 250,000.

Anticipated costs of post-Chernobyl cleanup, including health care and evacuation for the Ukraine and Byelorussia, run up to \$70 billion. These staggering figures come in the wake of an exodus of doctors from the affected regions, as well as shortages of appropriate medical technology, medicines, and even Geiger counters to monitor radiation.

These elements, combined with deepening poverty, account for the fact that in Kiev's Hospital No. 14, which treats children with leukemia, the survival rate is 15 percent, while in western Europe 70 percent to 80 percent of similarly afflicted children survive.

International aid for the mounting number of victims of Chernobyl, most of which is directed to, and by, the central government, is scant in proportion to the appeal. Moscow conceals the truth about Chernobyl in order to maintain a projected 600 percent increase in nuclear capacity by the year 2000. Blowing the lid off the bureaucracy's secrets about Chernobyl half a decade later could spark massive outrage and further shake the props of a rotted regime.

### Cuba provides treatment

The most extensive form of humanitarian aid is an ongoing effort initiated by Cuba in 1990 to treat children stricken with radiation-induced illnesses. Nearly 3,600 young victims have received medical attention at specially created facilities at the nation's largest beachside camp, two children's hospitals, and a hematology center.

A decision by the world's industrialized nations to emulate Cuba's example would mean immense relief for those suffering from the effects of the April 26 blast and fallout.

The Truth About Chernobyl not only helps understand what happened but what is happening.

On April 29, as if to grimly mark the fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl meltdown, the Maine Yankee nuclear power plant in Wiscasset, Maine, was the scene of explosions and a fire in its main turbine hall.

While the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) claimed no radiation escaped into the atmosphere, the facility was closed indefinitely.

Four days later, the NRC approved the restart of the Browns Ferry nuclear reactor in Alabama, which had been closed for repairs for six years, a shutdown record in the field of "nuclear safety." The scene of one of the worst power plant accidents in the United States, in 1975, the Browns Ferry restart was hailed by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as "a great day for nuclear power."

The chairman of the TVA, Marvin Runyon, is reportedly considering buying a new reactor, the first ordered in the United States since 1973.

Developments like these, including the Bush administration's repeated declarations to view nuclear power as an alternative to "dependence on foreign oil," led the New York Times to recently ask in a major article, "Is Nuclear Winter Giving Way to Nuclear Spring?"

The specter of Chernobyl cannot halt a new march to nuclear power. But *The Truth About Chernobyl* will help alert working people to the high stakes in the battle against it.



# Steel union strike faces challenges

Continued from Page 6

in simultaneous operation since 1981, when Kaiser shut down the potrooms and laid off 2,000 workers.

RAC had two potlines operating prior to the lockout. The third opened up earlier this year.

Since the end of the rolling roadblocks, the union's top international officials have promoted the perspective of lobbying Congress and promoting a boycott of aluminum made at RAC. This perspective has taken the ranks away from the scene of action at the plant.

The local union adopted a public campaign that includes leafleting and canvassing to inform the public that some aluminum cans are made from RAC aluminum and sent members to other states including Connecticut, Minnesota, and New York to distribute fliers.

Another big focus of the union's work is to urge support for the passage of two bills before Congress that prohibit companies from hiring scabs for jobs held by striking workers.

This approach by the top union officialdom centers on portraying the striking workers as victims of a lockout who, with others facing employer union-busting drives, can only be saved by legislation passed in Congress.

Rather than an aid to extending the mobilization of the ranks and committing more forces from the Steelworkers union to extend the active solidarity that is possible, this course weakens the possibility of an effective fight against the company.

## Continuing safety questions

On April 26, RAC filed suit for defamation against Local 5668 and Bill Doyle, head of the union's safety committee, after he urged an investigation of safety violations at the plant. Numerous injuries have been reported at the plant since the lockout began. In early May two electricians were hospitalized for severe burns.

The union has requested its representatives accompany OSHA inspectors on a plant tour. On May 23 the company refused OSHA entrance onto the plant's premises, saying they did not see the need for inspection since the requests came from individuals — union members — who are not part of RAC's workforce.

Many union members are banking on a favorable ruling from the National Labor Relations Board that would force the company to negotiate a settlement. They had hoped such a ruling would be handed down before July 14 when their unemployment benefits run out.

However, it was announced recently that an NLRB hearing to assess the matter is set for September 1.

According to Edward Verst, acting director of the NLRB's region 9 office in Cincinnati, an initial ruling could be quick. But assuming the company appealed any ruling favorable to the union, the entire appeals process resulting in a final determination "could take years," Verst said in an interview.

The ranks of Local 5668 have shown that they want to fight the company's union-busting drive. In fact, the ranks did fight as hard as they could — including initiating some innovative tactics and reaching out to fellow unionists — to repel the company's use of scabs to carry out production in the plant.

With the backing of the courts and the cops, the company has been able to increase production thus putting the strikers in a tough position. Pressing the fight to maintain the union at the plant and to get as many jobs of the strikers back as possible under a union contract acceptable to the local poses a big challenge to the Steelworkers union as a whole. Only a fighting perspective that reaches out to involve the ranks of the USWA and other unions can begin to pose the kind of struggle needed.

## Labor news in the Militant

The *Militant* stays on top of the most important developments in the labor movement. You won't miss them if you subscribe. See the ad on page 2 for subscription rates.

# MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

## ALABAMA

### Birmingham

**Revolutionary Cuba Today. An Eyewitness Report.** Speaker: John Hawkins, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor, member United Mine Workers of America Local 2368. Sat., June 15, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

**Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism.** Classes. Sat., June 15; Sun., June 16, 4:30 p.m. 111 21st St. S. Donation: \$2.50. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

## ILLINOIS

### Chicago

**Defending Abortion Rights Now.** Speakers: Maria Barahona, member United Steelworkers of America Local 5488; Ruth Nebbia, Socialist Workers Party, member United Transportation Union Local 1895. Translation to Spanish. Sat., June 15, 7 p.m. 545 W Roosevelt Rd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (312) 829-6815.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**The Struggle Against Apartheid Today.** Speakers: Representatives of MIT Coalition Against Apartheid, Socialist Workers Party, others. Sat., June 15, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

## MINNESOTA

### St. Paul

**Trade Unionists' Trip to Cuba: Eyewitness Report and Slideshow.** Sat., June 15, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

## MISSOURI

### St. Louis

**Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism.** Speaker: Dave Sandor, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers. Sat., June 15, 7:30 p.m. 1622 S Broadway. Donation: \$3. Tel: (314) 421-3808.

