

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Young Socialists take steps
to strengthen leadership

— PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 61/NO. 20 MAY 19, 1997

Bipartisan budget plan will slash Medicare

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Toasting each other in their bipartisan assault on social entitlements, the Clinton administration and Congressional negotiators reached a budget pact May 2.

"This agreement will help us to finish the job," President William Clinton crowed at the press conference where he announced the deal. Republican Speaker of the House Newton Gingrich claimed the deal was the completion of his so-called Contract with America.

The negotiations ended when the Congressional Budget Office supposedly discovered a "last-minute financial windfall" of \$225 billion, lowering the projected budget deficit over the next five years by that amount. The stated aim of the deal is a "balanced" budget.

The five-year accord includes a \$115 billion cut from Medicare — the government program that provides medical care to the elderly and disabled — over the next five years. Clinton had earlier called for slashing \$100 billion from Medicare in his 1998 budget proposal to Congress February 6.

The pact will increase Medicare premiums by \$1 per month, up from the current \$43.80 a month. The capitalist politicians

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Flood hits farmers in Canada and Midwest

BY ROBERT SIMMS

TORONTO — Residents of southern Manitoba, one of Canada's prairie provinces, are fighting the worst flood in 171 years. Some 25,000 farmers, rural townspeople, and Winnipeg residents have been forced to evacuate their farms and homes.

A giant lake up to 40 kilometers (25 miles) wide extends along the length of the Red River and several tributaries from just south of Winnipeg into North Dakota.

The losses and hardship facing those evacuated in both Manitoba and North Dakota are devastating. So far in Manitoba more than 800 farmsteads and homes have

Flood relief now!

Campaign statement by
Communist League in Canada
— page 14

been flooded out. Many more farmers, while their house and farm buildings may be above floodwaters or diked, have their land underwater. Many farmers have had to evacuate their livestock or send it prematurely to be slaughtered. One farmer was forced to sell 40,000 chickens to processors. Tens of thousands of pigs and cattle have been moved to temporary quarters, and farmers face problems of finding feed for them.

Estimates of flood damage to public infrastructure alone run as high as CAN\$75 million (US\$1=CAN\$1.40), while damage

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Workers in Cuba reject Washington's blackmail

Millions turn out for May Day parades

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND MARTIN KOPPEL

HAVANA, Cuba — Singing, dancing, and chanting, Cubans poured into the streets of the country's capital leading to Revolution Plaza here on May Day. About 1.3 million demonstrated in Havana. Similar marches took place throughout the Caribbean island on this international working-class holiday. Altogether, several million people turned out across the nation, in one of the largest mobilizations here in years.

It was the broadest and most visible rejection of U.S. imperialism's attempts to divide working people from their revolutionary leadership and force the Cuban people to submit to Washington's dictates through economic strangulation.

"Can imperialism — with its blockade, its Helms-Burton law, and aggression of all kinds — take away our independence, our revolution, our socialism?" asked Pedro Ross, general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), in a brief speech just before the Havana march began under the hot morning sun.

"No!" tens of thousands boomed.

"Will the exploiters be able to return and take away our land, our homes, our factories, our hospitals, and our schools?" said Ross.

"No!" shouted most in the crowd.

"Will we workers go back to being slaves, under the whip of the capitalist boss, to fill the pockets of a bourgeois minority with the product of our sweat?" the CTC leader asked.

The cry of "No!" resonated through the vast square.

The spirit of this exchange permeated the

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Arnaldo Santos

About 1.3 million people filled the streets of Havana for May Day demonstration

Italian garrison is fired on in Albania

BY BOBBIS MISAILIDES

ATHENS, Greece — Thousands of working people gathered at the Square of the Flag in Vlore, Albania, on May Day to demand the ousting of President Sali Berisha. The protest was organized by the Committee for the Salvation of the People to press for the president's resignation and warn imperialist forces occupying Albania

not to reinforce Berisha's ongoing hold on power.

Three days later, the Italian garrison in Vlore was fired on, in the first direct assault on the imperialist troops in Albania. No one was injured in that incident.

Vlore remains at the center of the working-class rebellion that erupted in early February against the results of the "market re-

forms" of the pro-capitalist Berisha administration. The confrontation was sparked by the collapse of fraudulent investment schemes, known as "pyramids," which the Berisha government had backed. The revolt has caused a deep crisis in the bureaucratic caste that has controlled political power in this Balkan workers state for decades.

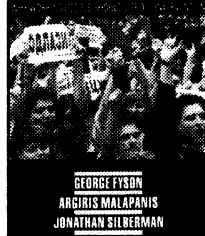
Since their landing in Albania in mid-April, imperialist forces have continued to spread their detachments around the country from the initial camps they set up in Tirana, Durres, Fier, and Vlore. On May 5, 300 Romanian troops, accompanied by Italian and French soldiers, moved into Gjirokaster, in southern Albania. Greek troops were deployed from Tirana to Elbasan. The 6,500 foreign troops, led by Italian army units, are collaborating with the government of "national reconciliation" to press for the dissolution of rebel councils in the south and the disarming of the population.

The ultimate goal of the intervention is to speed the day when imperialist powers can do away with the remaining gains of the 1944-46 socialist revolution and re-impose the complete domination of capitalism. The Italian, Greek, French, and other forces are carrying out this mission under the pretext of guaranteeing distribution of "humanitarian aid."

Many working people hold illusions that

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THE TRUTH ABOUT YUGOSLAVIA



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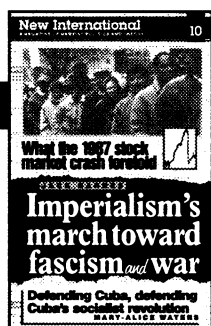
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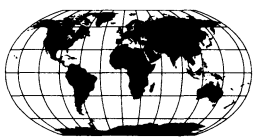
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555 fascist candidates to campaign in France elections

The fascist National Front (NF) party announced May 1 plans to run 555 candidates in the legislative elections scheduled in France May 25 and June 1. NF leader Jean-Marie Le Pen said he would not run for a parliamentary seat so that he could challenge French president Jacques Chirac in the next presidential elections, in 2002.

Le Pen spoke to an audience of 10,000 on May 1, as he sought to gain a broader hearing in the midst of a social crisis in France where unemployment is 12.8 percent. In recent elections, the fascist party has won mayoral contests in four cities.

Austrian fascist to form 'union'

Jörg Haider, fascist leader of Austria's Freedom party told 3,000 people at a May Day rally in Linz he planned to form a "Trade Union New" for "skilled workers, the diligent, and women." Haider is seeking to become Austrian chancellor in the next elections, which could take place in 1998. "Now that we have more support from working people it is important that we have better representation in the trade union movement," Haider told the rally. Two years ago Haider was filmed addressing a secret meeting of veterans of Hitler's Waffen SS.

In elections for the European parliament last October, the Freedom party won almost 28 percent of the vote, nearly as much as the two parties in the ruling coalition government. The Social Democrats won 29.2 percent and the conservative People's party won 29.6 percent in that ballot.

U.S., EU avert food trade war

Washington backed off a threat to block \$300 million worth of meat from countries in the European Union (EU) after forcing a last minute deal on the EU to accept each other's testing and inspection methods. Since April 1, the EU has blocked exports from the United States for red meat, poultry, eggs, dairy products and fish, worth some \$125 million a year. The U.S. government and trade officials in the EU will continue to ban poultry exports from each side, London's *Financial Times* reported.

U.S. poultry bosses issued a joint state-

ment declaring, "European chicken and turkey producers have been protected from American competition since the early 1960s."

Military cracks whip in Turkey

Cops in Turkey closed down seven buildings April 27 housing Islamic education classes after the military demanded a crackdown on Muslim organizations by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. An April 26 meeting the National Security Council (NSC) demanded Erbakan implement anti-Islamic measures or resign. Two True Path party members resigned from the coalition government in late April and pressure is mounting on Tansu Çiller, deputy prime minister and True Path leader, to pull out. Turkey's military leaders sent a column of tanks through an Ankara suburb in February after its mayor, a member of Erbakan's Refah party, invited the Iranian ambassador to give a speech in favor of an Islamic state.

Corruption scandal wracks India

Political turmoil continues to stalk India as the Central Bureau of Investigation announced April 28 it will prosecute 56 top politicians on corruption charges. The Central Bureau of Investigation said the corruption scandal involved the misuse of state funds worth up to \$280 million over several years from a Bihar state scheme to provide subsidized animal feed.

The accused include Laloo Prasad Yadav, chief minister of Bihar, who is also president of Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's Janata Dal party. Gujral was sworn in as prime minister April 21 after H.D. Gowda was forced out of that position on April 11 after 10 months in office. An unnamed business executive of a major U.S. company told



Under the pressure of protests like the one above in February, the Spanish government passed a law that gives gay and lesbian couples the right to marry and receive most of the legal benefits associated with marriage.

the *Wall Street Journal* Gujral's appointment was a "setback for business and economic reform" in India.

Class struggle rocks oil production in Nigeria

Assassins armed with cutlasses and automatic weapons raided two villages in Nigeria April 28, where activists have organized protests to demand compensation for environmental damage caused by oil companies, including Shell and Chevron. The Nigerian military regime has also sent troops to quell a struggle for land rights in the southern port of Warri, the second-largest oil producing center in Nigeria. Strikes and other labor actions disrupted production of more than 400,000 barrels of oil per day in Port Harcourt in late April.

The Nigerian economy depends on producing some 2 million barrels of oil per day for more than 90 percent of its foreign exchange earnings. Protesters in Warri say their village has seen very little development despite the extraction of enormous wealth from there over the last 30 years.

Manila, Beijing dispute islands

The Philippines government put its military forces on alert April 30 after supposedly identifying three Chinese warships near the Spratly islands. The Spratlys are a chain of atolls and reefs in the South China Sea

estimated to be rich in oil and mineral deposits. The islands are claimed in whole or part by regimes in the Philippines, China, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam and Taiwan. According to the Associated Press, Philippines Gen. Renaldo Reyes said a Filipino surveillance plane reported May 2 that Beijing removed its armed vessels from the waters near the disputed islands, easing the tensions.

1,000 protest Brazil mine sell-off

Thousands of trade unionists and others in Brazil demonstrated April 28-29 against government moves to sell the state-owned mining company, Vale do Rio Doce. Brazilian cops attacked the two-day mobilization with tear gas and a water cannon. The protesters called for a referendum, while former presidents Jose Sarney and Itamar Franco accused the regime of President Fernando Cardoso of selling off Brazil's mineral wealth cheaply. The government planned to sell a 40-45 percent share in the iron-ore mine — the world's largest — in an auction in Rio de Janeiro.

Ohio school voucher plan nixed

The Ohio District Court of Appeals ruled 3 to 0 on May 1 that the state's \$5.5 million voucher program to subsidize private schools was unconstitutional. The Cleveland teachers union challenged the program, which the court declared advances religion in violation of the separation of church and state because it provided government aid to religious schools.

FBI wants more eavesdropping

Executives from the telecommunications industry and civil libertarians issued a statement asserting that the FBI is pressing phone companies across the United States to install equipment in their new digital communications systems that would enhance their wiretapping capabilities. The Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act of 1994 requires companies to accommodate FBI surveillance operations.

Phone companies are installing new switches that do "not include all the functionality required to satisfy evidentiary needs dictated by law and the courts," the spy agency claimed. Industry officials have balked at the FBI's recommendations because of the non-negotiable attitude of the secret police and because many of the switches will have to be upgraded or replaced once an agreement on surveillance standards is reached, raising the financial costs for the phone companies.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Imperialist hands off Zaire!

Washington and other imperialist powers are stepping up their propaganda for military intervention in Zaire as the rebel forces prepare to topple the Mobutu dictatorship. The 'Militant' explains the facts about this rebellion and why workers should oppose U.S. and other imperialist troops deployed in Africa.



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The Militant

Vol. 61/No.20

Closing news date: May 8, 1997

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Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: 73311.2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant

Internet: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

The Militant can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:/11/pubs/militant

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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scription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. **Asia:** send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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Floods hit farmers in Canada, gov't relief is minimal

Continued from front page

to family-owned property could run into the hundreds of millions.

The government has refused full compensation to flood victims. They are offering up to CAN\$100,000 in assistance for those who can afford to pay the first 20 percent in damages. This deal will exclude large numbers of working people. Ottawa has pledged only CAN\$25 million in flood relief.

The town of Ste. Agathe, where 500 people live, was submerged when a temporary dike failed. Several towns in the river valley have permanent ring dikes, which are holding, but they are empty of residents. The land could be underwater for weeks.

The city of Winnipeg has been relatively protected from the deluge by a floodway system built in the 1960s after a devastating flood in 1950. The floodway diverts a considerable portion of the river's flow around the city. While most of the towns on the flood plain also have permanent dikes around them, farmland and farm buildings are unprotected.

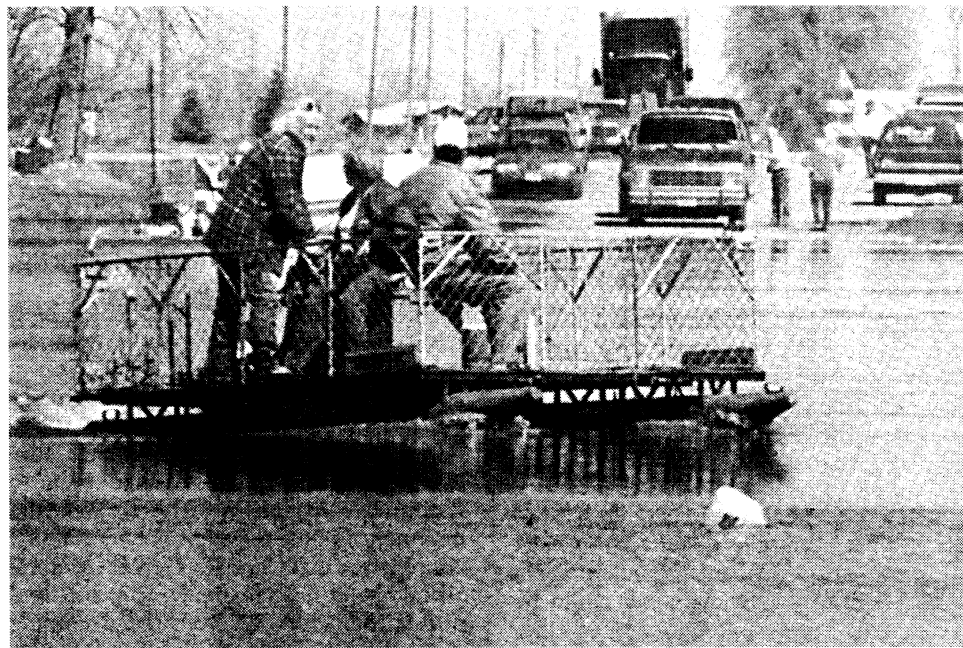
The damage is even more severe in North Dakota and Minnesota, where 60,000 people were forced from their homes and farms. The city of Grand Forks, North Dakota, was

hit by severe flooding when city authorities underestimated the scope of the rising floodwaters and then fire demolished three city blocks. Estimates of the losses exceed US\$1 billion. Some 1.7 million acres of cropland is underwater there and unavailable for spring planting. A combination of an extremely cold winter, blizzards, and the flood, has killed up to 100,000 cattle in the state — 10 percent of its livestock.

Ottawa has sent in 7,000 soldiers from across the country to help in dealing with the Manitoba flood — in the largest operation of the Canadian Armed Forces since the Korean War. Both the government and the big-business media are consciously using this particular initiative to try to buttress the image of the Canadian military. Acts of torture, murder, and beatings by its members in Somalia, and sexual assaults and black marketeering in Bosnia have been front page news in recent years.

Four of the eight large photographs of people fighting the flood in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* have been soldiers, though they are a small percentage of the volunteer sandbaggers and dike builders.

Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien has come under considerable criticism for call-



Floods in Canada, North Dakota, and Minnesota have left thousands without homes.

ing a federal election just as the crest of the floodwaters was approaching Manitoba from North Dakota. He flew into Winnipeg April 26 to make an appearance at a dike, then flew back to Ottawa to announce the election the following day.

This deluge and the fact that flooding is a periodic danger facing the valley are in large part the result of the impact capitalist agricultural practices have on land and water management.

Southern Manitoba is a flat plain that is a glacial lake bottom formed when the Ice Age glaciers were retreating. The Red River valley, which before European settlement was

full of swamps and wet grasslands, is one of the most densely drained regions in the world. The drainage ditches speed spring runoff, allowing machinery onto the land earlier. This lengthens the growing season in this northerly region, providing one protection against crop failure. The drainage also burdens the river with faster runoff and increased risk of flooding.

Retired University of Manitoba zoology professor William Pruitt noted in an interview that other practices contribute to the problem as well. He pointed to "the system of land tenure we have, where land is divided into sections and quarter-sections a half mile on a side, which prevents superior land management practices like contour plowing. That would allow the land to absorb more water and slow runoff." He added that a general reevaluation of crop practices should follow. For example, farmers could be encouraged to grow crops like various types of hay that are suited to wetter land.

Barley farmers vote to maintain protection of central marketing board

BY HOWARD BROWN

ROSETOWN, Saskatchewan — Western Canadian barley producers have voted by a decisive 62.9 percent majority in favor of retaining the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) as exclusive marketing agent for malting and export barley. The vote shows that among small- and medium-sized producers, the board marketing system is seen as providing significant protection from the profit-gouging of the private grain trade.

Out of 77,437 farmers eligible to vote, 58,042 mailed in ballots — a turnout of nearly 75 percent, reflecting the intensity of debate on this issue over the past few months.

In response to the aggressive campaign of the private grain trade and the lobby groups for large farmers, about 37 per cent voted for an end to the board's jurisdiction over barley in favor of sales through the "open market." Since the mid-1970s, successive capitalist governments have sought to fatten corporate agriculture's profits through chipping away at the wheat board's authority.

"I'm very pleased," said Nettie Wiebe, president of the National Farmers Union (NFU), which campaigned in support of the board. Describing the victory as "a landslide," Wiebe called on board opponents to respect the plebiscite's outcome and let up in their drive against the CWB.