## NEBRASKA

### Omaha

**Right to Abortion Under Attack.** Speakers: Heather Williams, Burke High School student; Hilda Cuzco, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers; and others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., June 22, 7 p.m. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (402) 553-0245.

## NEW JERSEY

### Newark

**New Round of Attacks on Democratic Rights.** Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, editorial staff *Militant*. Translation to Spanish. Sat., June 18, Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3 (Dinner and program \$6). Tel: (201) 643-3341.

## OHIO

### Cleveland

**Defend Abortion Rights.** Speakers: Terry Halfacre, president Grover Cleveland National Organization for Women; Sandra Nelson, Socialist Workers Party; others. Translation to Spanish. Sun., June 16, 7 p.m. 1863 W 25th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Philadelphia

**Keep the Pressure On: The Fight against**

**Apartheid in South Africa.** Speakers: Biki Minyuku, African National Congress of South Africa; Rosita Johnson, SOMAFCO. Translation to Spanish. Sat., June 15, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

## Pittsburgh

**Washington's Assault on Iraq: No Victory for U.S. Rulers.** Speaker: Jon Hillson, Socialist Workers Party, member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 168C. Sat., June 22, 7 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

## TEXAS

### Houston

**The Freedom Struggle in South Africa.** Speakers: Sebileto Matabane, Zakhele Foundation, Austin; Willie Mae Reid, Socialist Workers Party, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4-367; others. Sat., June 15, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

## WEST VIRGINIA

### Morgantown

**The Challenges Facing Labor: The Fight to Stop Union-busting and Attacks on Working People.** Speakers: Ron Leek and Rob Whetzel, members United Food and Commercial Workers Local 23, recently on strike against Giant Eagle; Josefina Otero, Socialist Workers Party, former Eastern Airlines striker. Sat., June 15, 7:30 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

## BRITAIN

### Doncaster

**War and Depression: the Challenges Facing Miners Today.** Forum with refreshments during Yorkshire Miners Gala. Speakers: U.S. trade unionist; representative National Union of Mineworkers; representative Communist League. Sat., June 15, 3 p.m. Women's Centre, Bolsover Street. Donation: £1.

# S. African regime ends land laws

Continued from Page 16

made up of Coloureds. This window dressing on the white-dominated parliamentary set-up has been rejected by the vast majority of the Coloureds and Indians.

## Hunger strikers

A series of mass actions by anti-apartheid forces — consumer boycotts, rallies, and planned strike action by unionists — aims to press ANC demands that the government curb its security forces' involvement in attacks on anti-apartheid rallies and Black townships; free political prisoners as the government had agreed it would by April 30; and remove top officials of the security apparatus.

Of 40 political prisoners still on hunger strike, 23 are in their second month and 26 are hospitalized. While the ANC insists that all those jailed for acts in the course of fighting apartheid be freed, the regime says it will not release anyone convicted of violent acts in the course of the struggle. The regime charged

## London

**Malcolm X: Fighter against Racism, Imperialism, and War.** Video: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Fri., June 14, 7:30 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Tel: 71-401 2409.

## Manchester

**The Palestinians' Fight for Freedom.** Speaker: Communist League. Fri., June 14, 7:30 p.m. Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £1. Tel: 061-839 1766.

## CANADA

### Montréal

**South Africa: The Struggle Continues.** Sat. June 15, 7:30 p.m. 6566, boul. St. Laurent. Donation: \$3. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

### Toronto

**Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism.** Speaker: Margaret Manwaring, Communist League, member Canadian Auto Workers Local 1967. Sat., June 15, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Tel: (416) 861-1399.

**Deepening Crisis of the Soviet Bureaucracy: A Problem for Washington; New Openings for Working People.** Speaker: John Steele, Communist League, member International Association of Machinists. Sat., June 22, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Tel: (416) 861-1399.

### Vancouver

**Malcolm X Speaks.** Video. Sat., June 22, 7:30 p.m. 1053 Kingsway, Suite 102. Donation: \$3. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

## SWEDEN

### Stockholm

**The Present Situation in South Africa.** Speaker: Billy Modise, chief representative of African National Congress of South Africa to Sweden. Sat., June 15, 3 p.m. Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

the individuals would "expose the public to relentless and dangerous criminals."

Nelson Mandela, deputy president of the African National Congress, said opponents of apartheid around the world should step up demands on the Pretoria regime to release political prisoners.

Due to the length of the hunger strike and the prisoners' deteriorating physical condition, Mandela urged them to end their fast because "our movement and people require the hunger strikers as active participants in the struggle to transform our country into a nonracial democracy."

He said the "heroic" hunger strike was "forced on them by the inexcusable failure of the government to honor the agreement to release all political prisoners by the end of April."

South African Justice Minister H.J. Coetsee said that 15,434 prisoners had applied to his office for release as political prisoners.

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**Christchurch:** 593a Colombo St. (upstairs). Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 656-055.

**Wellington:** 23 Majoribanks St., Courtenay Pl. Postal address: P.O. Box 9092. Tel: (4) 844-205.

## SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10. Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.



**Of blood and oil** — "The huge fuel demands of Operation Desert Storm fattened the profits of the nation's 18 major oil companies in



**Harry Ring**

the first three months of 1991, with income 18 percent above 1990 levels. . . . Chevron, Exxon, Mobil and Texaco accounted for most of the increased profits." — News item.

**First things first** — At Edwards Air Force base in California, a giant crane bearing a rocket motor crashed through a plywood platform last year, killing one worker and injuring nine. State officials found "serious" but not "willful" safety violations and fined three contractors \$10,000 each. Now it's disclosed that despite workers' complaints, the companies had refused to install the solid oak slabs that should have been used, but cost more.