But there's no sign that Wiebe's call will be heeded by the anti-CWB forces, who are presenting the vote's results as a sign of the growing strength of their campaign.

"I don't think this is a grain issue. I don't think this is a barley issue. I think this is an issue about basic individual rights," said Buck Spencer of the Western Barley Growers Association. In a second blow to wheat board opponents, a few days later, a federal court judge ruled against a legal challenge to the board system by the Barley Growers, the Alberta Barley Commission, and a number of individual farmers.

Spencer, like other board opponents, complained that farmers were not provided with the ballot option of voluntarily selling through the CWB. "I think about 85 percent of the farmers would be in favor of a

dual market," he said.

Ted Allan, president of the United Grain Growers elevator company, said the vote confirmed his company's belief most farmers support a voluntary CWB. The vote had not resolved the barley marketing question, Allan argued.

Dual marketing is "just another way of destroying the board," countered Eric Upshall, minister of agriculture in Saskatchewan's New Democratic Party government, which supported a pro-board vote in the plebiscite. Under the current marketing setup, the CWB is sole marketer of barley for malting and export, as well as for wheat. The returns from board sales are pooled and shared among farmers on the basis of their deliveries. A voluntary wheat board operating in a "dual market" would permit large farmers and grain traders to cherry-pick more lucrative markets, diminishing the returns from the pool account distributed among producers.

The late-March Western Canada hearings of the House of Commons agriculture committee provided a forum for the ongoing debate, with legislation now before Parliament that would significantly undermine the wheat board. Among other measures, the Liberal government bill would enable the CWB to purchase grain on a cash basis outside the pooling system.

Most individual farmers who showed up at the hearings supported the board, the weekly *Western Producer* reported. In fact, at the Saskatoon hearing, the National Farmers Union was accused by a Reform MP of stacking the hearing.

At the Calgary hearings, Conservative provincial agriculture minister Walter Paszkowski threatened that Alberta would opt out of the wheat board's jurisdiction if further measures were not introduced by Ottawa to weaken the board. Representing anti-wheat board activist Tom Jackson, Victoria lawyer Doug Christie complained that Ottawa passes laws to allow women to have abortions but won't allow farmers to sell their own wheat. Christie is best known for his courtroom defense of anti-Semites and Holocaust deniers James Keegstra and Ernst Zundel.

Meanwhile, newspaper ads placed by the right-wing Canadian Farmers for Justice claim the group has signed up 425 farmers for a convoy of grain trucks to cross the Canada-U.S. border to defy the CWB's jurisdiction over wheat and barley.

Howard Brown is a grain farmer in Rosetown, Saskatchewan.

20,000 workers protest antiunion bill in Australia

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia — Thousands of workers rallied in Perth, West Australia, on April 29 to protest new anti-union industrial legislation. Union organizers hailed the rally as the biggest in West Australia's history, estimating 20,000 workers turned out.

The same day, interstate road and rail deliveries were halted and no airline flights left or arrived in Perth. Strikes took place at the Kwinana and Muji power stations in West Australia. Teachers, nurses and other public sector workers also took strike action disrupting communications and other services across the state.

The 24-hour stoppage was part of an Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)-sponsored blockade of West Australia. The actions coincided with the antiunion bill being introduced in the State's Upper House. (It has already been passed in the Lower House.)

A similar 24-hour blockade was organized in October 1995 when this legislation was first proposed. This resulted in the West Australian government withdrawing it.

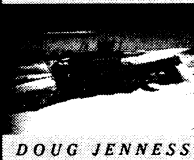
The new industrial legislation will impose some of the toughest restrictions on union activity in Australia. It introduces compulsory secret ballots before any form of industrial action is taken and it increases fines on individuals and unions for illegal strikes. It severely restricts unions' right of entry into workplaces and effectively outlaws the use of union funds for political purposes.

The rally was addressed by Jennie George, the president of ACTU, who said the legislation contravenes international conventions on freedom of association.

The ACTU decided on April 30 to extend the campaign against the West Australian government nationally. Public sector workers are being directed not to collect State taxes and charges. The Transport Workers Union is continuing to organize rolling strikes disrupting freight deliveries.

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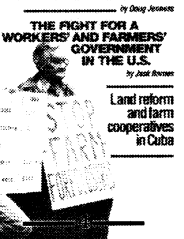


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2,500 rally for gay rights in Alabama

BY CINDY JAQUITH

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — Some 2,500 people here protested the local ABC-TV affiliate's refusal to broadcast the April 30 segment of the popular sitcom *Ellen*. In the episode, lead character "Ellen Morgan," played by Ellen DeGeneres, comes out as a lesbian. In the weeks leading up to the airing of the program, DeGeneres had publicly announced she is gay.

When the ABC channel here decided to ban the program, gay activists from Birmingham Pride Alabama searched for a public facility where the show could be broadcast as a protest. Rebuffed by one theater, they finally secured downtown Birmingham's Boutwell Auditorium.

The night of the showing, 2,500 people poured into the auditorium, exceeding the expectations of most activists. Many national media also showed up, including CNN, the *Los Angeles Times*, Reuters, *USA Today*, "Entertainment Tonight," and the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

Birmingham's ABC affiliate was the only one in the country to black out the sitcom.

According to the *Birmingham News*, station president Jerry Heilman "called it inappropriate for family viewing."

But many people clearly rejected both ABC's censorship and its antigay stance. Among those attending the special showing of *Ellen* were not only gays but a significant number of others who support gay rights. Before the broadcast began, Cathy Renna, from the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, spoke briefly about the importance of the large turnout here. When she reported that Chrysler, General Motors, Wendy's, and Johnson & Johnson had pulled their TV ads from the evening's show, the crowd boomed.

Kevin Snow, vice president of Birmingham Pride Alabama, declared the strong turnout was a statement that gays "will no more be cropped out of the picture."

The one-hour TV program followed, interrupted constantly by cheers and laughter as *Ellen* took well-aimed jabs at many myths and prejudices about homosexuals.

Two days before the showing, more than 100 people held an outdoor rally to condemn



Militant/Leonel Cabrera

Protest in March against bombing of gay club and abortion clinic in Atlanta. Thousands have taken action rejecting the antigay propaganda of capitalist politicians.

ABC's censorship and defend gay rights.

Meanwhile, on April 29, a federal appeals court upheld a lower court decision that an Alabama law denying state funds to gay organizations is unconstitutional and discriminatory.

The law was originally challenged in court by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Alliance at the University of South Alabama in Mobile. That group had been denied student activity funding for a regional gay rights conference.

Socialists petition for ballot in Washington, D.C.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Supporters of Mary Martin, Socialist Workers candidate for chair of the city council in the District of Columbia are pushing to complete a petitioning campaign by May 14 to get on the ballot. Martin is an airline worker and a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1759. She has been involved in the fight for women's rights, in mobilizations against imperialist wars and in working-class politics for more than 25 years. The socialist candidate will need 3,000 signatures on petitions to obtain ballot status for the July 22 special election.

The city council was mandated to call the election following the death of council chairman Dave Clarke. Martin will be opposed by Democratic councilwoman Linda Cropp, and Republican candidate Benjamin Metz.

Entering the last week of the effort, supporters have gathered more than 1,700 signatures at campuses, shopping areas, street corners, on the job, and at political meetings. Petitioners have sold more than 47 books published by Pathfinder Press, a major publisher of the writings and speeches by Fidel Castro, Ernesto (Che) Guevara, Malcolm X, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and other revolutionary working-class leaders.

The socialist campaign was well received at a protest of 200 Black farmers and their supporters against racist discrimination they face from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The socialist candidate also attended some of the rounds of hearings on a proposal to close 11 of the 16 schools in the city. The proposal is expected to be approved by a "trustee school board." Elected school board members were replaced with the trustees just weeks after their election last November. The trustee board was appointed by the Financial Control Board, which was itself appointed by the U.S. president in 1995.

Angry protests have been organized across the city against the cutbacks. Several parents and students noted in the hearings that some of the schools proposed to be closed are among the better performing schools in the system. The buildings from several schools to be closed are slated for

leasing to "generate revenue." Some 5,800 students will be affected by the closings.

"My campaign is opposed to closing a single school in the district," Martin explained. "These protests are an important part of the fight to defend public education."

Martin and her supporters also joined protests by students at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) against proposals to slash its funding. Some 200 students there have signed to get the socialist candidate on the ballot. UDC, the only public university in this city, is mostly attended by Black, Latino, Asian, and working-class students. The university is a product of the massive protests for equal and expanded education during the civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

The socialist candidate is also campaigning against renewed attempts to impose the death penalty in the city. On April 21 Mayor Marion Barry asked the city council to adopt

legislation imposing the death penalty for those convicted of killing a cop. A referendum ordered by Congress to impose broader death penalty provisions was overwhelmingly defeated in 1992.

"The death penalty is nothing more than a weapon of terror wielded by the capitalist rulers against working people," explained the socialist candidate.

The socialist candidate also calls for cutting the workweek to 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay to create more jobs at union wages; defending and expanding social security; support for striking workers; no imperialist intervention in Albania or Zaire; ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian land; and support for the Cuban revolution and end to the embargo and travel ban against Cuba.

Sam Manuel is a member of the United Transportation Union.

Canada CP wins victory for election rights

BY ROGER ANNIS

VANCOUVER — The Communist Party of Canada has won a victory for democratic rights in a court challenge to a 1994 seizure

of some of the party's assets by Elections Canada, the election agency of the Canadian government. On May 2, a judge of the Ontario Supreme Court granted \$20,000 in court costs as well as ongoing legal expenses pending another hearing of the party's case next November.

The judge also gave government lawyers until May 5 to show cause why the name of the party should not appear on the ballot in the Toronto riding (electoral district) of Davenport where party leader Miguel Figueroa is running in the current federal election.

In 1993, the Canadian Parliament adopted amendments to the Canada Elections Act aimed at muzzling small political parties. The new law raised the fee a candidate must pay to run in a federal election from \$200 to \$1,000 and the number of signatures of voters required on nomination papers from 25 to 100.

Another section of the new law targeted registered political parties which the government agency decides it doesn't like. It provides for the forced dissolution and seizure of the assets of a registered party which no longer meets the minimum criteria to be recognized as such. The principal criteria is that a registered party must present a minimum of 50 candidates in a federal election. There are 301 ridings represented in the Canadian Parliament.

Registered parties receive government funding and guaranteed access to paid political broadcasts, and they are the only parties with the right to have party names appear on the ballot alongside the names of their candidates.

The Communist Party, a registered party in 1993, was hit by the new law during and after the federal election that year where it presented eight candidates. Its name was not allowed on the ballot and some of its finan-

cial and physical assets were seized in April 1994. At least one other party that was deregistered following the 1993 election, the Rhinoceros Party, was not required to turn over its assets.

All parties represented in the Canadian Parliament in 1993 voted in favor of the amendments to the election act. The Communist Party is presenting 13 candidates in the current federal election.

In Vancouver, meanwhile, the party has denounced an April 23 death threat against its members. On that night, an envelope containing 20 bullets and a hand-written note was delivered through the mail slot of the party's office in Vancouver. It read in part, "Our blood has reached the boiling point ... the British Columbia Militia declares war upon your Communist Party. To show we mean business, we include a sample of our M-16's power. We shall exercise this power by randomly shooting people who dare to enter the Communist headquarters." The offices house the editorial office of the party's newspaper, the *People's Voice*, and Kimball Cariou, the CP's candidate in the current federal election in the Vancouver East electoral district, works there as the newspaper editor.

The party has demanded a full police investigation and increased police surveillance of the busy street where its headquarters is located, and says the response by police has been totally unsatisfactory. On April 28, the Vancouver Police informed the party that it had ceased investigating the threat and would not provide any special surveillance of the area surrounding the party's offices.

Roger Annis is the candidate of the Communist League in the riding of Vancouver Kingsway. He is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Young Socialists join May Day actions of 5,000 in Iceland

BY GREG McCARTAN

Following a May Day demonstration of 5,000 workers and youth in Reykjavik, Iceland, 60 people attended an open house at the Pathfinder bookstore. The event was sponsored by supporters of the *Militant* newspaper and the Young Socialists (YS).

"One reason for the big turnout," said Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdóttir, who helped organize the meeting, "was that there was a one-day strike just before Easter of all the unions that organize unskilled workers in Reykjavik. This strike was part of the general negotiations that cover most unionized workers in the country, some of which have not been concluded."

An agreement was reached granting wage increases of 12 percent over three years, which covers unions of unskilled workers and workers in light industry, food, docks, and municipalities. "Many were not satisfied with the outcome and thought more should have been negotiated," Gunnlaugsdóttir said. Some 1,000 workers remain on strike in the fishing industry freezing plants in the western part of the country. They are demanding higher wage increases than in the general agreement. Electricians have also not concluded agreements.

"Students at one school also had a one-day strike," Gunnlaugsdóttir said. "They were protesting that those who fail exams

have to pay money in order to retake them."

The Iceland Federation of Labor (ASI) organized the May Day demonstration and rally. "The event used to be mainly banners of unions and a few central demands. Today the central slogan was: Defend the Pension Funds," she said. "There were a variety of slogans and banners. I saw at least two Cuban flags and several people had revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara portrayed on placards. A group who supports the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement joined, raising protests against the attack on them by the Peruvian government. A person carried a sign demanding the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal," who is on death row after a frame-up conviction in Pennsylvania. There were unionists carrying signs saying "More pay for the eight hours." The Young Socialists had a banner.

Gylfi Pall Hersir, a communist and member of Dawn, the general workers union, spoke at the open house after the May Day rally on "Is the fight for socialism on the agenda?" Gunnlaugsdóttir said that "all kinds of people came from the rally, including at least four high school students and several members of Dawn, which is the biggest union in the country. Several high school students expressed interest in joining the YS, and we sold three *Militant* subscriptions, as well as books and pamphlets."

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Socialists have banner month selling revolutionary books

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS
AND GREG McCARTAN

Socialists around the world scored a real victory in April by selling more than 3,000 Pathfinder books and pamphlets to unionists, fighters involved in strikes and protests, youth seeking information on what socialism is, and others. These are the results from the first full-month of a special effort to utilize a "super sale" by Pathfinder of a wide range of revolutionary literature.

This week, the publishing house's distributor packaged and shipped many thousand more titles that will soon be on literature tables, shown around on the job, and put up on shelves in Pathfinder bookstores around the world. Volunteers have filled over 100 orders, including 125 of the special offer being advertised in the *Militant* of the 14-volume *Writings* of Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the Russian revolution and the Communist International.

As part of this effort, socialists are organizing classes, especially on "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today," the feature article in *New International* no. 1, by Jack Barnes. Together with reaching out with the books and the *Militant* and joining the many social protest actions and political events, these educational classes will help interest those new to the socialist movement in joining the Young Socialists or the Socialist Workers Party, as well as attending the party's convention June 11-14 in Oberlin, Ohio.

Socialists plan to build on the experience gained in April over the coming months. For example, communist workers in the rail and steel industries held national meetings May 3-4 in San Francisco and Pittsburgh respectively. Participants in the meetings discussed some of the progress they are making in getting Pathfinder titles into the hands of co-workers in their unions and the increased political activity they are carrying out on the job as a result of the stepped-up sales effort.

L.A. socialists sell nearly 500 books

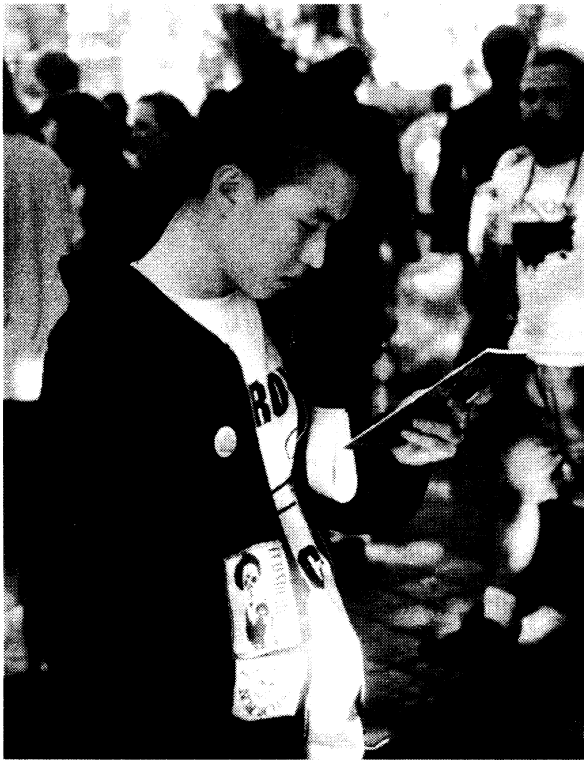
In Los Angeles, Craig Honts reports that socialists sold 495 Pathfinder titles in the month of April, including 169 books and pamphlets in the bookstore itself.

"We set up literature tables inside and outside the movie theater showing a movie on Che Guevara in Bolivia. Our table was swamped! During the first week the movie was shown we sold more than \$2,200 worth of books and pamphlets including 23 copies of *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*. I think we'll go over \$3,000 before the movie stops playing here," Honts said. "We met two high school students at the theater who came to the Young Socialist class on Che Guevara. They told us 'the best thing about that movie was seeing it and meeting you guys.'"

The Los Angeles Pathfinder Bookstore set up a table at the *L.A. Times* Book Fair, where 123 books and pamphlets were sold. "Our best seller there was the *Communist Manifesto*," Honts reports, adding that they put books on special sale at the front of the table, but noted "it's the politics — what is in the books — that sells them."

"We can sell a lot of books to co-workers, also. I take a briefcase to work full of books and open it up at lunch time. One co-worker wanted every 'supersaver' title on Malcolm X to build up his library. He also ordered *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks and Fighting Racism in World War II*, a real popular book."

Many socialist workers have been finding ways to let fellow unionists know about the sale. Steelworkers in Cleveland put out a leaflet organized by topic, listing titles on labor struggles, the fight for Black liberation,



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Socialists topped the sales chart in Los Angeles, above.

socialism, and others. Others have been marking the books in a Pathfinder catalog available at special sales prices so coworkers can see the entire selection of titles distributed by the publishing house as well.

Activists in Philadelphia sold 135 Pathfinder titles last month, said garment worker Pete Seidman. "We sold 19 books and pamphlets at an April 27 protest against the Clinton administration's volunteer summit. The next day nine titles were bought by participants at an all-day teach-in organized by Local 1199 of the hospital workers union." Seidman said socialist workers sold 11 books at a feminist conference held at Temple University, including several copies of *Women's Evolution* by Evelyn Reed.

"We sold 146 books and pamphlets in April, our highest monthly total since we began the book sale effort more than a year ago," writes Peter Thierjung, Pathfinder Bookstore director in Greensboro. Thierjung reported a leader of the Concerned Citizens of Tillery, the group organizing Black farmers protesting land loss, bought 15 Pathfinder titles, including *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*.

Socialist workers from Chicago participated along with 150 others in the National Independent Politics Summit in Decatur, Illinois May 1-3. While staffing a table at the conference, they sold 41 Pathfinder books, signed up two new members of the Pathfinder Readers Club, and four new subscribers to the *Militant*, reports Angel Lariscy. A member of the United Steel Workers of America who works at Bridgestone/Firestone in the city and was active in the strike there two years ago purchased eight books, as well as renewed his subscription to the paper. Conference participants bought five copies of *A Packinghouse Worker's Fight for Justice: The Mark Curtis Story*.

The *Militant* urges supporters to continue sending sales stories and pictures of political events, on the job, campus tables, plant gates, and at picket lines of striking workers. These reports strengthen the coverage of the response of workers, fighters, and youth to Pathfinder books, the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Great sales in garment, textile

BY JOAN PALTRINERI

GREENSBORO — Members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) are beginning to step up sales of Pathfinder titles to co-workers on the job. Socialist workers around the country who are members of UNITE are promoting the sale and sold 34 books in April, going over a goal of 26 for the month.

One member of Local 2603 at the Kmart distribution center here bought two books of Malcolm X's speeches and plans to buy more next month. He said the sale offers him an opportunity to expand his library. Three other Local 2603 members bought titles on Cuba to learn more about the Cuban revolution. One person also signed up for an introductory subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial*. Another unionist bought an introductory subscription to the *Militant*. One copy of *New International* has also been purchased.

Four members of Local 1994 at the Tultex textile mill in Martinsville, Virginia, placed orders for five titles, including four books of Malcolm X's speeches and a copy of the *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*. Peter Thierjung, a member of the local, reports that the orders, taken over three days, were the result of talking to as many co-workers are possible about the sale.

Sales to UNITE members in Atlanta include three titles on the Cuban revolution, five books of Malcolm X's speeches, and a copy of the *Eastern Airlines Strike: Accomplishments of Rank-and-File Machinists*. "The response to the sale opens new opportunities to discuss with coworkers subscribing to the socialist press," said Mike Italie who works at the plant.

Joan Paltrineri is a member of UNITE Local 2603 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books

| Countries/Cities | April | | | Previous Months | | |
|-----------------------|-------|------|------|-----------------|------|------|
| | Goal | Sold | % | Mar | Feb | Jan |
| UNITED STATES | | | | | | |
| Los Angeles | 120 | 495 | 413% | 94% | 95% | 81% |
| Greensboro | 41 | 146 | 356% | 90% | 20% | 22% |
| Philadelphia | 41 | 135 | 329% | 102% | 54% | 88% |
| Detroit | 54 | 136 | 252% | 89% | 233% | 123% |
| Washington, D.C. | 64 | 157 | 245% | 134% | 67% | 84% |
| Boston | 65 | 152 | 234% | 137% | 55% | 100% |
| Peoria | 27 | 62 | 230% | 56% | 52% | 130% |
| San Francisco | 110 | 252 | 229% | 113% | 168% | 243% |
| Pittsburgh | 54 | 123 | 228% | 96% | 49% | 71% |
| Chicago | 77 | 161 | 209% | 97% | 84% | 103% |
| Miami | 41 | 81 | 198% | 107% | 144% | 117% |
| Des Moines | 45 | 88 | 196% | 16% | 71% | 31% |
| Atlanta | 48 | 86 | 179% | 156% | 88% | 117% |
| Twin Cities | 104 | 173 | 166% | 29% | 43% | 41% |
| Morgantown | 32 | 50 | 156% | 19% | 69% | 56% |
| Salt Lake City | 27 | 34 | 126% | 30% | 74% | 50% |
| Houston | 65 | 81 | 125% | 97% | 128% | 34% |
| New York | 245 | 283 | 116% | 60% | 43% | 45% |
| Birmingham | 36 | 38 | 106% | 44% | 78% | 106% |
| Cleveland | 50 | 53 | 106% | 70% | 94% | 66% |
| Seattle | 80 | 79 | 99% | 84% | 79% | 84% |
| Newark | 171 | 153 | 89% | 76% | 57% | 51% |
| U.S. Total | 1436 | 2523 | 176% | 74% | 71% | 74% |
| Goal/Should be | 1800 | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| NEW ZEALAND | | | | | | |
| Auckland | 45 | 66 | 147% | 62% | 41% | 100% |
| Christchurch | 35 | 59 | 169% | 51% | 100% | 136% |
| N.Z. Total | 80 | 125 | 156% | 80% | 61% | 112% |
| UNITED KINGDOM | | | | | | |
| Manchester | 56 | 63 | 113% | 0% | 0% | 46% |
| London | 150 | 145 | 97% | 97% | 78% | 141% |
| U.K. Total | 206 | 208 | 101% | 64% | 36% | 95% |
| AUSTRALIA | | | | | | |
| | 36 | 36 | 100% | 105% | 44% | 175% |
| GREECE | | | | | | |
| | 13 | 13 | 100% | 331% | 23% | 46% |
| CANADA | | | | | | |
| Montreal | 80 | 73 | 91% | 40% | 46% | 61% |
| Vancouver | 41 | 37 | 90% | 66% | 34% | 154% |
| Toronto | 80 | 68 | 85% | 54% | 40% | 226% |
| Canada Total | 201 | 178 | 89% | 160% | 38% | 95% |
| SWEDEN | | | | | | |
| | 55 | 46 | 84% | 0% | 109% | 69% |
| FRANCE | | | | | | |
| | 25 | 11 | 44% | 164% | 96% | 20% |

IN THE UNIONS

| | Goal | Sold | Total | Mar | Feb | Jan |
|-----------------------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| UNITED STATES | | | | | | |
| UNITE | 26 | 36 | 138% | 31% | 23% | 69% |
| USWA | 46 | 47 | 102% | 33% | 48% | 22% |
| UFCW | 6 | 5 | 83% | 183% | 67% | 17% |
| IAM | 59 | 47 | 80% | 20% | 58% | 39% |
| UAW | 65 | 40 | 62% | 70% | 82% | 94% |
| UTU | 94 | 51 | 54% | 27% | 0% | 15% |
| OCAW | 44 | 19 | 43% | 27% | 27% | 16% |
| UMWA | 5 | 1 | 20% | 133% | 100% | 67% |
| U.S. Total | 345 | 246 | 71% | 38% | 37% | 37% |
| AUSTRALIA | | | | | | |
| AMWU | 4 | 2 | 50% | 50% | 100% | 50% |
| CANADA | | | | | | |
| USWA | 16 | 6 | 38% | 42% | 60% | 25% |
| IAM | 8 | 3 | 38% | 25% | 88% | 113% |
| Canada Total | 24 | 9 | 38% | 39% | 81% | 72% |
| UNITED KINGDOM | | | | | | |
| TGWU | 7 | 8 | 114% | 29% | 100% | 0% |
| RMT | 10 | 1 | 10% | 13% | 0% | 50% |
| AEEU | 10 | 0 | 0% | 10% | 40% | 40% |
| Total U.K. | 27 | 9 | 33% | 16% | 44% | 33% |

AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU — Amalgamated Metal Workers Union; CAW — Canadian Autoworkers Union; EU — Engineers Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFBGWU — United Food, Beverage, and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.

YS takes steps to strengthen its leadership

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 14392, St. Paul, MN 55114. Tel: (612) 644-0051. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY MEG NOVAK

MINNEAPOLIS — The Young Socialists National Committee met here May 2-3 to review the work of the Young Socialists (YS) since its second national convention a month ago and take steps to strengthen its central leadership. The meeting elected a larger National Executive Committee (NEC), voted to move the YS national office to Chicago, discussed building the U.S. delegation to the World Festival of Youth and Students, and decided to launch a fund drive.

Young Socialists leaders from around the country shared experiences of protest demonstrations and conferences that the YS has been a part of in the recent period, and the opportunities that are open to the communist youth organization to reach out with the *Militant* and books by revolutionaries to young fighters they meet.

Brian Taylor, a member of the New York chapter, explained the importance of having discussions on the political character of the conferences the Young Socialists participates in. "We were part of a conference on police brutality in New York," Taylor said, referring to the National Emergency Conference on Police Brutality and Misconduct called recently by the Center for Constitutional Rights. "A Black cop, who claimed to be 'revolutionary,' called for cleaning up the police department from within. Because we had a discussion beforehand with members of the YS and Socialist Workers Party who participated in the conference," Taylor continued, "we were better prepared to discuss with other conference participants the role of the cops under capitalism."

"The more we participate in these conferences, the more we're seen as a force within these movements," said Verónica Poses from the Twin Cities chapter. At the conference of MEChA — the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán — "several people told us that they had seen us at other conferences and demonstrations and had bought the *Militant* and Pathfinder books in the past," she added.

Joshua Carroll, from Washington, D.C., spoke about the young people YS members there are working with following the Young Feminist Summit, and the potential for recruiting them to the Young Socialists. He also spoke about people the YS has been working with who they met at a conference of Black farmers fighting against government foreclosures of their farms.

"In Des Moines, we have been driving out to meet with people in our region that Young Socialists met at the Young Feminist Summit in Washington, D.C., and the MEChA conference in East Lansing, Michigan," explained Tom Alter. YS members from Des Moines also attended the Pedagogy of the Oppressed conference in Omaha, Nebraska, where they sold over \$500 worth of Pathfinder literature.

"These experiences show the real opportunities that exist today for the YS to be a part of these conferences, and raise the political level of discussion by bringing the working class and the class struggle into them," explained Willey. "It also points to the organic relationship between the fights that we're engaged in, education, our continuity, and the need for serious discussion and study within the Young Socialists. Through these experiences, we will raise the political level of the YS and become more effective at bringing communist politics to the young fighters we meet."

National Committee (NC) members took this opportunity to discuss the work being done around the country in preparation for the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students to be held in Havana, Cuba, July 28-August 5. At its convention, the YS took on building this international forum on world politics as a major campaign.

Paul Pederson reported a local festival committee is reaching out to American Indian organizations, women's groups, and other organizations in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

"At George Washington University in D.C., a member of the Arab Club has decided to attend the festival," Carroll reported. He explained that by reaching out besides those involved in solidarity work with the Cuban revolution, the Young Socialists has met young fighters from a variety of backgrounds who are interested in the festival.

The National Committee also voted to launch a national fund drive, beginning May 15 and going through June 30, with a goal of raising \$6,000. Chapters will be discuss-



Militant/Nancy Cole

Youth sign up for information on the World Youth Festival to be held this summer in Havana, Cuba, at protest against presidential summit in Philadelphia, April 27.

ing and voting on goals they plan to raise through pledges from members of the Young Socialists and fund-raising activities.

Making YS a self-financed organization

A good part of discussion at the meeting focused on the importance of working toward becoming a self-financed organization. "After going to several political conferences over the past few months, I've grown to appreciate even more the fact that the communist movement is self-financed," Poses explained. "We don't rely on any grants or contributions from bourgeois institutions to fund ourselves."

Lieff Gutthuidaschmitt explained how finances come directly out of the political work and goals of the YS and how this is an integral part of building a democratic centralist organization.

Chapters will be discussing out with every member how much they can contribute to the fund drive, as well as organizing fund-raising activities that help the Young Socialists reach out politically, such as speaking engagements on campuses where the YS can get honoraria, socials, and pre-forum dinners.

At the meeting, the National Committee

voted to move the national office of the Young Socialists to Chicago for two central reasons. Chicago is a major working-class city that plays an important role in U.S. politics. Moving the national office there puts the YS nationally in the strongest position to reach out to the rising Chicano struggle, protests against police brutality and other political events that workers and youth are part of.

Strengthening the YS leadership

"At the NACCS (National Association of Chicana/Chicano Studies) conference in Sacramento, California, almost 90 people from Chicago attended," Poses noted. "This points to the possibility to reach out to young fighters in that city, and the real political openings that exist there. The Young Socialists needs to put itself in the best position to respond to these things." Others pointed to the thousands of Latino fighters from Chicago who participated last October in an immigrant rights march in Washington, D.C., and recent protests against a racist beating in Chicago.

The Illinois membership of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) recently voted to combine the Chicago and Peoria branches into one, based in Chicago. This move puts the communist movement in that region in good stead to reach out further into the political fights in the city and region.

"By having the kind of national leadership we need in Chicago, we can move forward towards doing what's objectively possible in every city where we are turned out into politics, building a large, politically strong chapter of the Young Socialists that is actively involved in the political life of the city and the region," explained Jack Willey in his report on leadership responsibilities in the YS.

In a move to strengthen the national leadership of the Young Socialists, the National Committee increased the size of the National Executive Committee from three to five members. This committee is charged with leading the work of the organization between meetings of the NC. The new NEC will include two members working in the industrial trade unions alongside other communists in the YS and SWP.

The new National Executive Committee is composed of Lieff Gutthuidaschmitt, Meg Novak, Cecilia Ortega, Verónica Poses, and Jack Willey.

Youth festival committees step up work

BY JACK WILLEY

NEW YORK — Following the May 4 meeting of the U.S. Organizing Committee for the World Youth Festival, youth across the country are stepping up their activity to get dozens of applications into the committee office by the May 15 deadline.

At the meeting, roughly 30 people discussed the building efforts in local areas, festival activities, and travel.

Carlos Hernández, a student from Los Angeles, reported that a local organizing committee for the youth festival was launched at a meeting of roughly 15 people May 1. This was in part the product of smaller meetings with students at Occidental and Glendale Colleges. Activists there are setting up fund-raisers and have called their next planning meeting for May 15.

Alex Papali, a student at the University of Massachusetts in Boston who came to the meeting, had become active in the past few weeks around the youth festival. The committee in Boston held their first meeting a few weeks ago and have since focused on meeting with student organizations at the University of Massachusetts and other colleges in the area.

Forty people attended an informational meeting in Minneapolis on April 30, reported Adriana Sánchez. The meeting, sponsored by some student groups at the University of Minnesota, discussed the political importance of the festival and fundraising efforts to get several people there. Several organizations and individuals expressed interest in going.

Many students are submitting requests for money from their colleges through departments and administrative grants.

Stephanie Zwenko reported that fund-raising efforts are under way in Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh Cuba Coalition raised \$150 so far and activists there plan on reaching out to other groups to get more people to the festival.

There is still much work to do nationally in getting youth and student groups to endorse the U.S. Organizing Committee and send representatives to the festival.

Leslie Cagan, chair of the U.S. Organizing Committee, reported 69 national preparatory committees internationally have been set up and organizers estimate youth will attend from 126 countries. So far, 65 people have sent in applications in the United States.

There was quite a bit of discussion on travel at the meeting. Bob Guild, of Marazul Tours reported that 20 applicants submitted requests to the U.S. Treasury Department for a license to attend this international conference. The U.S. government prohibits U.S. residents from spending money in Cuba, effectively carrying out a travel ban. Since this is an international conference, the government can grant a license allowing participants to spend money. The large majority of applicants so far have indicated they want to apply for a license.

Both Bob Guild and Argiris Malapanis, the representative from the Socialist Workers Party, urged meeting participants to encourage people in their local areas to apply for licenses as part of building a broad delegation, including many youth who have never traveled to Cuba or to such an international gathering before, and countering government efforts to intimidate people from going.

The festival, dedicated to revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, will include workshops on: peace, security, nuclear

weapon-free world and international cooperation and friendship; anti-imperialist struggle, solidarity, national liberation, sovereignty and self-determination; democracy and participation; environment and sustainable development; employment; education, science and technology; childhood; young women; health; culture and social communication; discrimination, racism and neo-fascism; international youth and students movements; and human/people's rights.

Two new features have been added to the festival program: an anti-imperialist tribunal that will include mock trials of imperialist powers for their crimes against oppressed nations and discuss anti-imperialist struggles; and a bookfair with publishers from around the world.

The meeting set a deadline of May 30 for local organizing committees to submit proposals on who from local areas is designated to give special presentations on political topics, like the fight for Native American rights or Puerto Rican independence, and cultural presentations at the festival. These proposals will in turn be sent to the International Preparatory Committee which is meeting in Havana in early June. Another national meeting of the U.S. Organizing Committee was set for Sunday, June 22, in New York City.

The total cost for the festival is \$600 for those who apply by May 15. This covers all expenses for the trip except airfare from the United States to Nassau, Bahamas, or Cancun, Mexico — the meeting points for U.S. participants. Applications must be accompanied by a \$50 deposit and full payment is due by June 30. There will be an additional \$25 charge for those who apply between May 16 and June 30.

COME TO THE

14th World Festival of Youth and Students CUBA' 97



For more information
U.S. Organizing Committee for the World Youth Festival
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New York, NY 10025
Tel: (212) 866-7270

Washington maneuvers for role in Zaire

BY MEGAN ARNEY

The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire (AFDL) has captured three-fourths of the country and are now 40 miles from the capital city of Kinshasa. As the rebels advance, the imperialist powers — led by Washington — are maneuvering to establish a position in Zaire's future as the dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko collapses.

Zaire, which borders nine other countries, is one of the wealthiest countries in all of Africa. It leads the world in industrial diamond production, produces about a quarter of the world's cobalt, and ranks sixth in copper production. Zinc, tin, manganese, gold, silver, iron ore, and uranium are also found there. Energy resources include 13 percent of the world's total hydroelectric potential, oil reserves, and some coal deposits. Since the rebellion began in October, the AFDL has consolidated control over nearly all of the country's mineral-rich regions. Several major imperialist corporations have reportedly met with the rebels to set up contracts for mining.