**Burial insurance** — To provide employers "affordable" health insurance coverage for their workers, 17 states have approved "bare-bones" policies. In Kansas, a worker pays a monthly premium, plus a \$5,000 deductible. In Kentucky,

you're allowed 14 hospital days. You pay \$300 deductible, 20 percent of the hospital bill, and half the doctor's tab.

**Capitalism, the system that works** — The period of 1982-89 was one of economic growth. Yet during the 1980s, low wages and shrinking welfare programs pushed an additional 2.2 million children into poverty, for a total of 12.6 million children living in households with incomes below the official poverty level.

**Vacation tip** — A museum will soon open at California's San Quentin prison. See for yourself an old-fashioned 30-pound ball-and-chain,

and model gas chamber. Walk up the 13 steps to the three nooses atop a gallows. Leaf through the personal diary of a doctor who presided at 100 executions.

**Can't cut corners on that** — In Puerto Rico, nearly two years ago, Hurricane Hugo left at least 900 families homeless. Of these, 300 families are still in temporary shelters. Officials explain that in some cases relocation has been slow because of problems with property deeds.

**A growth industry** — The Union Corp. used to refine oil and ran a commuter airline. Now it's concentrating on its lucrative subsidy, Trans-World, a debt collection agency. One prosperous area of activity is Puerto

Rico where the debt-ratio to after-tax income is 51.4 percent.

**Doomsday payoff** — An entrepreneur was having a hard time marketing Death brand cigarettes, with a skull and crossbones and the surgeon general's warning on the pack. Major distributors were afraid of offending the coffin-nail biggies. But, with a breakthrough in Hollywood, Death's are now enjoying a brisk sale.

**Relax and enjoy** — "If a bird passes the inspector, that means it's fit to eat," declared a spokesman for the Southeastern Poultry and Egg Assn. He says 99.5 percent of the chickens pass inspection.

## Cuban union leader answers AFL-CIO charges

Reprinted below is an article from the May 20 *Union Advocate*, the biweekly paper of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly.

The article is a result of a trade union tour to Cuba organized by the Minnesota U.S.-Cuba Friendship Committee. Hosted by the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC), the delegation of six unionists participated in May 1 events and visited agricultural brigades, schools, medical facilities, and construction sites.

Subheads are by the *Militant*.

HAVANA — "As Communist regimes fall around the world, it is clear that the days of Fidel Castro's reckless, cruel and murderous tenure over the people of Cuba are coming to an end.

"Fidel Castro's obsessive adherence to a failed totalitarian system is a blight on the poor and exploited working masses of that Caribbean island prison."

These are excerpts from a statement issued in February by the national AFL-CIO Executive Council, in which the council endorsed a report prepared by the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) that outlined alleged abuses of worker rights in Cuba.

The statement is part of a heightened campaign that included establishment of an AFL-CIO Labor Committee for a Free Cuba and a "Free Cuba Day" in Miami at which President Lane Kirkland charged the Castro government with holding 30,000 political prisoners.

The union members who visited Cuba for May Day made a specific request to the Cuban Workers Federation (CTC) for answers to the points raised by Kirkland. As a result of this request, they were able to arrange an exclusive, four-hour interview with CTC President Pedro Ross — Kirkland's counterpart in Cuba.

### Context of AIFLD report

Ross, who was aware of the charges raised in the AIFLD report, said he views the alle-



Militant/Cindy Jaquith

**Pedro Ross Leal, secretary general of Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions.**

gations as part of a bigger effort by the U.S. government to discredit the Cuban revolution. The AFL-CIO Labor Committee for a Free Cuba is associated with many Cuban-Americans who fled the country after the revolution and use Florida as a base of operation for opposing the current socialist system.

"We are criticized for what — giving workers a job or building a kindergarten or providing day care for working women?" Ross asked.

"A socialist project cannot be made if there is no close relation between the leaders of the government and the people. The people make the revolution. You cannot use authoritarian ways."

He agreed to respond to specific allegations that have been raised in the AIFLD document. In addition to the holding of po-

litical prisoners, they include charges of forced labor, speedups, excessive hours of work, religious and ideological discrimination in employment and the use of government dossiers on workers.

The political prisoners most often cited by the AFL-CIO are Mario Chanes De Armas, a former brewery worker in prison since 1961, and Ernesto Díaz Rodríguez, a fisherman imprisoned since 1968 who was released when his term ended in March. Both allegedly were union leaders who were jailed for opposing the Cuban government.

Ross said neither was a union leader and that both had been involved in a plot to assassinate Castro, planned in conjunction with the CIA. He said both were convicted in public trials and that Chanes de Armas will be freed when his term ends in July.

A number of Cubans have been jailed for participating in CIA-supported actions to overthrow the government, Ross added.

"We wanted to sign an agreement with the U.S. administration in order for them to welcome these people who have been in prison for crimes because of serving foreign countries," he said. The Cuban government, he said, was ready to free anyone classified as a "political prisoner," but the U.S. government has refused to take them in.

### Volunteer or forced labor?

Cuba has been accused of using forced labor because of its many volunteer work programs, including construction brigades and crews of workers sent to farm in the countryside. Every adult is expected to spend two weeks per year volunteering on such projects.

The U.S. unionists raised this issue many times in talking with Cubans during their weeklong visit. All said they volunteered willingly and did not view such programs as hardships.

Ross said the use of volunteers goes back to the beginning of the revolution in the early 1960s, when 100,000 people volunteered to go to the countryside to teach people who could not read. Ross was one of those volunteers, whose efforts virtually eliminated illiteracy in Cuba.

"I'm also a volunteer worker" today, he said. "I go to volunteer work with my wife

and children."

The accusation that the government keeps dossiers on workers is totally false, Ross added.

Religious and ideological discrimination is not an issue in employment, he said. People are free to attend a number of churches on the island, the most popular being the Protestant faiths. (The Roman Catholic church is criticized by many people for supporting the Batista dictatorship.)

Union leaders need not be Communist Party members, he said, although Ross himself is a member of the party's central committee.

The Cuban population is a mixture of the blood of native Indians, Spanish, Africans, Chinese, Haitians and other people of the Caribbean, making the country very racially integrated.

There remains, however, a problem of sex discrimination, Ross said. "Macho conception in our society is very strong," he said. "We are still fighting that [sex stereotypes]."

At present, women make up a sizable portion of the union leadership, he said — 24 percent at the national level and 28 percent at the local level.

One of the most serious charges leveled at the Cuban unions is that they do not engage in true collective bargaining. Their function is so different from that of American unions that it is like comparing apples and oranges.

Whereas in the United States all wages and working conditions are defined in union contracts, in Cuba these provisions are decided at the national level, through centralized economic planning.

Health care is free and government-sponsored, as are pensions. A right to a job, housing, and opportunities for advancement are national law. Union leaders are part of the government that establishes these laws, Ross said.

Unlike U.S. unions, which must strike for health care benefits, for example, Cuban workers rarely go on strike.

"Strikes are not prohibited," Ross said. But "people have no interest in organizing strikes against their own interest."

Cuban unions focus on handling grievances in the workplace and improving productivity. "When the right of any worker is violated, we are strong enough to discuss the problem and find a solution," Ross said.

Supervisors at factories have been fined and demoted for mistreating workers, he noted.

The Cuban Workers Federation is part of the current "rectification" process to improve the socialist system, Ross said. This process involves reducing the bureaucracy and getting people more involved in their government, he said.

"To correct the mistakes of socialism, you can't use capitalist ways," he said. "We have been in capitalism before. The capitalist economy lasted for over 200 years.

"What's the situation of those countries [in Latin America] that had capitalism all these years? More misery, poverty."

Ross said the Workers Federation would welcome any U.S. union members who wanted to visit Cuba to investigate firsthand the allegations raised in the AIFLD report.

Visitors would be "exceptional witnesses of how the Cuban people think, how they feel. We don't want our wars to be hidden," he said, adding, "We are at peace with our conscience and with God."

## — CALENDAR —

### ARIZONA

#### Tempe

**Report Back from Cuba.** Slide presentation; discussion with Karen Ray, member Socialist Workers Party. Sat., June 15, 5 p.m. 309 Beck. Buffet; music by Gonzalo Sepúlveda. Donation: \$5. Tel: (602) 279-5850.

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

**Class Series on Socialism.** Every Tuesday, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

### MINNESOTA

#### St. Paul

**Young Socialist Alliance Fundraiser.** Party following Militant Labor Forum. Sat., June 15, 10 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**How to Fight for a World without War and Racism.** Class series. Every Thurs., 6:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Sponsor: Young Socialist Alli-

ance. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

### CANADA

#### Toronto

**Educational Tour to Cuba.** Aug. 4-18, 1991. (For residents of Canada.) Sponsor: Canada-Cuba Cultural Interchange and Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. Price: \$916 includes airfare, accommodation, and meals. Applications and deposit due now. Tel: Toronto, (416) 533-1225, 658-1561; Montréal, (514) 270-0197; Vancouver, (604) 873-8898, 595-3991.

#### Vancouver

**Picnic.** Celebrate successful international Militant circulation campaign. Games, food, refreshments, music. Sun., June 16, 3 p.m. 112 E 59th Ave. Donation: \$10. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Introduction to Socialism Discussions.** Every Tues., 6:30 p.m. 157a Symonds St. Sponsor: Young Socialists. Tel: (9) 793-075.



# Class character of gov't attacks

The Supreme Court's recent antiabortion ruling, the assaults on affirmative action, and governmental budget slashing highlight the class character of the U.S. rulers' domestic policy decisions today.

It is a bipartisan offensive against the labor movement and all working people, aimed at undermining the capacity to exercise rights and reducing the social wage, hitting the worst-off sections of the working class especially hard.

Because any gains the employing class makes in this broad assault will deepen divisions within the working class and weaken its fighting capacity, the labor movement should wage a fight to reverse this assault.

The 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion in the United States still stands. It has not been overturned.

The right of women to choose if and when to have children, free from interference or restriction, is essential to women winning full equality and economic independence. The 1973 victory in securing this right increased the self-confidence of women and helped them fight their way into jobs previously denied them.

Since then the employing class has waged a grinding assault on legal abortion, aimed squarely at working women, making it harder to exercise their hard-won right. Rich women have always been able to get abortions, even when they were illegal. But many working-class women must depend on government funded health-care programs. The steady antiabortion offensive — which has outlawed most federal funding for abortions and now has curtailed the right to obtain abortion information — hits poor women, minorities, and young women the hardest. In taking aim at a woman's right to control her own body, the rulers seek to

deepen inequalities between workers who are male and those who are female.

The dispute between the Bush administration and the Democrats in Congress over the assault on affirmative action centers on how hard and fast to push in reversing affirmative-action programs. The only difference between Democrats and Republicans is that the majority of the Democrats want to move more slowly in this assault.

Affirmative action programs — many involving court-mandated hiring quotas — have provided oppressed nationalities and women with a weapon to force their way into jobs in basic industry that mean higher wages and greater unionization. The employing class seeks to take this weapon away, thereby perpetuating and reinforcing racist and sexist employment practices and weakening the potential for unity in the working class as a whole.

Officeholders have used the debate on quotas surrounding the Democrats' "civil rights" bill as an opportunity to step away from waging any fight to defend affirmative action gains.

A third assault centers on city and state budget slashing under the guise of a "fiscal crisis." These cuts aim to wring concessions from unions and scale back or eliminate social programs that benefit working people, such as health-care programs, funding in public education and for libraries, and shelters for homeless people — thereby whittling away at the social wage. The labor movement has no interest in "helping" the owners of big business and their government figure out how best to "balance" their budgets on the backs of working people.

## Solidarity is the key

*"If you generate strong solidarity, it can override injustices... I didn't win parole, solidarity did."*

Johnny Imani Harris

Defenders of democratic rights and opponents of frame-ups celebrated a tremendous victory won in Alabama with the parole of Johnny Imani Harris.