Seeing the collapse of the Mobutu regime as inevitable, the White House and other imperialist governments have called for the dictator to step down. On April 28, Washington sent William Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, to Zaire to force negotiations between the Mobutu regime and the AFDL. Washington is seeking to stabilize the situation, get a regime it can work with, and avoid any further instability that could damage imperialist interests in the region.

Negotiations hit a snag

Talks between AFDL leader Laurent Kabila and Mobutu were arranged for the weekend of May 3-4. South African president Nelson Mandela, who has been pushing for the talks for months, was to be the liaison between Kabila and Mobutu during negotiations. Citing security reasons, Kabila

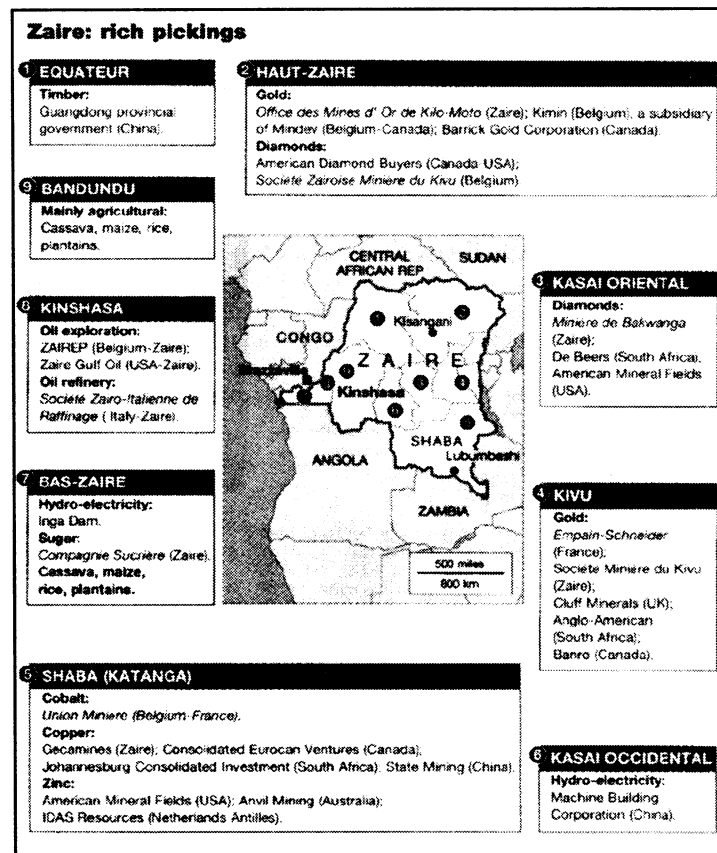
refused to board the boat at the last minute. However, on May 4, the rebel leader and Mobutu met, agreeing on nothing.

Coming out of the meeting, Kabila continued to insist that Mobutu resign and demand immediate transfer of power of the transitional government to the AFDL. Mobutu agreed to resign, but only to hand over power to either Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo, who resigned as head of the country's transitional parliament in 1996, or the current prime minister, Gen. Likulia Bolongo.

In a letter to Clinton, Mobutu said that if he left power, he wanted assurances that "some of his financial resources would remain intact." White House officials said. Kabila has conceded to give Mobutu eight days to consider the demand to step down, but added, "I made it clear a cease-fire is out of the question and my forces will advance on all fronts. If we make it to Kinshasa before the eight days then too bad, but we cannot wait while he makes up his mind."

On May 6, Mobutu was reportedly leaving for what was called a three-day trip to Gabon.

With rebel forces closing in on Kinshasa, Richardson delivered a message to Kabila saying, "We stressed our long-standing view... that ... there should be a peaceful entry into the capital of Kinshasa — a soft landing which avoids violence and chaos." The U.S. ambassador to the UN added that Washington wants an "inclusive" transitional government that would include those in the Mobutu regime and the current opposition in the Zairian government.



Map of the energy resources in Zaire

Richardson has also touted the White House's idea of "free and fair elections." These elections would include Etienne Tshisekedi, leader of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress. Tshisekedi, once part of the Mobutu regime who actually signed the arrest papers for independence leader Patrice Lumumba, still regards himself as the rightful prime minister. Tshisekedi led anti-Mobutu demonstrations in the capital in early April, after being dismissed from his position of prime minister by Mobutu for the third time.

In a move to shore up support for

Washington's plan, Richardson stopped by to visit with Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni and Rwandan vice president Paul Kagame.

History of imperialist backing

Mobutu, who came to power in the 1960s with Washington's backing, has usurped an estimated \$1 billion of Zaire's wealth. For decades Washington used his regime as a protectorate in the region. At one point a paid CIA employee, Mobutu has long served the imperialists' interests.

Shortly before Angola's independence from Portuguese colonial rule in November 1975, that country's new government — led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) — was attacked by South African apartheid forces and Zairian troops. The invading forces were allied with the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA) and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

The Mobutu regime backed these counterrevolutionaries in Angola, and allowed Zaire to be used as a base for UNITA leader

Jonas Savimbi. On at least three occasions in 1986 alone, the CIA used an air base in Zaire to transship arms to the UNITA terrorists. Today, reports in the big-business press assert that Angola is backing the rebels as a "payback" to the Mobutu government.

Washington has warned the government of Angola not to get involved with the struggle in Zaire. It has been reported in the news for months that Angola has backed the rebels in Zaire, financially and with weapons. Many big-business papers have accused Angola of sending troops to fight in Zaire. On May 2, Angolan foreign minister Venancio de Moura denied that Angolan troops were fighting alongside the rebels.

The big-business press has continued to use pictures of starving refugees to lay the ground for possible intervention in Zaire. For weeks newspapers like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* have splashed their pages with such pictures, and printed articles that report alleged massacres of refugees by the rebels.

On April 21, Sadako Ogata, head of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, accused the AFDL of killing Rwandan refugees — suggesting a UN intervention in the name of "humanitarian aid." The AFDL antigovernment rebels have consistently denied the allegations. For months international food agencies, the UN, and Washington have complained that the rebels were not moving fast enough to repatriate the hundred of thousands of Rwandan refugees who fled that country during the war in 1994.

In late April, the rebel forces began to move refugees, sending them by train and truck. On May 5, the UN complained that the refugees were being moved too fast, and stopped the transport of refugees by train. More than 90 refugees died in overcrowded boxcars on one of the trains during the trip.

Socialists consolidate forces in Illinois

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

PEORIA, Illinois — Forty workers and students packed the Pathfinder Bookstore here April 26 for a program entitled, "Strengthening the Socialist Movement in Illinois." This Militant Labor Forum marked the closing of the Peoria bookstore and explained why socialists here are moving to Chicago to merge with the Socialist Workers Party branch there, significantly strengthening the new branch's striking power.

"Having a single new branch in Chicago, an important regional center, will strengthen our ability to be part of the many political opportunities in the region — from work in the trade unions to building a delegation to the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students in Cuba, and participating in the fight for women's rights, against police brutality, and other struggles. We'll be best able to recruit workers and youth to the communist movement with one stronger unit," explained Angel Lariscy, a trade unionist and leader of the Peoria SWP.

Lariscy outlined the political work carried out by the Peoria branch since it was established in 1994. As a revolutionary organization of workers based in the industrial unions, the SWP took the broad lessons of the world class struggle to fighting workers in central Illinois. They sold the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* at plantgates and on campuses, helped organize political discussions at regular Militant Labor Forums, and volunteered with others to open a Pathfinder Bookstore so that political fighters could find the books with the answers they were looking for.

An important struggle of the working class the socialists embraced was the fight by Caterpillar workers to defend themselves from the company's attacks on them. In November 1991, members of the United Auto Workers struck Caterpillar Corp. — the world's largest heavy earth-moving equipment manufacturer and one of the main employers in the region — resisting the company's concession demands. While the UAW officialdom called off the strike after five months, the workers still refused to accept the company's "final offer," and the struggle continued inside the plants. Socialist workers made numerous trips to the area during and after this strike, to report on the

fight and sell the *Militant* and Pathfinder books to these workers.

Following a series of work brief stoppages, the UAW workers at Caterpillar walked out again on June 21, 1994. This labor battle was a central piece of a small wave of strikes throughout the U.S., including fights by locked out Staley workers, Bridgestone Firestone workers, United Parcel Service workers, American Airlines flight attendants, and garment workers at Leslie Fay.

Lariscy described how this strike wave made possible the efforts of socialist workers to revitalize structures of the party rooted in the industrial working class and trade unions, such as getting in on the hiring taking place at larger plants and in basic industry. The entire socialist movement also turned toward solidarity with and participation in the unfolding strike wave.

"What those of us in the socialist movement aim to do," said Lariscy, "is give a picture of the working of class society and what's necessary to make a revolution. The revolutionary books," on display from Pathfinder bookstore there, "are a key aid in this effort." The experiences socialists have had in Peoria confirms what is being found around the country — a thirst for ideas and an openness for discussion.

Frank Forrestal, a member of the UAW at Ford and a leader of the socialist movement in Chicago, also spoke at the forum. Forrestal began by condemning the brutal massacre of 14 members of the Tupac Amaru movement by the regime of Alberto Fujimori in Peru, and described the developing struggles of working people in Albania, Zaire, the West Bank, and Europe. He also talked about the strikes going on now at several auto plants, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel, and Goodyear Tire.

Gary Winnett, a member of UAW Local 974 and retired Caterpillar worker, commented after the forum that he got his first *Militant* at the UAW union hall during the strike. He added, "The fight is far from over."

Socialists in Peoria have been selling the *Militant* regularly at one of the Caterpillar plantgates in East Peoria. Socialists from Des Moines plan to get back this plantgate on a regular basis, along with those in Illinois, reported Tom Alter, a leader of the YS

and SWP branch in Des Moines.

"This is how I was won to the communist movement," said Alter, holding up his first copy of the *Militant* from 1994 with the front page headline, "Nationwide strike shuts down 8 Caterpillar plants."

While a student in Indiana, Alter attended an October 1994 strike solidarity rally in Decatur and was then convinced by socialists from Chicago to go on a team to sell the *Militant* to strikers on the picket lines in Peoria. "I talked to strikers about their struggle, learned from them, introduced them to the *Militant*, and talked to them about the Cuban revolution."

Verónica Poses, a member of the Young Socialists National Committee, also spoke and encouraged the decision to merge the socialist forces.

Attending the forum were activists in the struggle for women's rights and civil liberties from Peoria, industrial workers from the region, and students from Knox College in Galesburg and Bradley University in Peoria. Those attending contributed about \$300 to help with the move to Chicago, and purchased two dozen Pathfinder titles.

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From Pathfinder

May Day in Cuba

Continued from front page demonstration.

"For this reason," Ross said, "workers, together with patriotic people, have signed our names to the Declaration of the 20th Century Mambises and to the Law of Dignity and Sovereignty. Both documents emphatically state that here in Cuba there will never be a counterrevolutionary transition, that we voted for socialism during the glorious days of Playa Girón and we continue to do so today."

Over the last two months, millions of workers, peasants, students, and other Cubans — the majority of the country's population of 11 million — have signed the Mambises Declaration. This manifesto was initiated by officers of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) rejecting Washington's bribe and reaffirming their determination to defend Cuba's national sovereignty and socialist revolution. The *mambises* were the 19th century liberation fighters in the Cuban wars for independence from Spanish rule.

The Law of Dignity and Sovereignty Ross referred to was passed by Cuba's National Assembly in December in response to Washington's embargo-tightening Helms-Burton act.

Gathering signatures on these two documents and presenting them publicly has been a feature of recent mass mobilizations, including actions on April 16 celebrating 36 years since the victory by the Cuban people against the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs).

At the May Day march, hundreds of signs and banners, many of them hand-lettered, condemned Washington's economic war.

"No transition to capitalism, no surrender, no turning back to the past," read a placard carried by Luis Savige, a member of a volunteer construction brigade in Boyeros. He explained that the slogan was his response to a report by U.S. president William Clinton that has overwhelmingly drawn derision among Cubans. In that January 28 document Clinton offered the Cuban people \$4-8 billion in "aid" if they overthrew President Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro, minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, and accepted a "transition" to capitalism as outlined in the Helms-Burton law.

"This is an insult by the United States," said Pascual Londres, a construction worker, referring to the demand to get rid of the two most prominent leaders of Cuba's revolutionary government. "It's going to be real hard for them to change our government. Even the children would fight that."

Internationalist commitment

At the head of the march, 4,000 members of the Blas Roca construction workers

contingent carried portraits of Ernesto Che Guevara and other guerrilla fighters who fell in combat in Bolivia 30 years ago. The May Day march was dedicated to Che, an Argentine by birth who was one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution, as part of honoring the 30th anniversary of his death.

In Bolivia, Guevara was leading a guerrilla front that set out to build a movement of workers and peasants that could extend the socialist revolution throughout South America. He was captured by Bolivian army forces on Oct. 8, 1967, and murdered the next day with U.S. complicity.

"Cuban internationalists have shed their blood all over the world," said José Mayans, 60, a parking lot attendant at the discotheque of the hotel Copacabana. He was part of a group of 200 workers and family members near the front of the demonstration who carried a bright red banner reading "100% Cuban." Mayans mentioned an eagerly sought new book recently published here, titled *Secrets of the Generals*. It consists of interviews with top FAR officials, who among other things describe internationalist missions they participated in — from Angola to Ethiopia, Syria, Bolivia, Argentina, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Vietnam — joining national liberation struggles and other fights against imperialism and reaction.

Mayans, a veteran of the Rebel Army, which led the revolutionary war in Cuba that toppled the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, took part in such missions in Angola and Nicaragua. Midway during the parade, a group of hundreds of veterans of Playa Girón marched carrying placards with photos of Che and other guerrilla fighters in Bolivia. Those in the front row held the portraits of Bolivian, Peruvian, and Argentine fighters, followed by the photos of Cuban internationalists who fell in battle.

Ariel Marino volunteered and fought in Angola twice against the invading armies of South Africa. He also participated in a mission in Ethiopia in 1977 and is now a retired colonel from the FAR. "I am of African origin," he said. "I had to fight with

bassy, some demonstrators painted slogans opposing Washington's embargo against revolutionary Cuba. The marches were sponsored by independent trade union organizations.

In the labor demonstrations held in Bolivia, one of the themes, as in Cuba, was the 30th anniversary of the death of revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, who was killed while leading a guerrilla front in that country. Brazilian workers held rallies in all 27 states of that nation, demanding jobs and a genuine land reform. Three thousand unionists marched in Santiago, Chile, highlighting their opposition to the mass layoffs caused by the closure of the state-owned Lota coal mine.

Demonstrators in Santiago, as well as in Panama City and other Latin American capitals, also condemned the April 22 U.S.-backed massacre of rebels by the Peruvian regime of Alberto Fujimori.

Similar demonstrations took place in Tegucigalpa, Honduras; San Salvador, El Salvador; and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; with one of the biggest — several tens of thousands — in Caracas, Venezuela.

In both Germany and France, workers turned out to protest unemployment, government austerity policies, and attacks on the rights of immigrants. One hundred thousand workers demonstrated across Ger-



Militant photos/Argiris Malapanis

High school students at Havana May Day march carrying portraits of Ernesto Che Guevara (above). Pre-May Day demonstration of 1,500 at San Diego, a rural town of 8,000 in Villa Clara province, April 24 (left). Sign reads, "Clinton, *cabrón*, remember Girón," referring to the defeat of the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and using a derogatory term for the U.S. president.



my brothers against apartheid and reaction."

Maria del los Angeles González, who took part in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in Angola in 1987-88, which dealt the decisive blow to the apartheid army, made a comment that drew smiles and nods from many around her in the contingent of internationalists. "We'll do it again," she said, "anywhere in the world that is possible."

Behind them was a group of hospital workers. "Today we're showing the enemy that we're not afraid," said Cristo Valina, 32, a nurse at the Ramón González Coro hospital in Havana. "They can't defeat us with all the laws they impose. We're not going to betray our martyrs," he stated, pointing to the portraits of Che and other guerrilla fighters.

Resisting Washington's economic war

The determination to resist Washington's economic war through efforts to improve efficiency and productivity in industry and agriculture, drawing on the creativity of workers and farmers, was evident throughout the march.

Public transportation workers carried a sign depicting a *camello* (camel) — the

popular name for a special type of bus that symbolizes the many ways Cubans have found to confront the crisis, known here as the "special period." This crisis was sparked in the early 1990s when aid and favorable trade relations with Soviet bloc countries abruptly ended, triggering shortages in fuel, spare parts, and a sharp drop in production of food and industrial goods. The hardships have been exacerbated by Washington's escalating economic offensive.

The *camellos*, which have helped ease the severe transportation crunch, are put together by welding the bodies of two buses rendered inoperable from the lack of spare parts, and are drawn by a truck cab purchased or donated from the used market abroad. The weld produces a hump in the middle of the long vehicle — the origin of the humorous term.

You often hear complaints here that *camellos* are uncomfortable and crowded — they carry up to 300 people and lack good ventilation. But many workers are proud they came up with a solution, even if partial and imperfect, that has cut down substantially the long hours they had to wait to go to work or school.

Among the most boisterous contingents was the one of hundreds of whistle-blowing *amarillos* — special traffic inspectors, called the "ones in yellow" because of their uniforms. Their job is to stop cars with state license plates and fill them up with passengers who need a ride in the same direction the driver is going. They are popular in Cuba among working people and their contingent drew applause from others in the crowd. They are one of the best examples of the proletarian spirit that has prevailed in Cuba throughout the special period.

One of the most sizable contingents was made up of 6,000 steelworkers from Antillana de Acero, the largest steel mill in Havana, and their relatives and friends.

"We have achieved a small but steady pickup in production over the last two years," said Angel Sosa, 39, a machine operator at Antillana. "This year we are trying to produce 25,000 tons of steel, compared to 20,000 last year. We are well on our way to doing that. This is our answer to Helms-Burton."

Rejecting what capitalism has to offer

"What is on the agenda today in the world of neoliberal capitalism is economic instability," Ross said in his remarks opening the May Day march, "unemployment, and cutbacks in the miserable benefits that workers were previously able to wrest from capital through titanic, prolonged battles."

"This will result, sooner rather than later, in protest actions, steps toward unity in struggle, and class battles."

"We Cubans, through our resistance and tenacious defense of socialism, are making a modest contribution to the workers of the entire world. The struggles of the proletariat and of all the oppressed, wherever they may take place, are our battles, too, and they help strengthen our morale and our principles."

More than 600 representatives of trade unions from 40 countries observed the

Continued on Page 10

May Day actions held all over world

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

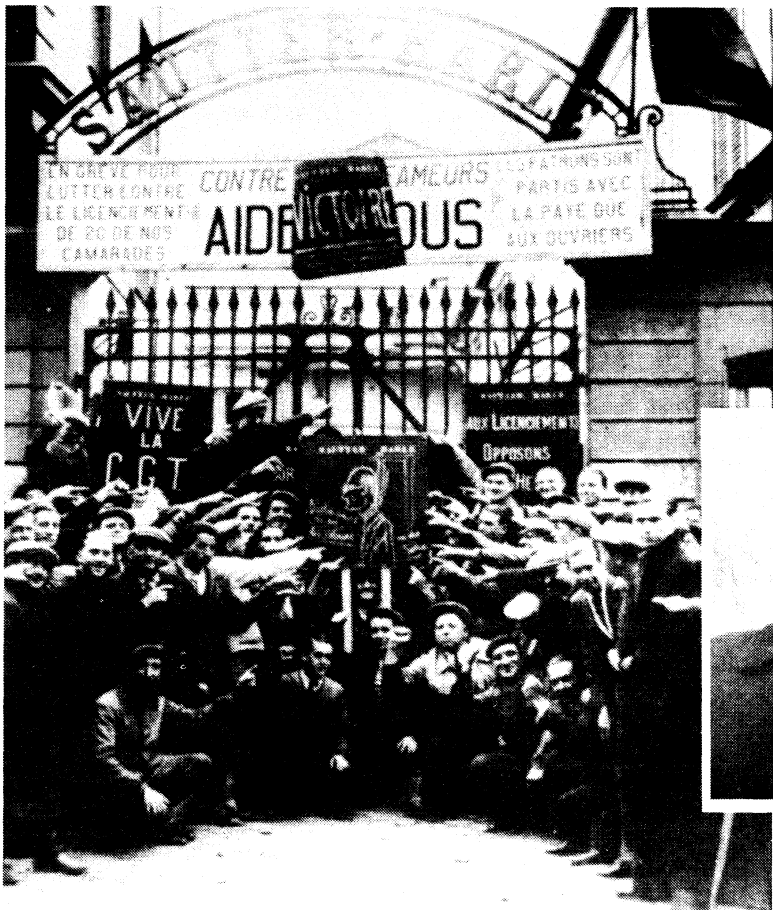
May Day this year was the occasion for working people around the world to organize protests against the ruinous effects of the international crisis of the capitalist economy. Workers facing different conditions — in imperialist countries, semicolonial nations, and workers states — often found themselves raising similar demands for economic relief from this crisis and for democratic rights, under attack by capitalist and pro-capitalist regimes everywhere.

In Mexico, two different May Day actions took place. As in the last two years, officials of the pro-government Mexican Workers Confederation (CTM), which for decades has dominated the labor movement there, chose not to sponsor a demonstration, fearing the simmering social discontent and working-class anger might escape their control. Instead, CTM leaders held a staid, indoor ceremony together with President Ernesto Zedillo.

In contrast, tens of thousands of workers marched to Mexico City's downtown Zócalo square demanding wage increases, condemning Zedillo's austerity policies, calling for an end to government repression against peasants in the southern Chiapas state, and protesting U.S. president William Clinton's upcoming visit. As unionists marched past the heavily guarded U.S. em-

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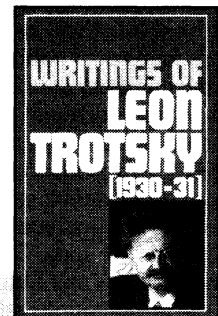


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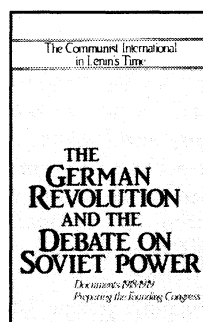
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Mexico conference addresses crisis in Latin America today

BY AARON RUBY

GUADALAJARA, Mexico — Under the title "Latin America towards the *Fin de Siècle*" the 20th Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) met in this city April 17-19, attended by more than 3,000 people. The largest delegations were from the United States, Mexico, and Brazil. This was the first LASA congress held in Latin America in a number of years. More than 30 Cuban academics participated — a number comparable with previous years.

Attended by academics, writers, graduate students, a number of political activists, and others, the congress consisted of some 550 sessions addressing topics ranging from literature and the arts to women's issues, the environment, international politics, struggles over land, labor struggles, and more. The event also included a book exhibit, which attracted some 75 publishers from the United States and Latin America.

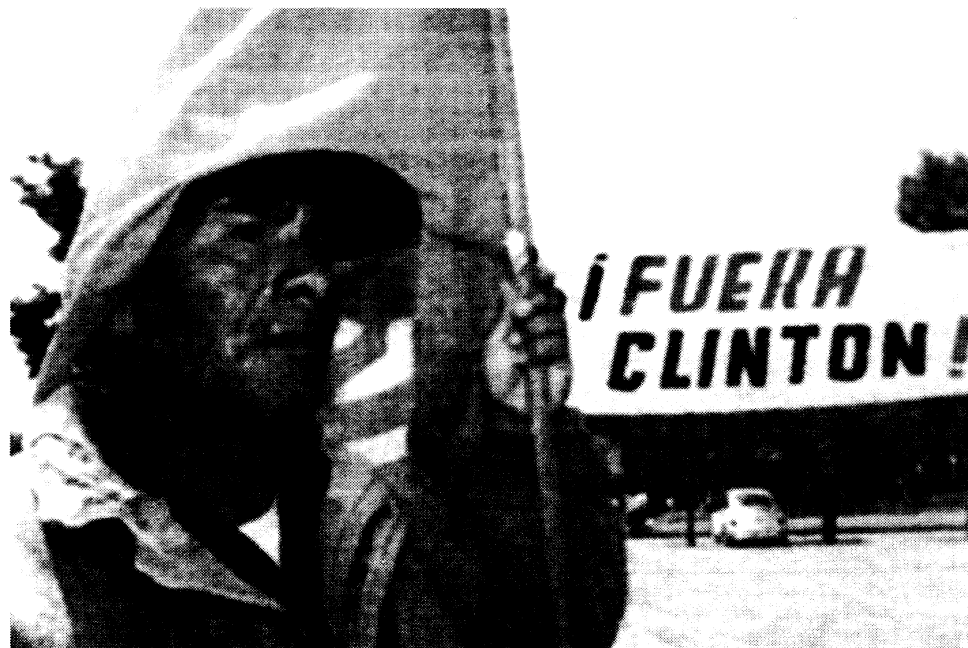
Many of the presentations addressed the deepening social and economic crisis in Latin America as "the end of the century" approaches — the theme of the congress. In the panel "Sackings and Protests in the Era of Neoliberalism," Margarita López-Maya of the Central University of Venezuela reported that, not including strikes, in the last four years over 4,200 street protests have

rocked Venezuela. Another panelist reported that in Peru in 1989 real wages were 25 percent of the 1973 level.

Neoliberalism is a term frequently used to describe the cuts in social spending and other attacks, as well as the privatization of state-owned companies and layoffs, imposed by capitalist governments in Latin America over the last decade, resulting in increased unemployment and worsened living conditions for millions. Forty six percent of the population of Latin America lives in poverty — 40 million people in Mexico alone.

Several dozen University of Guadalajara students helped organize the congress and attended the panels. A number had been active in leading student protests here over transit rate hikes. They were interested in other struggles across Latin America, and welcomed facts about fights being waged by workers and youth in the United States. "One thing I know for sure," said one of the Mexican students who asked not to be identified. Latin America "is going to explode. The thing is, are we going to be ready to meet the challenge when the time comes?"

A number of presentations took up the increasing immigration from Latin America to the United States. One panelist reported that now some 100 U.S. towns have become majority Mexican, most of them in California. Robert Aponte of Michigan State Uni-



Demonstrator protests U.S. president William Clinton's visit to Mexico in early May. LASA conference touched on many of the fights of working people in Latin America.

versity reported that there are now 27 million persons of Latin American origin in the United States, which ranks it the country with the fifth-largest Latin American population, after Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina, respectively.

Women's issues were strongly reflected at the congress including topics on feminism, women's health care, and women in industry. A panel on abortion reported that in all but one Latin American country abortion is illegal. Dinnys Luciano from the Dominican Republic reported that in that country there is one illegal abortion for every three births, resulting in many deaths and illness. In contrast, "Cuba is another world," affirmed Luisa Alvarez Vásquez, who works

for the World Health Organization. "There, abortion is a guaranteed right that all women have, and it is free."

Many of the presentations pointed to the deepening crisis facing working people in Latin America. However, many panelists held the view that a "post 'Cold War' world" means trying to get at the crisis without stepping out of the bounds of capitalism. A debate took place at a panel entitled, "The future of Revolution in Latin America." Jeff Goodwin of New York University asserted that there would be no further revolutions because most Latin American countries now had elected governments. Eric Selbin of Southwestern University disagreed. "Neoliberalism is failing badly," Selbin said. "As the crisis deepens people will turn to the tool of revolution," he predicted.

Cuba was the topic of a number of panels. Richard Nuccio, former head of Latin American affairs for the Department of State under Clinton, spoke at the LASA congress, repeating U.S. government line blaming Cuba for the U.S. embargo and other hostile acts. "Our [U.S. government] foreign policy towards Cuba is in the hands of the Cuban government," he asserted.

A resolution attacking the Cuban government for alleged "violations of academic freedoms" was initially presented by Wayne Smith, former head of the U. S. Interests Section in Havana during the Carter administration. At a meeting of the Cuba task force of LASA, Cuban academics and others attending the congress refuted the charges, and after some debate the task force voted to oppose the resolution. Smith later withdrew it at the main LASA business meeting.

Due to a lack of a quorum at the meeting, none of the proposed resolutions were adopted, including one condemning the intensification of the U.S. economic aggression against Cuba — the Helms-Burton law.

The draft denounced the U.S. law's violation of international treaties and agreements, its restrictions on "exchanges between Cuban and American academics." Also authored by Smith, it stated that the Helms-Burton law "has resulted in isolating the United States."

Another draft resolution took up human rights abuses in Colombia. LASA congresses are held every 18 months; the next will be in Chicago in 1998.

Youth debate politics at national Chicana/Chicano studies conference

BY JIM ALTENBERG

SACRAMENTO, California — Wide ranging political discussion ran through the workshops, meetings, and in the corridors of the Radisson Hotel here April 16-19, where a thousand students, teachers, and other mainly young Chicanos and Latinos gathered for the 24th annual conference of the National Association for Chicana/Chicano Studies (NACCS).

For many of the participants, the conference was an opportunity to discuss the political activity they had recently taken part in, from the large April 13 United Farm Workers demonstration in Watsonville, California; to "La Marcha," last summer's march from Sacramento to San Diego in defense of affirmative action; to protests against attacks on Chicano studies and affirmative action on campuses and high schools throughout the country. Others had been at the march for immigrants' rights in Washington D.C. last October 12, and at rallies, meetings, and school walkouts protesting the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California.

Some had been involved in other meetings of Chicano activists and youth held over the past few months, including national and regional conferences of the Chicano student movement MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán). Two students from DQ University, a Chicano and Native

American college in the Sacramento Valley, said they were sponsoring a conference the weekend of April 26. Another is set for the same weekend at Stanislaus State University in Turlock, California.

Conference organizers reported that 77 percent of the participants came from California — with most of the others coming from other West Coast campuses and towns. A group of 45 students came from DePaul University in Chicago. Three-quarters of the participants were college and high school students.

Conference workshops took up the history of the Chicano movement; Chicano art and culture; allies of Chicanos in the struggle; U.S. government policies regarding immigration, welfare, racism, and education. A notable feature of the conference was the active participation of young Chicanas, and the numerous workshops and discussions on feminism and its relation to the struggle against national oppression. There were also workshops on gay and lesbian rights.

Throughout the conference, discussion around socialism and its relation to the Chicano struggle came up. At a well-attended workshop entitled "The Politics of the Chicano Movement Revisited," panelist Ernesto Vigil pointed out that red-baiting, which had once plagued the Chicano movement, was now less pervasive, and an open discussion and study of Marxism could be carried out. He went on to say that the roots of poverty, oppression, and environmental destruction lay in the profit system of capitalism. Vigil, a Denver activist, had been a leader of the Crusade for Justice, an influential Chicano organization in the 1970s.

Socialists at the conference sold 73 books and 13 subscriptions to the *Militant* newspaper. Best selling titles included *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, by Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin, Che Guevara's *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, and *The Politics of Chicano Liberation*, which reviews the history and political lessons of the Chicano movement of the 1960s and '70s. A meeting was held at the conference to build the World Festival of Youth and Students, set for August in Havana, Cuba.

Special guests at the conference were Nadine and Patsy Córdova from Vaughn, New Mexico, a small town south of Albuquerque. Both teachers, who are sisters, were suspended from teaching their class at Vaughn high school for incorporating Chi-

cano studies into their curriculum. The school district superintendent also barred students from participating in the student group MEChA, which was sponsored by the Córdovas. Twenty-three of the district's 68 students in grades 7-12 had been members of that club. Nadine and Patsy Córdova are now fighting to maintain their teaching positions.

As part of the NACCS conference, around 350 participants marched to the state capitol April 17 to protest the attacks on Chicanos, immigrants, and youth in California. Speakers and signs carried by marchers called for an end to the anti-immigrant Proposition 187, defense of affirmative action and Chicano studies programs, opposition to reactionary "welfare reform" schemes and police brutality faced by Chicanos throughout the state and country.

One rally participant reported that Sacramento cops had killed a Mexican man at his home in front of his family a few days before. He was there because he didn't believe the police story that the man was a big-time drug dealer. Marchers were also joined at the capitol by a group of Irish solidarity activists, who were well-received by the Chicano youth present.

May Day parade in Havana

Continued from Page 8

march from the reviewing stand at Revolution Plaza, along with 2,000 Cuban vanguard workers.

A number of workers interviewed at the demonstration commented on the devastation capitalism is bringing to working people around the world. "You don't see thousands of children sleeping in the streets here, as you do in the rest of Latin America," said Reynaldo Baroso, 57, a garment worker from Guanabacoa, who was part of a contingent of several thousand organized by the National Union of Light Industry Workers. "It's true, we have problems in Cuba, there are many shortages. But we're not exploited like wage slaves. And we're not under the boot of imperialism. Look at Mexico, a much bigger country with oil, more industrialized than Cuba. The poverty faced by workers and peasants there, especially since 1994, is unspeakable."

Baroso was referring to the collapse of the Mexican peso in December 1994 and the

subsequent "bailout" by Washington, which loaned the Mexican government billions at exorbitant interest rates. The resulting austerity policies by the administration of Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo, dictated by U.S. imperialism, pushed the number of those living in extreme poverty to 22 million last year — a 30 percent jump over 1995 in a nation of 92 million, increased unemployment, and accelerated land evictions of peasants.

"Clinton and [U.S. vice president Albert] Gore would like to do here what they did in Mexico," Baroso said. "But we won't let them."

Similar marches and rallies took place throughout Cuba on May Day. They included demonstrations of 300,000 in Santiago de Cuba, the country's second-largest city; 250,000 in Camagüey; 200,000 in Holguín; 150,000 in Guantánamo; and about 100,000 each in Cienfuegos, Ciego de Avila, Granma, Pinar del Río, Sancti Spiritus, and Santa Clara.

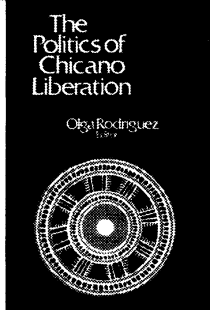
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Auto, tire strikers reach tentative pacts

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — "Strength in Solidarity" declared bright orange buttons worn on the coats and caps of over 1,000 auto workers who rallied here and then marched around Chrysler's strike bound Mound Road Engine Plant May 2. The action was called by United Auto Workers Region 1 in solidarity with the UAW members, who have been on strike since April 9.

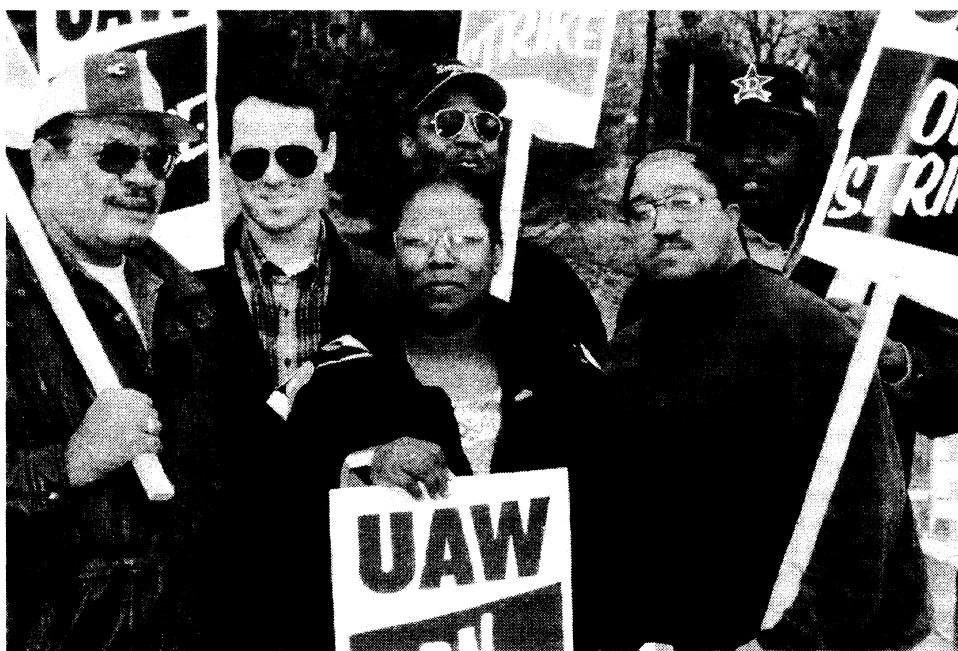
Some 1,800 members of UAW Local 51 walked out because the auto maker refused to sign a local agreement. Chrysler has settled local contracts at all their facilities except Mound Road. On May 7, company officials and UAW negotiators announced a tentative settlement; a ratification vote is scheduled for May 9.