Not bowed by the harshness of the sentences he faced — 5 life terms and 14 years on death row — Harris and his supporters continued to explain the frame-up and win support in his case. After 20 years of injustice, the board finally decided to release him.

As Harris points out, his freedom was made possible by solidarity won through a 15-year international effort by his many supporters and defenders.

Supporters of framed-up unionist Mark Curtis can build on this victory by widening the calls for parole for the Iowa packing-house worker as well.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is encouraging unionists and their local and international unions, defenders of democratic rights, prominent individuals, and others to get the facts on Curtis' fight and join in a campaign to win his parole.

The Iowa Board of Parole has refused to release Curtis even though he meets every criteria set forth in the Iowa administrative law code for someone who should be paroled.

Curtis has no previous criminal record. Prison authorities concede that his conduct has been excellent and that he has performed well on every prison job.

He has served two-and-a-half years in prison, well beyond the average time served by someone in the state of Iowa convicted on the rape charge he was framed on.

Already, unionists, civil rights leaders and activists, and others have offered their help in meeting the parole board's requirements.

## U.S. bases out of the Philippines

Washington's pressure on the government of the Philippines to conclude current negotiations on the status of the U.S. military bases there is a case lesson in extortion on a grand scale.

U.S. officials, aiming to keep Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station in the Philippines, are brazenly using U.S. imperialism's considerable economic leverage to force the Manila government into a treaty extending Washington's lease beyond September 1991.

They have not so subtly let it be known that Manila's "special" relationship with the United States would be threatened if the base negotiations collapsed. This special relationship is akin to that between master and slave, and reflects the decades of U.S. exploitation and domination of the Pacific archipelago.

The Philippines is among the largest recipients of U.S. foreign aid and the United States is the Philippines' largest trading partner, offering some trade concessions to Filipino businesses. The imperialist banks have yoked the country with a debt of \$28.6 billion and bilk millions in interest payments.

Washington's threat to unleash greater economic catastrophe on the Philippines if Manila does not submit is aimed directly against Filipino workers and peasants, millions of whom want an end to the political domination and economic exploitation of their country by the United States. The opposition to the bases among Filipinos has deepened since

the massive social upheaval several years ago that rid the country of the U.S.-backed dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Clark and Subic are the club Washington needs to try to keep the Filipino people, who are sliding into ever greater poverty under the impact of capitalism's deepening crisis, under thumb.

With more than 10,000 troops, these bases are the largest military installations maintained by the Pentagon in Asia. They were recently important to U.S. military operations during the war in the Middle East. They are key components for the U.S. imperialists' ability to project their strategic military power in the world.

With the base negotiations currently under way, working people and the labor movement in the United States have a special obligation to demand that Washington stop its economic extortion and threats against the workers and peasants of the Philippines and get its troops out now.

Labor has no interest in Washington maintaining an outpost in the Pacific that strengthens imperialism's hand in the region. The ability of the U.S. rulers to keep people under their domination anywhere weakens the fighting power of the labor movement in the United States.

Demanding the U.S. government get out of the Philippines builds ties of solidarity and strengthens the U.S. labor movement in its battles against the government-employer offensive on the unions, rights, and the livelihood of working people here at home.

## A discussion on local socialist campaigns in '91

BY DOUG JENNESS

On a recent trip to Minnesota Kate Kaku and I were able to participate in a discussion between leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in Austin and the Twin Cities on the SWP's 1991 local election campaigns.

Kaku is a leader of the SWP and the wife of Mark Curtis, a political activist and unionist imprisoned in Iowa on frame-up charges.

Among the participants in the discussion were Gale Shangold, one of two SWP candidates who ran in the May 21 Austin School Board election; Laura Garza, currently the SWP candidate for city council in St. Paul's First Ward; and Wendy Lyons and Craig Honts, who ran for governor and lieutenant governor of Minnesota in 1990. All are production workers and active unionists.

Recently the Minnesota socialists had conducted a lively and well-publicized campaign for Henry Zamarrón, a mem-

## LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

ber of the United Auto Workers who ran for Minnesota state legislature in District 32B, located in rural Fillmore and Mower counties in the southern part of the state.

The Minnesota candidates are among dozens of SWP candidates campaigning in local races throughout the country.

One of the central questions we addressed was the focus of communist election campaigns in races for state legislature, county commissioner, city council, and school board, where all the other candidates are focusing on very local matters.

We agreed that it was politically a serious error to begin with the immediate and narrower concerns of "local" issues. Candidates who are part of the more politically far-sighted detachments of the working class utilize the electoral arena to discuss, explain, and offer answers to the most important national and international questions facing working people.

Today world politics is stamped by the drive of the most powerful ruling families to try to maintain their profit rates in the face of stiffening price competition among them. There is intensified pressure by the imperialist powers to dominate and control key areas of capital investment, sources of raw materials, and commodity markets at the expense of their rivals. This increasingly leads to military conflicts as plainly shown by Washington's assault on Iraq.

The irrepressible and aggressive protectionist drive of the imperialists goes hand in hand with this.

Moreover, the employers try to bolster their profit rates by squeezing more out of working people by driving down wages, speeding up work, and cutting corners on health and safety.

And they have mounted an assault on government-funded social services that were won as a byproduct of mass political struggles of working people. This is really a "social wage" — that is, part of the wealth that workers have created that we get back for our benefit. The employers want to reduce this component of our wage, meager as it is, in order to line their pockets with more profits.

By presenting this broader political picture, SWP candidates are able to explain more effectively the origin and ferocity of the slashes in education, health care, libraries, sanitation services, recreational facilities, and many other services that the employing class is driving through in cities, counties, and states from coast to coast.

In our discussions we also noted the nonclass way in which the big business press and bought-and-paid-for politicians talk about the "budget crisis," "educational crisis," "urban crisis," and so on. For workers the only "budget crisis" that has any meaning is the increasing difficulty we have in making ends meet in our household budget each week. We have no stake in the budgetary difficulties of the government. This terminology covers up the class content of what's really involved — stepped-up attacks by the employing class on government-funded programs that benefit working people.