"We're striking over outsourcing and management not carrying out their word," is how Jeff Blaney, an inspector with four years in the Block Department, explained the strike. "It's not money, I'm working seven days a week, 12 hours a day, anytime I want to, but they want to ship our work out to nonunion shops." The union is protesting plans by the car maker to shift work out of plant, affecting between 200 and 300 workers, and sending it to Dana Corp., a lower cost, mostly nonunion parts supplier.

The union is also protesting discriminatory policies of plant management. "Women are being denied promotions because they are women," Sam Nardicchio, Local 51 president told the rally. "Blacks are being denied promotions because they are Black."

The May 2 rally included auto workers from many other plants in the region, including a contingent of Canadian Auto Workers members from the Chrysler truck plant in Windsor, Ontario.

Up to 22,900 North American Chrysler



Rick Macks

Members of UAW Local 594 picket GM plant in Pontiac, Michigan, April 27.

workers were idled during the strike at other plants in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Before the settlement was announced, Chrysler had moved to block unemployment compensation for workers laid off due to the strike.

In other developments, two strikes by UAW workers continue at General Motors assembly plants in Pontiac, Michigan, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. About 25 GM locals still are without a contract. A number these local unions at parts plants have requested strike authorization. Over 2,700 members of UAW Local 909 at the Warren Powertrain in Michigan, which makes transmissions, are waiting for authorization from

the international union to issue a five-day warning of strike action. The major issue there is the same as Oklahoma City and Pontiac — staffing levels.

On April 30, 3,600 members of UAW 31 at GM's Fairfax Assembly Plant near Kansas City approved a strike vote after failing to negotiate a local agreement. Some areas of the plant are running 12-hour shifts, six days a week. The strike vote now allows the local negotiating committee to request strike authorization from the international union.

BY BETSY FARLEY

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — After two

weeks on strike, workers at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. will be voting on a tentative agreement. The agreement, reached May 3 between negotiators for the company and the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), reportedly includes a six-year contract and coordinated expiration dates for workers at three plants operated by Goodyear's Kelly-Springfield division.

The tentative pact would also establish a two-tiered wage system, which would allow Goodyear to hire new workers at 70 percent and then increase wages over three years until they reach full pay. Workers remain on strike at plants in Akron, Marysville, and St. Marys, Ohio; Gadsden, Alabama; Lincoln, Nebraska; Topeka, Kansas; Danielle, Virginia; Union City, Tennessee; and Sun Prairie, Wisconsin until the vote is taken.

Talks resumed in a separate strike by more than 2,000 workers at Kelly-Springfield in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

BY JIM ROGERS

FAYETTEVILLE, North Carolina — "We really surprised management when we walked out. Their mouths dropped open. They were all watching us and talking frantically into their walkie-talkies, they just couldn't believe it. People felt like they had to fight because of all the takebacks in the company's proposal," said Buck Gainey a worker at the Kelly-Springfield plant here at USWA Local 959's "Solidarity day" picnic May 3.

Several hundred strikers and their families attended the solidarity event, "to provide a way for strikers and their families to get together, talk about the strike and reinforce each other," said Molly Revels, an officer of the local and a line server. "There are quite a few women working in the plant but it is still a mostly male workforce. If the strike goes on for long we want to set up a women's strike support group."

The main issues in the strike are the company's attempt to go to a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week operation; increase the time it takes a new employee to get to full pay from 24 weeks maximum now, to three years; increase co-payments for medical insurance; and probes against the cost-of-living clause in their contract.

The plant has about 2,500 production workers. At the time of the strike, about 2,100 were union members but most of the nonunion workers walked out too. According to Gainey, "at least 140 of them have joined the union since then."

John Sarge is a UAW Local 900 member in the Detroit area. Betsy Farley is a member of USWA Local 12014 in Birmingham, Alabama. Jim Rogers is a member of UNITE Local 294-T in Eden, North Carolina.

U.S. cops hunt and kill rightist in Texas

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

State police shot and killed Mike Matson, a member of the group known as the Republic of Texas on May 5 in the Davis Mountains near Fort Davis, Texas. He and another member of the organization were being hunted by police in helicopter and on horseback, using several bloodhounds.

The two men had earlier fled from a trailer belonging to the rightist group, besieged by 100 heavily armed FBI agents and state police. Several of its leaders had taken a couple as hostages on April 27 demanding authorities release two of the Republic's followers arrested by the police. The couple was released to the cops 14 hours later. The seven-day standoff ended when the four Republic members remaining in the trailer surrendered to the authorities on May 3. The other member of the group still at large has been identified as Richard Keyes, 21.

"Shots were fired from the helicopter

and from the ground at the suspect, killing him," said a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Police claim they opened fire after the two men fleeing shot at the tracking dogs. "At least three of the hounds were shot by the fugitives," said an article in the May 6 *New York Times*. "One was killed, two were expected to survive, and a fourth was missing late tonight, authorities said." While indicating concern for the condition of the police dogs, the article reported few details on the man who was killed.

Authorities had not filed any charges against Matson. Keyes faces charges stemming from kidnapping and holding the two neighbors hostage for several hours.

Richard McLaren, leader of the Republic of Texas, and his followers who surrendered

to the police, also face charges of conspiracy, bank fraud, mail fraud, and aiding and abetting a scheme to defraud merchants and banks. Federal prosecutors presented an indictment against McLaren and other members of the group accusing them of trying to pass \$1.8 billion of worthless "Republic of Texas" checks to merchants and banks from December 1995 to January 1997 to pay bills. "This indictment sends a clear message," said U.S. District Attorney for the Northern District of Texas. "Don't mess with Texas."

The Republic of Texas group says that Texas was never legally annexed from Mexico in 1845 and that it thus remains an independent nation, whose assets the rightist group says it controls. "We are at war with the United Nations and all foreign entities," McLaren told the *Times* April 27.

UK Labour gov't targets social gains

Continued from Page 16

volatility been expressed in an election.

While Labour received 44.5 percent of the vote (to the Conservatives' 31.5 and Liberal Democrats' 17), it won nearly two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. In Scotland, the Tories won no seats even though the party received half a million votes, while the Liberal Democrats won 11 Scottish seats with a lower vote (about 360,000), and the pro-independence Scottish National Party won six seats.

Blair has made clear his administration's intention of advancing Labour-Liberal links, including having some Liberal Democrat MPs sit on cabinet committees.

The scale of the Tory electoral defeat reflected the deep-going crisis of the party. The Tories polled their lowest vote this century. They failed to win a single parliamentary seat in either Scotland or Wales. Seven Tory cabinet members lost what were considered safe seats. And even before the polls were closed, the recriminations had started and the knives were being sharpened.

Right-wing Tory MP Nicholas Winterton said that chancellor of the exchequer Kenneth Clarke had been "personally responsible for the poor conservative general election campaign.... Mr. Clarke will be remembered, even reviled in history for his actions." Publicly confirming the election defeat, John Major also announced his deci-

sion to resign as Tory Party leader. The prospect of a party split is openly being discussed in television and radio chat shows.

Pushing forward his objective of regrouping with right-wing Tories, Referendum Party leader James Goldsmith declared that indeed the Tories are "dead." "All their leaders have always said it is either the party of the nation or it is nothing," Goldsmith said. "This one is not only not the party of the nation, it betrayed the nation."

Goldsmith announced that the Referendum Party would continue after the election. "We will be a conduit of mobilization against

future betrayal," he announced.

In a television interview on election night, Goldsmith said he anticipated a low vote but that it was not the most important thing. Then when his Tory opponent, David Mellor, was defeated by Labour, Goldsmith led a barracking of Mellor, drowning him out as he tried to speak with shouts of "out, out, out!" Goldsmith has called the Referendum Party "the rabble army." The Referendum Party won its highest vote in coastal areas, where it campaigned against the European Union's fisheries policy. In Harwich, it won some 5,000 votes, nearly 10 percent.

Abortion clinic is hit by arson attack

BY MARTIN BOYERS

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — In the early morning hours of May 6, an arson attack closed down Piedmont-Carolina Medical Clinic. None of the clinic staff was at the building when the fire started. Investigators reported that someone pried open an air-conditioning vent, poured in a flammable liquid, and ignited it. The entire inside of the facility is coated with black soot.

Clinic owner Jean Goldston has pledged to reopen the facility. The clinic suffered a similar attack in March of 1991. Goldston reported that anti-abortion protesters were at the clinic the Saturday before the blaze.

Piedmont-Carolina is the only abortion clinic in the city. Greensboro's only other abortion clinic, Options, closed down a week earlier after its landlord refused to renew its lease.

The Militant Labor Forum announced an emergency speak-out against the arson attack for Friday, May 9, at the Pathfinder Bookstore.

Celebrate the life and political contributions of Sam Stark

Sam Stark, a longtime member of the communist movement, died in Los Angeles May 2 of complications from a stroke and heart attack.

Sam joined the Communist Party in New York in the mid-1930s. In 1939 he left the Communist Party over differences around the Spanish Civil War and the intolerance of the party toward the writings of Leon Trotsky, and joined the Socialist Workers Party that same year.

He worked in industrial jobs for many

decades and was a member at different times of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Carpenters Union, which he remained a member of until his death.

In 1941 Sam moved to Los Angeles, where he lived until his death at age 86.

A meeting to honor his life as a revolutionary will be held Memorial Day weekend at the Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles. Call (213) 380-9460 for exact time.

Bipartisan budget lays out Medicare cuts

Continued from front page

previously probed hiking these insurance payments by as much as \$8 per month.

Some \$16-17 billion will be cut from Medicaid benefits for low-income recipients. These cutbacks would involve slashing payments to hospitals that serve large numbers of working people. The five-year plan Clinton presented to Congress proposed chopping \$22 billion from Medicaid.

Earlier versions of the budget plan included reducing the Consumer Price Index (CPI) by 1.1 percent, thereby lowering cost-of-living increases in Social Security and other benefits. Nervous about the possible reaction, the negotiators backed off this probe and instead decided to approve a 0.15 percent "adjustment" to the CPI in 2000 that is expected to be implemented by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The big-business dailies claimed the bipartisan budget will cut some \$85 billion from the military "after accounting for inflation." But they plan to increase military spending by \$23 billion.

The budget also proposes tax cuts totaling \$135 billion. About \$100 billion would go to reducing the capital gains and inheritance taxes. Under the agreement ironed out on Capital Hill, the amount exempted from estate or inheritance tax would be doubled from \$600,000 to \$1.2 million. About 30,000 U.S. citizens pay inheritance tax every year. There is little mention in the capitalist media of annual interest payments to wealthy bondholders of \$247 billion. That's more than twice the amount of the deficit, which workers are supposed to make sacrifices in order to reduce.

No relief for working people

Working people will get no relief in the proposed budget from the Welfare Reform Act Clinton signed into law last August. That measure eliminated federally guaranteed Aid for Families with Dependent Children, a component of the Social Security Act of 1935. The new welfare law affected most of the 13 million workers and farmers receiving welfare and the 25 million receiving food stamps. An estimated 1 million immigrants with legal documents were due to be cut from the food stamp program and hundreds of thousands have been excluded from Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Clinton and his congressional cohorts offered a few crumbs to working people such as restoring medical and disability benefits to legal immigrants already in the United States, but new arrivals would not be eligible. And while Medicaid coverage for indigent children of legal immigrants would be reinstituted, food stamps for the 1 million legal immigrants would not be restored.

Some Democrats, trying to distance themselves from some of the harshest aspects of the budget projections, grumbled about the Clinton administration keeping them in the dark during the final phase of the negotiations. "I'm declaring my independence," said Senator Thomas Daschle, the minority leader. "It's atrocious that deals would be cut and that decisions would be made behind closed doors."

Other bourgeois commentators complained that the budget agreement didn't go far enough. The May 3 *New York Times* editorial called the Medicare cuts a "temporary respite." Stepping up its probes on Social

Security, the editors said the "plan makes no progress in accelerating corrections in the Government's gauge on inflation [CPI] — the fairest way to cut the deficit because it reduces Social Security benefits."

The editors of the *Washington Post* complained that "neither party wants to take the ax to the broad" entitlement programs such as "Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, that make up the bulk of the budget."

'Volunteerism' summit

A few days before the budget deal, the president participated in a government-sponsored "Presidents' Summit for America's Future" in Philadelphia. The three-day gathering, which began April 27, launched a volunteer campaign aimed at sugarcoating the attacks on the social gains of working people. Former Gen. Colin Powell, who led Washington's slaughter against the Iraqi people during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, was the meeting's chairman. Powell, Clinton, and former presidents James Carter and George Bush addressed an April 27 rally of 5,000 calling on them to volunteer their labor to compensate for federal cuts in jobs and social programs.

At the volunteer summit Clinton announced plans to triple the current 200 scholarships under the "Police Corps," which gives grants to college students who agree to serve at least four years as cops. He said he would push more federal workers to volunteer for charities, and took part in a well-hyped effort to paint over graffiti.

Meanwhile, as the bipartisan assault on the social wage continues, the White House is preparing deeper attacks on affirmative

action programs. Government officials announced May 5 that the Clinton administration is revising its approach on business contracts for oppressed nationalities.

The measure is a response to a Supreme Court decision stating affirmative action programs were constitutional only where there was concrete evidence of discrimination. The Commerce Department is conducting an industry-by-industry review on discrimination in the awarding of government contracts. Officials say the review could eliminate, suspend, or cut back federal contracts to minority-owned businesses worth \$200 billion a year.

This probe follows an April 8 ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, which ended an injunction that halted the implementation of Proposition 209. This measure, officially bearing the cynical title of the California Civil Rights Initiative, bans affirmative action programs in public hiring and education.

Campaigns for similar anti-affirmative action measures are planned in the states of Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington. Rep. Charles Canady from Florida has declared he will sponsor a bill in the U.S. Congress that would roll back federal affirmative action programs.

Meanwhile, the so-called Whitewater scandal continues to stalk Clinton. *New York Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal wrote May 5 that he "rejected" the statement by Clinton and his wife Hillary that no one at the White House knew former Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell was possibly facing criminal charges when he resigned from

that post in 1994. Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth Starr is investigating whether Clinton or his aides helped find employment for Hubbell to encourage him not to cooperate with the Whitewater probe.

In 1994 Clinton met with James Riady, whose family owns the Indonesian-based Lippo Group, shortly before he held a meeting with Hubbell. Later, the Lippo Group hired Hubbell for \$100,000, a few months before he went to prison for bilking the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he was a partner with Hillary Clinton.

Rosenthal wrote that he was now convinced the Clintons risked "an obstruction of justice charge, the accusation that led to Richard Nixon's resignation."

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Panel of participants in April 13 march in Watsonville, California. Barb Kucera, editor of *The Union Advocate*; Somah Yarney, student, Macalester University; Javier Aravena, member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Local 6-418, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 16, 7:30. *2490 University Ave. W. Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.*

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Meatworkers: Defend Accident Compensation! Speaker: James Robb, Communist League, and member of Meatworkers Union. Sat., May 17, 7 p.m.

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Salute Cuban Youth. Benefit for participants in the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students. Speaker: Johana Tablada, Cuban Interests Section. Performers: Jorge Matos, poet; Lucid Dreams, poetry/rap; D.J.; Drum performance, and more. Fri., May 16, 8:00 p.m. *Casa de las Americas, 104 W. 14th St. (between 6th and 7th Avenues). Suggested donation: \$10. Students and youth: \$5. For more information: (212) 633-6646.*

WEST VIRGINIA Morgantown

Capitalism's World Disorder: The Place of Working-Class Resistance. Program: Sat., May 24, 7:30 p.m. Class: An Action Program for Working-class Unity. Sun., May 25, 11:00 a.m. Picnic: 2:00 p.m. *Program and class will be held at 242 Walnut St. Location of picnic to be announced. Donation: \$4 for program, \$2 for class. For more information: (304) 296-0055.*

Close call — We've been thinking about that six-year-old in Largo, Florida, who was arrested, handcuffed, and taken to jail after she



Harry Ring

allegedly disrupted a class where cops were showing a "crime prevention" video. Lucky she didn't reach for her waistband. She might have

been shot.

How civilized can you get? — Queried on the arrest of the six-year-old, Florida officials said that children under seven are not usually considered capable of committing a crime.

No Joe Camel? — The Ontario, Canada, board of education says it will pick up an extra \$500,000 a year by accepting computer screen savers featuring corporate advertising, like McDonald's and Wrigley's.

Probably didn't punch out —

Steelworker Gregory Cooper and a co-worker dashed off a work site in Rockville, Maryland, and helped pull 15 people from a burning building. At a commendation ceremony, Cooper's beaming foreman joined him at the podium. Moments before, the foreman had told him he was fired, adding, "Don't say anything about it." Cooper was never told why he was fired.

Seem qualified for a scholarship — The weekly Miami *New Times* reported two young men were charged with robbery and murder in

Boynton Beach and that their motive was to raise money to get into the police academy.

Washington? Ridiculous — Manuel Noriega, Panama's former president, now doing 40 years in a U.S. prison on drug charges, declared in an interview that he had been offered a lighter sentence if he would implicate Fidel Castro in drug smuggling. Prosecutors vigorously denied it.

Order early for next year — For Mother's Day, Neiman Marcus offered a cheesecake designed to

look like a straw bonnet. Tasters at the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, said it was pretty good, except the "hand-crafted Belgian chocolate topping" tasted like a real hat. Only \$150, which is probably only a tad more than the number of grams of fat.

Simple thought from a simple mind — "...we recognize two lifestyles. One is marriage and the other is celibacy and there can't be anything in between. And we don't recognize same-sex marriages." — George Carey, Church of England's Archbishop of Canterbury.