There's an "educational crisis" — but for whom? The Kennedy, DuPont, Mellon, Rockefeller, and Weyerhaeuser children attend fancy private schools and don't suffer from lack of educational opportunities. But public education, which was fought for by working people, is being sapped, especially for the most oppressed sections of the working class.

By starting with the international crisis of the capitalist system and its ravaging consequences for exploited toilers, SWP candidates are better able to show that attacks on workers aren't unique to particular localities. Nor can they be resolved except as part of a more general struggle against capitalist rule. Trying to present answers to cuts in social services simply within the framework of a local perspective can lead to campaigning for social reform of the existing capitalist system.

What's necessary is a series of proposals to unite and mobilize working people in a fight to protect ourselves against the consequences of devastating imperialist wars and the economic ravages of the capitalist crisis. Through the course of these struggles we will lay the basis for uniting the exploited in a mass revolutionary struggle to wrest political power from the exploiters.



# Biltwell wins 5% wage cut from garment union

This column is dedicated to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

Working people around the world are involved in skirmishes over speedup, forced overtime, layoffs, or attacks on health and safety benefits. Some unionists

job action protested the company's hiring of a new worker when a number of workers were already on short hours.

Two days earlier, at a meeting called by management, the company presented workers with an ultimatum: give the company a 5 percent wage cut or face a possible plant closing. The company "guar-

Missouri, where the fabric for the coats made in St. Louis is cut and the trousers matching the coats are manufactured, the workers rejected the 5 percent wage cut by a vote of 186-167.

The company then threatened to close the Farmington plant in three weeks if the workers didn't reverse their vote. In a second vote the next week, a majority voted in favor of the giveback. Workers at several other Biltwell plants have also accepted the cut.

The large "no" votes in St. Louis and Farmington reflect a growing discussion among garment workers about their declining standard of living and a desire to figure out how to fight back. The May 1 job action deepened this discussion at the St. Louis plant.

Workers at Jos. A. Bank Clothiers, Inc. in Baltimore voted by a margin of 8-1 to reopen their union contract and give concessions to the company, hoping to retain their jobs. The workers are members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU).

Workers were told by an official of the Baltimore Regional Joint Board of ACTWU that the company faced a January 31 deadline on \$30 million in interest payments to the Wells Fargo Bank and that \$56 million was also owed in other debts.

The union official said that, in the case of a "no" vote, the next step was a strike vote. That would mean

the plant would close down.

Workers voted for the concessions because they believed they had no other course to follow. Even people who spoke out against the concessions voted in favor of accepting them.

"I've been with this company for six years. I've seen them do so many things. It's always the same. Accept it or the company will shut down," one worker commented.

The U.S. government is planning to reduce the wages of tens of thousands of federal employees by as much as 25 percent in Puerto Rico, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The cut will be made by severely reducing or eliminating the Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA).

Current COLA rates are 25 percent of earnings in Alaska, 12.5 percent in the Virgin Islands, and 10 percent in Hawaii and Puerto Rico. COLA would be eliminated in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. In St. Croix the rate would be cut to 7 percent and in St. Thomas it would remain the same. St. Croix and St. Thomas are the two main islands in the Virgin Islands.

U.S. government workers in Puerto Rico tend to make a little higher wage on the average than other workers on the island. The current unemployment rate is 17 percent and rising.

Even with the COLA, federal workers in Puerto Rico receive less

pay than workers doing similar work in the United States. A federal worker at a grade of GS4 in Puerto Rico receives 10 percent more than a GS4 in the United States but is actually doing the work of a GS6 or GS7. Most federal employees at all levels are undergraded. This is a violation of the government's own rules, which state that pay grades are based on duties and responsibilities, not unemployment levels.

A meeting was held May 15 at the Caribe Hilton in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to discuss the fight against the COLA reductions. Two hundred people showed up. Leaders of two unions that organize federal workers, the American Federation of Government Employees and the American Postal Workers Union, attended.

Speakers at the meeting, organized by the COLA Defense Committee of Puerto Rico, Inc., encouraged those in attendance to write letters to various congressional representatives demanding that they intervene. Because Puerto Rico only has two nonvoting representatives in the U.S. Congress, people were urged to write the congressional delegations from the states with COLAs: Alaska and Hawaii.

Lisa Potash, a member of ACTWU Local 1104 in St. Louis; Rachele Fruit, a member of ACTWU Local 70 in Baltimore; and Ron Richards from San Juan, Puerto Rico, contributed to this column.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

faced with steep takeback demands, lockouts, and union-busting moves by the employers have gone on strike to force the bosses to back down.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines to let other *Militant* readers know about what is happening at your workplace or in your union. If there is an interesting political discussion going on at work, we would like to hear about that, too.

More than 100 workers at Biltwell Clothing in St. Louis, Missouri, walked off the job for 45 minutes May 1. The workers, members of Local 1104 of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU), refused to return to work until the company promised to bring in the international representative assigned to the local. The

anteed" the plant would stay open at least one more year if the workers approved the giveback.

Workers at the meeting expressed their opposition to the company's demand. "We can't afford to take a cut," said one. "Some of us barely make minimum wage as it is."

"What's to stop you from closing the plant before a year is up, even if we do take the cut?" asked another.

After the plant meeting, union officials explained that they had been negotiating the wage cut for two months and recommended it be accepted. Workers voted to accept the 5 percent cut by a vote of 138-78.

Over the past six months, Hart Schaffner & Marx, the owner of the plant, has been restructuring production. This has resulted in an intensification of the pace of work, cutting the piece rate, and increasing repression on the job by cracking down on tardiness and absenteeism. Several workers have been fired.

At a Biltwell plant in Farmington,

## LETTERS

### Lakota Woman

*Militant* readers may want to read *Lakota Woman*, by Mary Crow Dog with Richard Erdoes, published in paperback this year by Harper Perennial. The author describes her life growing up on the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota; her experiences as an American Indian Movement (AIM) activist; government repression against AIM activists; and the special problems faced by Native American women.