Marxism is the science of revolutionary struggle

In capitalist society, we are trained to think of ideas and individuals as eternal things that float above social classes and material conditions. The rulers confidently expect to enjoy the riches acquired off the backs of workers and occupy the seats of sovereignty forever. The dialectical method of Marxism shows how bourgeois rule is not eternal and there is scientific logic behind the revolutionary struggle against the mad chaos of capitalism's wars and economic crises.

The excerpt below is from the article "The ABC of Dialectical Materialism," from the book *Problems of Everyday Life* by Leon Trotsky. Trotsky, a central leader of the Russian revolution, was defending the materialist foundations of scientific socialism in response to the rising pressures of bourgeois public opinion as Washington prepared its entry into World War II. The selection also appears in *In*

inferior or completely worthless.

Our scientific thinking is only a part of our general practice, including techniques. For concepts there also exists "tolerance" which is established not by formal logic issuing from the axiom A is equal to A, but by dialectical logic issuing from the axiom that everything is always changing. "Common sense" is characterized by the fact that it systematically exceeds dialectical "tolerance."

Vulgar thought operates with such concepts as capitalism, morals, freedom, workers' state, etc., as fixed abstractions, presuming that capitalism is equal to capitalism, morals are equal to morals, etc. Dialectical thinking analyzes all things and phenomena in their continuous change, while determining in the material conditions of those changes that critical limit beyond which A ceases to be A, a workers' state ceases to be a workers' state.

The fundamental flaw of vulgar thought lies in the fact that it wishes to content itself with motionless imprints of reality, which consists of eternal motion. Dialectical thinking gives to concepts, by means of closer approximations, corrections, concretizations, a richness of content and flexibility, I would even say a succulence, which to a certain extent brings them close to living phenomena. Not capitalism in general, but a given capitalism at a given stage of development. Not a workers' state in general, but a given workers' state in a backward country in an imperialist encirclement, etc.

Dialectical thinking is related to vulgar thinking in the same way that a motion picture is related to a still photograph. The motion picture does not outlaw the still photograph but combines a series of them according to the laws of motion. Dialectics does not deny the syllogism, but teaches us to combine syllogisms in such a way as to bring our understanding closer to the eternally changing reality. Hegel in his *Logic* established a series of laws: change of quantity into quality, development through contradictions, conflict of content and form, interruption of continuity, change of possibility into inevitability, etc., which are just as important for theoretical thought as is the simple syllogism for more elementary tasks.

Hegel wrote before Darwin and before Marx. Thanks to the powerful impulse given to thought by the French Revolution, Hegel anticipated the general movement of science. But because it was only an *anticipation*, although by a genius, it received from Hegel an idealistic character. Hegel operated with ideological shadows as the ultimate reality. Marx demonstrated that the movement of these Ideological shadows reflected nothing but the movement of material bodies.

We call our dialectic *materialist* since its roots are neither in heaven nor in the depths of our "free will," but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of nebula. On all the rungs of this ladder of development the quantitative changes were transformed into qualitative. Our thought, including dialectical thought is only one of the forms of the expression of changing matter. There is place within this system for neither God, nor Devil, nor immortal soul, nor eternal norms of laws and morals. The dialectic of thinking, having grown out of the dialectic of nature, possesses consequently a thoroughly materialist character.

Darwinism, which explained the evolution of species through quantitative transformations passing into qualitative, was the highest triumph of the dialectic in the whole



Trotsky and staff review revolutionary workers of Red Army in Zarapul, 1919.

field of organic matter. Another great triumph was the discovery of the table of atomic weights of chemical elements and further the transformation of one element into another.

With these transformations (species, elements, etc.) is closely linked the question of classifications, just as important in the natural as in the social sciences. Linnaeus's system (eighteenth century), utilizing as its starting point the immutability of species, was limited to the description and classification of plants according to their external characteristics. The infantile period of botany is analogous to the infantile period of logic, since the forms of our thought develop like everything that lives. Only decisive repudiation of the idea of fixed species, only the study of the history of the evolution of plants and their anatomy prepared the basis for a really scientific classification.

Marx, who in distinction from Darwin was a conscious dialectician, discovered a basis

for the scientific classification of human societies in the development of their productive forces and the structure of the relations of ownership which constitute the anatomy of society. Marxism substituted for the vulgar descriptive classification of societies and states, which even up to now still flourishes in the universities, a materialistic dialectical classification. Only through using the method of Marx is it possible correctly to determine both the concept of a workers' state and the moment of its downfall.

All this, as we see, contains nothing "metaphysical" or "scholastic," as conceited ignorance affirms. Dialectical logic expresses the laws of motion in contemporary scientific thought. The struggle against materialist dialectics on the contrary expresses a distant past, conservatism of the petty bourgeoisie, the self-conceit of university routinists and . . . a spark of hope for an afterlife.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 19, 1972

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., May 9 — Albuquerque city police opened fire on a crowd of 500 antiwar demonstrators today, wounding three people, all believed to be students at the University of New Mexico. One of the victims, Carolyn Babb Coburn, received multiple shotgun wounds in the chest and abdomen. The 22-year-old UNM law student, a staff writer for the school newspaper, the *Daily Lobo*, was rushed to Presbyterian Hospital in critical condition. The school administration has withheld information on the other two.

The following eyewitness account was given to me by Gary Davis, a student at UNM

"This morning a few students began passing the word that an antiwar rally would be held on the university mall. It was a spontaneous action, but about 400 to 500 people showed up.

"Discussion on possible antiwar action lasted for nearly an hour, finally ending with the consensus opinion that students should continue their protest along Central Avenue. Many felt that the antiwar movement could gain public attention by stopping traffic on the main thoroughfare that runs alongside the campus."

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

May 17, 1947

The Spanish workers have dealt a stiff blow to Franco's fascist regime. As reported in last week's *Militant*, work stoppages occurred throughout Spain on May Day. The Franco regime singled out the Basque workers of Bilbao for reprisals.

The May Day strike had been especially impressive in Bilbao, second industrial center of Spain. For two days the workers had shut down tight the great steel mills, mines and shipyards, including the Babcock and Wilcox machine shops.

Provincial governor Riesta ordered mass arrests, but the strike remained solid. Then he decreed that all workers who had participated in the anti-Franco demonstration were to lose all seniority rights, suffer pay cuts and lose pension rights.

The strike spread to other Basque cities. Gunpuzcoa province was the scene of sympathy strikes which closed munition, sewing machine, and bicycle plants. The Franco regime has been badly shaken.

The *New York Times* reports that "Whatever penalties individuals may suffer, the workers in general have scored in a way that observers would not have believed possible in defiance of the iron-fisted Franco police system."

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Gov't tries to legitimize brutality

The U.S. rulers are using their attack on the right-wing Republic of Texas group to legitimize the deadly use of their police forces and justify government brutality.

Police officers used overwhelming force, from the ground and the air, to kill a fleeing man who didn't even face any legal charges. The cops and the big-business media justify the killing by dehumanizing the person, gratuitously showing more compassion for the wounded police dogs. The police were in fact prepared to launch a Waco-style assault on the trailer where members of the rightist group were holed up for seven days, after the hostages they held were released.

The operation was reminiscent, on a smaller scale, of the attack by federal agents on the housing complex of the Branch Davidians — a religious sect — in Waco, Texas, in 1993, ordered by Attorney General Janet Reno and approved by President William Clinton. That assault, complete with tanks, resulted in an inferno that took the lives of 86 men, women, and children. In the Fort Davis case, the cops and the government are taking advantage of the unpopularity of the right-wing group to undermine democratic rights. The goal is similar to what the rulers tried to accomplish through the lethal 1992 siege by the FBI of a rightist militia at Ruby Ridge in Idaho.

Ultraright groups, the Republic of Texas included, are a deadly threat to working people. But the government and its repressive agencies are not forces workers and farmers should rely on in fighting fascist and antilabor outfits. Working people can only depend on themselves and their

class allies — and their organizations like the trade unions — to accomplish this goal. It is the capitalist system in decay that breeds these rightist groups. The bosses and their government in Washington will turn to fascist organizations to salvage their system when working-class resistance to capitalist austerity explodes.

The rulers will use precedents like the killing in the Davis Mountains of Texas to unleash their cops and courts on working-class militants and other fighters.

The true and brutal face of the U.S. government can be seen in its stance toward the massacre of the Peruvian rebels who held hostages in the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima. In that case, the Clinton administration laid down the line from the beginning — no concessions — and the regime of Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori carried it out to its bloody conclusion, killing all of the rebels, along with one of the hostages. Washington not only applauded the butchery, but was involved in the whole thing from beginning to end.

It is important never to forget that Washington and its allies are the greatest perpetrators of terror around the world — from Waco on its home territory to Vietnam, Iraq, Nicaragua, and countless other parts of the world just in recent decades.

Working people must oppose efforts by the government to utilize the recent police assault in Texas to further restrict democratic rights and rationalize its own responsibility for the oppression and violence inflicted on working people day in and day out the world over.

Massive aid to flood areas now

The following statement was released May 4 by the candidates of the Communist League in the upcoming Canadian federal election June 2. The candidates are Michel Dugré and Vicky Mercier running in Montreal, John Munoru in Toronto, and Roger Annis in Vancouver.

Working people in Canada and the United States, along with their unions and farm organizations need to join together to demand that Ottawa and Washington provide immediate and massive assistance to those hit by the devastating flood in the Red River valley.

About 85,000 people in Manitoba, Minnesota, and North Dakota have been affected by the flood. Some have lost their entire farm or house in the floodwaters, many farmers will lose this year's crop, and others have been forced out of their homes and jobs for several weeks.

The response of working people across Canada has been an outpouring of solidarity. Typical is the response from people in the Saguenay region of Quebec, devastated last summer by floods, who have raised \$100,000 for Manitoba flood victims.

This stands in stark contrast to the compensation governments are offering flood victims — all of which will benefit the wealthy the most. The government is guaranteeing up to \$100,000 in assistance for those who can afford to pay the first 20 percent of damages themselves. Workers and family farmers who have lost their homes or livelihoods will be hard pressed to pay this deductible.

Instead of mapping out a real plan of emergency relief, capitalist politicians, be they in the Liberal, Conservative, or Reform parties, as well as the New Democrats spent the entire first week of the flood debating the relative merits of postponing voting and electioneering in Manitoba.

The Communist League demands massive, unconditional aid to the flood victims to rebuild homes and farms. Farmers who have lost their this year's crops should be fully compensated to guarantee a living income.

The government should launch a massive public works program to rebuild homes, farmsteads, and communities. This kind of program, with workers paid at union-scale, would provide jobs for those who are out of work due to the flood, as well as to thousands of others. This repair campaign should be part of a broader public works program to build housing, hospitals, schools, and child-care centers to meet the needs of working people and provide jobs for the unemployed. This includes reopening and re-staffing hospitals.

As the crisis of the capitalist system deepens, working people will be faced with more natural and capitalist-made disasters. The rulers will try to make working people bear the brunt of its crisis, while they continue cuts to social programs.

We pledge to work alongside fellow workers to organize resistance and protests to these anti-working-class and anti-farmer actions. A good place to start is by fighting for massive aid to workers and farmers in the Red River valley.

Imperialist troops in Albania

Continued from front page

the imperialist troops may help bring security and guarantee fair elections in Albania, now scheduled for June 29.

Nevertheless, the efforts by the imperialists and the government in Tirana to end the revolt once and for all are running into trouble. At 2 a.m. on May 4, three men fired on the Italian San Marco military camp in Vlore. Lt. Colonel Giovanni Bernardi of the Italian army called the attackers "criminals." Reuters quoted Bernardi saying, "The men on duty fired back into the air in the general proximity of the criminals without trying to kill them.... No one was injured and there was no damage."

Rifts continue between Berisha's Democratic Party and Prime Minister Bashkim Fino's Socialist Party, the main groups in the coalition government that represent competing layers of the ruling caste.

After a recent meeting with Berisha and Fino in Tirana, Franz Vranitzky, the European Union envoy in Albania, said there were divisions between the two on how to proceed with parliamentary elections. Fino reportedly hopes to convince the rebel councils to dissolve and accept the authority of previously elected mayors and city councils before the elections. But facing stiff opposition from working people, Fino and the imperialist forces have retreated from their earlier demands to disarm the population in the insurgent cities in the short term. Berisha, meanwhile, insists that planned elections can take place "only after the rebel committees are disbanded" and weapons collected

by authorities in Tirana.

Fino has asked the European Commission and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to oversee the elections, including the drafting of a new electoral law. Even SP ministers now state the election will probably be postponed. "June 29 is too early and August 1 too late," Albanian justice minister Spartak Negla told the Greek news daily *Kathimerini*.

Organizing "fair elections" is increasingly becoming the pretext for extending the imperialist intervention. According to the May 6 *Eleftherotipia*, one of the main Greek dailies, the Italian-led force is now planning to extend its mandate for another three months and beef up the troops. Rome, which has already deployed 3,000 men, will reportedly send another 2,000 soldiers who will be deployed largely in the insurgent southern part of the country.

Meanwhile, Berisha has continued to organize vigilante gangs that terrorize the population. The May 3 *New York Times* reported that Agim Shehu, the former head of the national police the government was forced to fire, "has organized a private militia loyal only to Berisha."

At a meeting in Vlore on April 25, the National Front for the Salvation of the People, the coalition of 28 rebel councils, reiterated that its affiliates will not disband "until Berisha's dictatorship falls, a new government is elected and has a chance to present its program, and legal guarantees are provided that the government will return 100 percent of the funds" Albanians lost after the collapse of the pyramid schemes.

Defend Maori land rights

In a letter on the facing page, reader Chuck Petrin asks why the *Militant* would support the return of land to Maori by the New Zealand government, and other demands that have been won by Maori in recent years, often claimed under the Treaty of Waitangi. Petrin says he "cannot think of a single reason," asserting that the sole beneficiaries of these victories are capitalist investors who are Maori and that working people gain "absolutely nothing."

Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, are an oppressed nationality. Numbering around 13 percent of the country's 3.5 million people, Maori are overwhelmingly working class, concentrated in the industrial work force. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 by a number of Maori tribal chiefs and representatives of the

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

British government. Under the treaty, the British government laid claim to New Zealand as a colony while guaranteeing Maori continued possession and control over their lands, forests, fisheries, and other resources. The development of capitalism in New Zealand in the 19th century was accompanied by warfare and violence through which the emerging capitalist class, backed by the military power of imperial Britain, deprived Maori of the bulk of their best lands. Although they were formally equal citizens, the Maori became subject to systematic discrimination.

For more than 150 years, Maori people have resisted this process, giving rise to struggles and movements for national rights. The 1970s and early 1980s saw a renewed upsurge in the fight for Maori rights, as part of a broader working-class and youth radicalization and an upturn in union struggles. Demands for the return of stolen land were at the center of mass protests and land occupations.

This movement forced concessions from the government, the impact of which continues to be felt today. These include restoration of title to, or compensation for, substantial lands; access to fishing, forestry, and other resources; greater use of the Maori language in education and the media; and affirmative action in education, employment, and other areas.

As a result of these victories, the racism used by the rulers to justify national oppression and divide working people in this country has been weakened, and the potential unity and self-confidence of the working class in the struggle against capitalism has been strengthened.

The Waitangi Tribunal, a government-appointed judicial body, has been one of the main mechanisms through which concessions to Maori demands have been registered. Originally set up by the government in 1975 to try to channel Maori protests off the streets, the government was forced to expand the tribunal's powers in 1985.

The tribunal has become a target of rightist politicians and other reactionaries. They appeal to resentment against gains won by Maori, portraying these as a threat to the livelihood and security of other working people. They blame Maori and Pacific Island language instruction and cultural activities in schools for undermining the standard of education. And they present Maori claims to the Waitangi Tribunal as robbing "New Zealanders" as a whole of resources and threatening the "national interest."

The goal of these forces is to undermine support for equal rights and reverse the gains won by Maori and other working people through struggle, in order to divide and weaken the working class as a whole. Accordingly, all working people have a stake in rejecting such attacks.

One of the results of the gains won by Maori over the past decade has been an increase in the number of Maori in the professions, business, and other middle class occupations. There is a small layer of capitalists and others who function in the corporate world. Many among this milieu act as spokespeople for Maori today. They often put their stamp on the settlement of Maori land and fishing claims negotiated with the government, and use these gains as a means to advance themselves. This is part of a growing class differentiation among Maori.

However, to assert as Petrin does that "Maori capitalists" are the sole beneficiaries of gains resulting from decades of struggle by Maori, the big majority of whom remain working class, is way off the mark.

Petrin refers to the 1992 fisheries settlement with the South Island Maori tribe Ngai Tahu, which included a shareholding in a major fishing company. Thousands of independent fishermen and women were deprived of their livelihoods in the 1980s as a result of the capitalist offensive to shore up profits. A major turning point was the introduction of "individual quota" in 1986. These set maximum catch allowances for all those engaged in the fishing industry based on previous catch records. Unable to make a living from the limited catch entitlements that they were allocated, most small fishers were forced to sell their quota to the major fishing companies. A large number of those who lost their livelihoods were Maori. This fueled claims by Maori to the Waitangi Tribunal for recognition of fishing rights guaranteed by the Treaty of Waitangi. These claims, like that won by Ngai Tahu, have been the target of attacks by capitalist politicians and fishing industry representatives. — EUGEN LEPOU

Apple packers fight for union rights in Washington state

BY EMILY FITZSIMMONS

YAKIMA, Washington — A crowd of more than 500 apple packers and their supporters marched through downtown Yakima April 20 in support of their union organizing drive. The lead banner, carried by a contingent of Mexican and Chicano youth said, "Justice for Washington Apple Workers" in both English and Spanish.

Contingents of farmworkers, youth, and Teamster union members were prominent. Students from five different chapters of MEChA, a Chicano student organization, marched together.

The action was part of a campaign by fruit warehouse workers and the Teamsters union to organize fruit-packing warehouses in the Yakima and Wenatchee valleys. Apples are a major business in this state, employing 15,000 warehouse workers, two-thirds of whom are Mexican. Average wages among packers are only \$11,000 a year, and much less for migrant workers.

The packers are seeking better wages and benefits, and an end to arbitrary firings and abusive treatment by management. They are also fighting the companies' threats to use immigration cops against them.