Like many Indian children, Mary Crow Dog was separated from her family and raised at a missionary boarding school, where the teachers tried, as she says, to "civilize them with a stick." She got involved with AIM in 1972 and took part in the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973, where she gave birth to her first child. She describes the Wounded Knee occupation in some detail.

After Wounded Knee, Mary Crow Dog married traditional Lakota spiritual leader Leonard Crow Dog. Like many participants in the Wounded Knee occupation, he was framed up afterwards and spent two years in federal prisons. She describes his mistreatment in prison and the international defense campaign that won his release.

Not only is *Lakota Woman* an important historical record; it's easy reading, and it's written with humor and introspection.

Tom O'Brien  
St. Paul, Minnesota

### Free trade pact

Recent articles in the *Militant* exposing the AFL-CIO officialdom's reactionary and racist campaign against the U.S.-Mexico free trade pact have been helpful at work.

The officials of the International Association of Machinists have unfortunately joined this protectionist bandwagon by attacking the establishment of airline maintenance facilities in Mexico. The officials argue that Mexicans performing work on the planes will cause safety and airline maintenance standards to be "less than the best."

However, they reject any effort to help unionize Mexican workers into our "international" union (which does organize Canadian and other workers), or to fight part-time and two-tier wage concessions here at home.

This backward protectionist campaign divides us from our Mexican and Canadian sisters and brothers in their fight against the same corporations.

Our strength is in fighting with our coworkers here and internationally, not in fighting against any worker's right to a job.

Mark Friedman  
Detroit, Michigan

### Voice of voiceless

Discontinue sending my *Militant* subscription here, since I will be released on parole in the near future.

There hasn't been an education that I've been exposed to that has more depth and clarity than the *Militant* newspaper, which is truly the voice of the voiceless.

My love reaches out to the staff, supporters and general readership as I prepare for the struggle that is steadily awakening the many puppets against the few puppeteers.

A prisoner  
Auburn, New York

### Confessions under torture

I'm writing in regard to the recent Supreme Court decision allowing the use of confessions obtained through the use of coercion (torture).

Now they've given the police 48 hours "free time" to use this coercion without ever having to justify your detention in any way.

Come on! We're talking police state here! One with no constraints, that is running away with itself.

I can say this with authority because I was in a jail where the police beat a black inmate to death. I listened to it happen. No indictments! Ever!

A prisoner  
Westville, Indiana



### Two-state solution?

The coverage from the West Bank and occupied Palestine was very exciting. Looking forward to more coverage as possible.

One question raised in an interview with a West Bank leader was the idea of a "two-state solution" to the oppression of the Palestinian people. I have heard it put this way: "the right of a Palestinian state to exist alongside Israel, with peace and security for both sides."

A discussion in the *Militant* on this approach and its relation to the need to overthrow the Israeli colonial-settler state, a state which oppresses Jewish workers and farmers as well as the Palestinian people, would be helpful for readers of the *Militant*.

Bronson Rozier  
Louisville, Kentucky



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## Supporters celebrate Harris' freedom

Former frame-up victim says, 'Strong solidarity can override injustice'

BY JOAN LEVITT

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — A gathering of nearly 70 people celebrated freedom for Johnny Imani Harris at the St. Joseph Baptist Church May 31. The theme of the meeting was "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, free at last."

The celebration was sponsored by the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (NAARPR), which has organized Harris' international fight for justice for the past 15 years. It was attended by supporters of Harris from cities across the United States. Many had worked for his release for years.

Harris served more than 20 years in prison, 14 of those on death row. He was framed-up by police in 1970 when his family moved into a previously all-white neighborhood here. After months of racist harassment by the Ku Klux Klan and the police, Harris was stopped by police on his way to work one day and subsequently charged with four robberies and the rape of a white woman.

He was sent to Atmore prison to serve five life terms. In 1974, during protests against prison conditions later declared to be "cruel and unusual punishment," prisoners took two guards hostage in an attempt to expose the conditions to the public. The warden ordered guards to break up the protests, resulting in the death of one prisoner and a guard.

Although no evidence was presented, Harris was tried for the death of the guard. At the trial the prosecutor maintained that even though Harris did not personally stab the guard, his involvement in the protest meant he was accountable for the death. Using an 1859 slave-era law mandating the death penalty for an inmate convicted of killing a guard while serving a life term, Harris was convicted by an all-white jury and sentenced to death.

### Conviction thrown out

After 14 years on death row, Harris' sentence was overturned; the murder conviction was thrown out shortly thereafter. Harris was released from prison on May 20 by the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Prominent civil rights activists led the speakers list at the celebration. They described the impact of Harris' courageous fight for justice. Some, like Mattie Jones, representing the Louisville chapter of the NAARPR, recounted the time when Harris was led from the courtroom following his death-sentence verdict. Although bound by chains and shackles, he managed to raise his arm to his supporters in a gesture of power and solidarity.

One of Harris' attorneys described him as a man "with more grace than his oppressors" and someone who had suffered racist victimization not only at the hands of those who framed him, but repeatedly by the judicial system itself. He thanked Harris for his example of strength, which had given others the courage to fight as well.

Birmingham Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) President Abraham Woods noted how long it had taken for Harris to be freed. "Justice delayed is justice denied," he declared.

Colonel Stone Johnson, chair of the Birmingham NAARPR, introduced Sally Davis. Her daughter, Angela Davis, is a national leader of NAARPR and a former frame-up victim who was acquitted in 1970 after an international defense effort.

Carol Zippert, copublisher of the weekly *Greene County Democrat* and president of the Alabama New South Coalition, welcomed Harris home, but noted that racism and injustice still plague the world to which he returns.

Anne Braden, a longtime leader of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice and of the NAARPR, thanked Harris for 20 years of struggle which, she said, enabled those outside the prison walls to learn and fight alongside him. She explained that his battle had

awakened many because of his refusal to buckle under to the frame-up against him.

Spiver Gordon, president of the SCLC in Eutaw, Alabama, remarked that while Harris' release is a victory that should be celebrated, others like Mark Curtis are not yet free. Curtis is an Iowa unionist and political activist jailed on frame-up charges.

Kate Kaku, Curtis' wife, brought greetings from Curtis. She explained that her presence at the celebration was a promise she had made to Harris during her last visit with him in prison. She noted that other prisoners and frame-up victims like Gary Tyler, Leonard Peltier, and Curtis would take inspiration from Harris' victory.

Before Harris spoke, keynote speaker Fred Shuttlesworth, a founder of the SCLC and well-known civil rights leader, welcomed Harris. Capiph Washington, a former frame-up victim himself, introduced Harris.

Harris thanked his supporters for their love and sacrifice and urged all those present to unify their efforts in order to work together for the common goal of a better society.

The evening was highlighted by the gospel music of the Freedom Singers.

In an interview shortly after his release, Harris discussed his fight for justice.

### 'Chance to right this wrong'

"There were countless people who cared, who had compassion," Harris said, explaining why his case had become a symbol for people around the world. "When people saw this miscarriage of justice, they saw a chance to help, to rectify an injustice, to right this wrong."

Harris said that even on death row he was

at peace with himself because he knew he had done nothing wrong.

"I simply knew we had to take action, both on the legal front and with all the solidarity we could find," he said. "If you generate strong solidarity it can override injustices, even in the legal system. Sometimes you can even affect individuals within the system; not all of them will go along with the injustice."

"My case was used to bring back the death penalty in Alabama, because I was serving five life sentences and was the only one eligible to receive it," Harris said. "I was overlooked by society, because people outside didn't know the facts. Solidarity allows people outside to learn the facts. It allows open communication so people can begin to help."

Asked about the reaction of other inmates to his parole victory, Harris said, "I didn't win parole, solidarity did. And it worked. Many, many people made sacrifices on the outside. The majority of prisoners were very glad for me."

The media in Alabama raised an outcry against Harris' release, but this has not dampened his spirit. "I have received so much negative publicity for so many years, it broke me from reading much of it," Harris said. "I mostly read Third World publications. Many other papers take people's tragedies and exaggerate them, and blow them out of proportion. They don't care who they hurt or how they inflict pain. I knew I hadn't done anything wrong."

"This release is a blessing from God," Harris concluded. "The system never gave me much. I gave the system 21 years of my life. This is my reward."



Militant/Julie Wolenski  
Johnny Imani Harris. Fifteen year international defense campaign won his freedom from prison, May 20.

## S. African regime repeals Land Acts, resists demands for prisoners' release

BY GREG McCARTAN

Two of the most odious pillars of apartheid, the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and the Group Areas Act, were repealed by the South African parliament June 5.

At the same time, the African National Congress stepped up a series of mass actions demanding the government release political prisoners and take steps to halt attacks on anti-apartheid forces and residents of Black townships.

The Land Acts had placed the legal limit on land Blacks could own at 13.7 percent of South Africa's total area. The Group Areas Act strictly segregated areas of residence and business according to racial classifications.

Whites number 13 percent of South Africa's 37.5 million population. The Population Registration Act, whose repeal is also being discussed, assigns to each individual a classification: "White," "Black" (of African origin), "Coloured" (of mixed parentage), or "Asian" (also known as Indian).

### 'Law of dispossession'

Known as the "law of dispossession," the 1913 Natives' Land Act was the legal basis on which the regime drove some 3.5 million African farmers off their land in the last three decades alone.

After South African President F.W. de Klerk introduced draft legislation on land ownership in early March of this year, the ANC pointed out that simply ending the discriminatory laws left intact the decades-long impact of forcing Blacks off the land. The liberation organization called for the "restoration of land to the victims of forced removal."

Some Blacks began staging occupations of lands stolen from them.

Bowing a little to this pressure, the regime set up an advisory commission that could recommend allocating only state-owned land

to Black victims of forced removals.

H.J. Kriel, minister of Planning, Provincial Affairs and Housing, claimed the commission proved the regime is "not insensitive" to those "possibly disadvantaged in the past," reported the *New York Times*. He added that restoring lands seized from Africans is "not practical or financially viable."

While calling the new land legislation an "improvement," the ANC said an independent land commission with binding powers on distribution and relocation was needed.

### 'Neighborhood rights'

Opposition to the regime's moves also centered on wording in the bill dealing with the Group Areas Act. Initial legislation would have let neighborhoods erect their own bar-

riers to integration, effectively nullifying the repeal of the Group Areas Act in large portions of the country.

Although backing off a little on the measures neighborhoods could adopt, the legislation gives the green light to local areas to set their own "norms and standards" for communities.

The final wording was even too much for members of the Labor Party, who remained silent during the vote to show their opposition to this provision.

Blacks, who are not allowed to vote, have no representation in the parliament. Two subordinate chambers of the legislature are reserved for parties claiming to represent the Coloureds and Indians. The Labor Party is

Continued on Page 12

## Washington casts sole abstaining vote on resolution condemning apartheid

BY SETH GALINSKY

UNITED NATIONS — Washington's view of current events in South Africa was highlighted at a May 31 meeting of the United Nations' Economic and Social Council.

The U.S. delegate to the council cast the sole abstaining vote on a resolution condemning the violation of trade union rights in South Africa. The 40 other delegates present all voted in favor of the resolution. The vote of each country was recorded at the request of Washington to ensure that its displeasure would be noted.

"The United States remains deeply concerned about continuing problems in South Africa," U.S. delegate John Hurley claimed.

But the resolution's criticism of the arrest of trade union leaders and repression against

unions lacks "balance" he charged. Hurley denied that this repression is occurring.

What particularly irked the U.S. delegation was the characterization the resolution made of the South African government.

"The term 'apartheid regime,'" Hurley said, "is not an accurate description of the current situation."

Hurley singled out one paragraph in particular, which says that the council "demands once again the unimpeded exercise of trade union rights, the immediate unconditional release of all trade unionists imprisoned for exercising their legitimate trade union rights and the cessation of the persecution of trade unionists and repression of the independent black trade union movement."

The U.S. delegate complained that the paragraph is "overly severe."