Ana María Guzmán, speaking at the post-march rally, described how she had worked first in the fields and then in the warehouse for 20 years. Currently employed by Washington Fruit, she said, "The racism, discrimination, and abuse of all workers drove me to want to organize a union. We want to see change and it has to come from us, not the company. We have the right to organize, documented or undocumented."

Some of the demonstrators had also marched in Watsonville, California, the previous week in support of the United Farm Workers (UFW) organizing campaign among strawberry workers there, and were inspired by the 25,000-strong action.

Jesús Linares, a farm worker at the Chateau Ste. Michele vineyard, went there with a busload from Yakima. "Things are changing fast and the struggle of the apple packers here is helping to unite people," he said. Workers at Chateau Ste. Michele hold the only UFW contract in the state of Washington.

The rally following the march was standing-room only in a school auditorium. Five warehouse workers active in the organizing drive addressed the crowd. Speakers also included local religious figures, officials of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Washington State

AFL-CIO, United Farm Workers, and Teamsters union.

The previous week, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled that Stemilt, Inc., the largest apple packer and shipper in the state, had violated workers' right to organize. It ordered the company to pay over \$21,000 in back wages to 14 workers who had been laid off.

Stemilt was also ordered to reinstate Genaro Morales, a worker the company had fired twice for his union organizing activity. Morales' return to work was featured in an April 16 front page article in a Yakima Valley daily, the *Wenatchee World*, headlined, "Justice Has Been Done."

A highlight of the rally was the introduction of Morales. After loud applause and chants of "Sí, se puede!" (Yes, it can be done), he explained, "I wasn't sure if the



Militant/Scott Breen

Apple packers in Yakima are demanding better wages and end to arbitrary firings

Teamsters would get my job back, but I kept fighting because it was the right thing to do. For those undecided about the power of the union, look at me — fired twice, and I'm back. We can stand up now, or lay down and

play dead."

Emily Fitzsimmons is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Seattle.

Black farmers protest discrimination

BY CHARLOTTE HERNÁNDEZ AND STU SINGER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — About 200 people demonstrated outside the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) here April 23, protesting the government agency's discrimination against farmers who are Black. They then packed into and testified at a hearing on the subject called by the Congressional Black Caucus. US secretary of agriculture Daniel Glickman and other top USDA officials participated in the hearing.

"If you don't fight, you won't get anywhere," said 15-year-old James Evans, from Tillery, North Carolina. Evans and a number of other high school students took the day off from school to join the protest.

John Boyd, a farmer from southeastern Virginia who is the president of the National Black Farmers Association, told the rally and the congressional hearing that in spite of the USDA's announcement of a temporary moratorium on farm foreclosures, "There have been 1,000 foreclosures since the moratorium in December. Only 200 discrimination cases have been settled, of the 1,800 on file. This is an insult to all of us."

Lucius Abrams, a fourth-generation farmer from Keysville, Georgia, pointed out how difficult it was for farmers to come to this demonstration because it was at the height of planting season. He also described some problems caused by the delays Black

farmers face in receiving federal loan money. "When the money is late it means you plant late. We've had to do that for the last 4 or 5 years. Late planting means we get lower yield from the crop and that affects future subsidy payments and crop insurance. But you still have to pay interest on the loan starting from when you filed for it."

At the hearing Glickman acknowledged that the foreclosures had continued after his December moratorium announcement. He said USDA would now require that when a civil rights complaint was filed, the foreclosure process would be frozen. Glickman offered no immediate money for spring planting. He said the Department was out of money and had to get more from Congress.

He did not announce any steps to speed up processing civil rights complaints, but boasted about two recent settlements awarded to Black farmers with long-standing discrimination complaints and offered that "all complaints that can be resolved by our June 6 goal, will be."

"Not just Black farmers are suffering," Boyd told the crowd at the rally. "Small farmers across the nation are suffering. But when you add on the 130 years of discrimination, we've been last for the USDA. We need the power to open the doors of the last plantation," as many farmers describe the Department of Agriculture.

Several white farmers who have joined

the National Black Farmers Association participated in the demonstration, including Mike Newcomb from Chase City, Virginia. Newcomb's farm is near Boyd's. He said he joined the group to protest the favoritism shown by the USDA to the big farmers.

Kay Gannis, a farmer from South Carolina who is white, spoke at the rally and described her farm being foreclosed by the Farmers Home Administration, a division of the Department of Agriculture. "I would like to see the USDA and the FMHA completely put out of business. They're a bunch of greedy land hogs, and they cheat Black farmers, Hispanic farmers and us too, anybody that is poor."

A contingent of 11 workers, members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in Greensboro, North Carolina, participated in the demonstration. Black farm leader Gary Grant from Tillery, North Carolina, spoke at their union meeting the week before. Grant welcomed them to the demonstration and urged other unions to join with the Black farmers. "This is for all working people," he said.

Stu Singer is a member of the United Transportation Union. M.J. Rahn, a member of UNITE from Greensboro, and Joshua Carroll a member of the Young Socialists from Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Treaty of Waitangi

Articles from New Zealand in two issues of the *Militant* caught my attention. (See March 3 "Rightists Attack Maori Land Rights" and March 10 "NZ Rulers Attack Maori Rights.") I believe the authors are promoting a point of view that is fundamentally flawed. Further, by tarring as "racist" and "rightist" anyone who is critical of those views, they have effectively closed the debate they pretend to be interested in opening.

I cannot think of a single reason the *Militant* would want to champion the Treaty of Waitangi settlements negotiated in recent years. The facts show that the sole beneficiaries of these settlements are capitalist business investors — tribal, corporate, and individual — who are Maori. There is nothing — absolutely nothing — in any of them for working people: no tangible gains, no greater latitude for struggle, zilch.

The fisheries settlement with Ngai Tahu, for example, was a body blow to small producers — most of them Maori, as it happens — who saw the onslaught of the big commercial operators suddenly enshrined as a "treaty right." Property

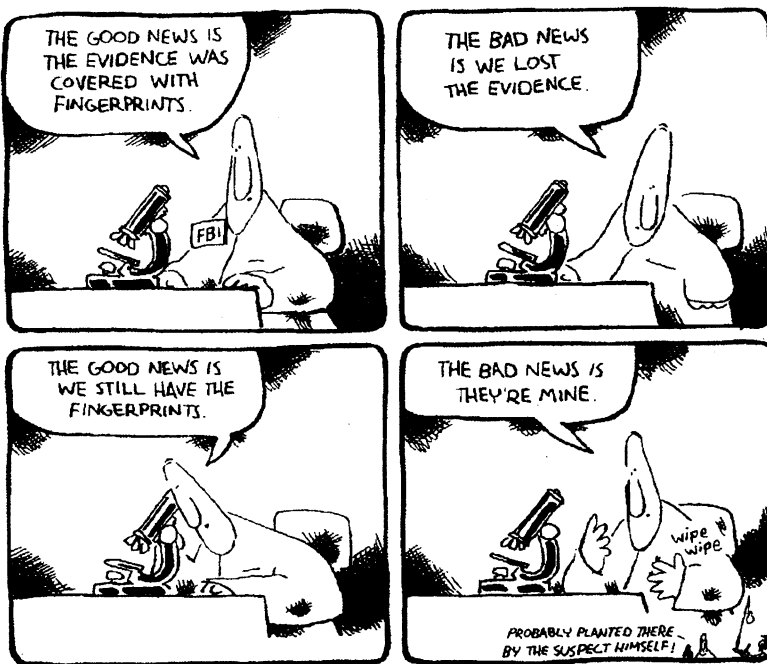
rights in land gained by Tainui, Ngai Tahu, and others will "liberate" tens of thousands of hectares only in the sense that previously idle or cheaply leased government real estate is now freely open to commercial development at prime market rates; small farmers need not apply.

If the Communist League truly wishes to join the ideological battle with rightists — and I hope they do — they will have to think much more about issues such as these and be prepared to argue convincingly for a working-class alternative.

Chuck Petrin
Canterbury, New Zealand

Cuban speaks in Denver

On a cold, snowy April night, over 40 people packed the Parlor Room at the First Baptist Church here in Denver to hear Fernando Pérez, First Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. He underscored the importance of solidarity work in the face of ongoing adversity by the U.S. State Department. His travel itinerary, where he stays, who he will visit, right down to his airline flight and seat number are required before he is issued a travel visa. Mayors,



city councils, and other elected officials, as well as business groups and private individuals often receive (State Dept.) pressure not to meet with the Cuban diplomatic corps. To counter this, every opportunity must be utilized in what essentially is a struggle to exercise free speech. Pérez noted the U.S. government's

openly stated desire to "push Cuba back to 1958" — prerevolutionary days under the dictatorship of Batista. In the face of such constant and hostile rhetoric backed by the economic blockade imposed by Helms-Burton, Pérez said that "U.S.-Cuba relations are as bad as at any time since 1962."

In a wide-ranging question and answer session, the diplomat pointed out that Cuba receives over 2,250 hours per week of negative broadcasting from more than 20 Miami radio and TV stations. Ironically, fearing a threat to its news monopoly, it was the *Miami Herald* that opposed CNN joining the 58 press agencies with more than 1,300 journalists already in Havana. He emphasized that as long as there is a basic respect for Cuba's sovereignty, self-determination, and independence, participation in Cuban society is open to those living outside the country. More than 50,000 Cuban-Americans traveled to Cuba in 1996. Importantly, this all takes place in the context of three straight years of increasing economic growth. "We have no alternative but to resist," he said.

Horace Kerr
Denver, Colorado

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

New UK gov't targets social gains

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Anthony Blair, elected Labour Party prime minister on May 1, has signaled that a major assault on social benefits will be a high priority of the new government. Even before the election, Blair promised to “think the unthinkable” about welfare, accusing the Tory government of spending too much. Now he has appointed Labour Member of Parliament (MP) Frank Field, as second-in-command at the social security department. Field was the chair of the House of Commons social security committee when Conservative (Tory) prime minister John Major was still in office.

Field, who has been praised by Tory politician Margaret Thatcher, has been put in charge of long-term planning for “reform” of the social security budget. Last year Field published a pamphlet entitled *How to pay for the future*, calling for slashing the current £100 billion welfare bill (£1 = \$1.63). The essence of Field’s proposals is to shift welfare payments away from state funding, out of the government treasury, and place the burden even further onto individual wage earners. Formal income tax would be cut, but the proposals amount to a major hike in taxes on workers’ wages. National Insurance contributions would rise substantially, including a 7 percent “insurance tax” that would supposedly fund half of the National Health Service (NHS) expenditure.

Field’s plan envisages a major overhaul of pensions, including abolishing the State Earnings-Related Pensions Scheme (SERPS) and forcing everyone to take out a second welfare policy covering unemployment, sickness and retirement.

To win support for his proposals, Field has tried to couch them in progressive sounding terms, such as a defense of “democratic socialist values” as opposed to means-testing, upon which much of current welfare payments are based. Field’s opposition to means-testing isn’t based on its use to erode universal benefits and foster divisions among working people. Rather Field opposes means-testing because, he says, it “promotes idleness, encourages dishonesty, and penalizes savings.”

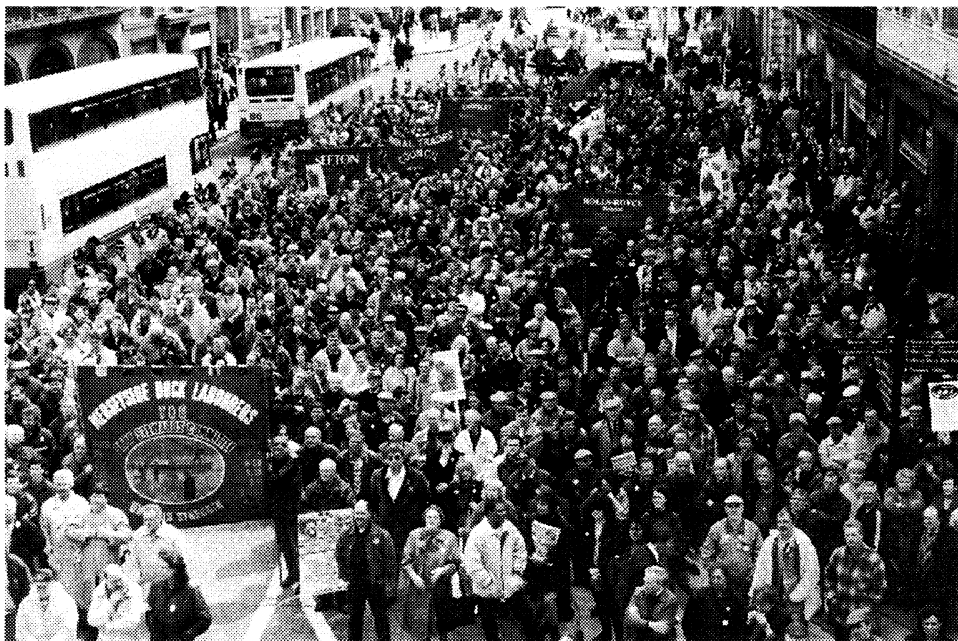
By “democracy,” Field means that everybody pays. He says that it is vital to give even the poorest “a stake” in their pension and in the NHS, and proposes lowest wage earners — who currently don’t have to pay National Insurance — be obliged to contribute. Anyone earning more than £10 per week would be levied 2 percent; those earning above £60 weekly would “contribute” 6 percent. Field proposes the creation of individually-owned funds in the private sector through which welfare would be administered. In addition, student grants would be replaced by loans.

Field and his boss, Harriet Harman, will not wait until the adoption of the welfare overhaul before starting their assault. They plan to immediately launch a “welfare to work” program and an attack on “benefit fraud.”

“Work is the best form of welfare for people of working age and lone mothers,” Harman said. “We need to reduce the obstacles that keep people out of work.” The *Sunday Telegraph* quoted one government minister as saying, “The public will not support a social security system that appears to tell people they can sit in bed all day watching television and drawing benefits.” Meanwhile, the official unemployment rate in the United Kingdom stands at 6.2 percent or 1.7 million people. The real unemployment is closer to 4 million.

Labour is already pledged to maintaining the stricter criteria on people claiming incapacity benefit and the new job seekers allowance that was imposed by the Tory government. It is now expected to introduce “workfare” — financial penalties for those deemed “workshy.”

In another move, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown announced May 6 that the new government was granting the Bank of England the power to set short-term interest rates without government approval.



Militant/Tim Rigby

Rally last year to support dock workers in Liverpool. Many workers voted Labour in hopes of reversing the government and employer assault of last two decades, but in his first days in office Blair made clear his government will continue the offensive.

Now the government will set a target inflation rate — currently 2.5 percent — which the Bank of England will try to adjust monetary policies to meet. This is presented as one of the steps needed to keep the pound strong in relation to other European currencies. Kenneth Clarke, the former Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, warned, “What you are going to see is, undoubtedly, tighter monetary policies than you might otherwise have” — in other words a willingness to raise interest rates high at the cost of deflation and higher unemployment. The government simultaneously raised short-term interest rates a quarter of a point to 6.25 percent, with the stated aim of dampening consumer spending, wage raises, and inflation.

In pre-election interviews, Blair promised that his government would be more “radical” than many envisaged. Whether or not his pledge was designed to give comfort to working-class voters, his welfare proposals show that it’s cold comfort indeed. Financial markets remained buoyant throughout the election campaign, and following the election the FTSE stock market index reached an all-time high.

A number of trade union officials at London’s May Day festival, including General Municipal Boilers (GMB) union president Mary Turner, declared that the new government’s adoption of the European Union (EU) social chapter showed that workers would reap the benefit of a Labour victory. The agreement on social policy consists of seven articles, two declarations and a protocol on economic and social cohesion — broad statements of aims rather than

policy. Foreign secretary Robin Cook has gone out of his way to reassure any doubters that UK government support for future EU social legislation will depend on whether it “promotes competitiveness” and the goal of a “skilled and flexible workforce.”

At the same time, the bosses remain concerned with Labour’s continuing links with the unions, upon which the hopes and expectations of working people are based. Labour’s election victory was greeted by an air of celebration by working people when they went to work on May 2.

A group of rail workers at South West Trains watching the results in their break room on TV discussed how, with such a large majority, the government would be able to renationalize the railway. There was no renationalize proposal in Labour’s manifesto, however. The railway was nationalized in 1948, and privatized by the Major government.

Labour increased its share of the vote in the main industrial centers, reflecting working people’s association of the Tory government with two decades of attacks on their rights and living standards, and the hope that a Labour government could be used to defend their interests. Many workers expressed their delight that prominent Tory government members like Michael Portillo, who had been strongly tipped as a successor to John Major, were voted out.

But the size of Labour’s 179-seat parliamentary majority was the result of something else: a substantial shift of middle class voters — some traditional Liberal voters, others traditional Tories — against the party that had, at least temporarily, lost the backing of decisive sections of the ruling class. The social base of the party built up by Thatcher’s “share-owning, home-owning democracy” has been substantially eroded by the effects of the depression. Never before in post-World War II elections has such

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Sinn Fein scores victory in UK election

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — A blow was struck against the British occupation of northern Ireland with the election of Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness to the seats of West Belfast and Mid-Ulster in the United Kingdom general election on May 1. Sinn Fein is the nationalist party in the forefront of the struggle to end British rule in the north of Ireland.

Adams and McGuinness are the first Sinn Fein representatives to win seats in the UK Parliament since Adams lost West Belfast to Joe Hendron of the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) in 1992. The SDLP is a reformist party with a base of support in the nationalist community. It remains the second largest party in northern Ireland. Tactical voting for the SDLP by voters who normally support the Unionist (pro-British) parties helped Hendron win the seat from Adams in 1992. This year tactical voting by Unionists for the SDLP almost doubled, but it could not stop Adams from taking the seat by winning the overwhelming majority of nationalist votes. Sinn Fein won 16 percent of the overall vote in the six counties on northern Ireland, surpassing the loyalist Democratic Unionist Party to take the third largest total in the north of Ireland. The vote for Sinn Fein was more than double that of the last UK general election in 1992.

Like all Sinn Fein members who have been elected to Parliament, Adams and McGuinness will refuse to take their seats at Westminster, as doing so requires taking an oath of allegiance to the British rulers. The party is, however, planning to open an office in London for the first time.

On Sunday, May 4, thousands of republicans rallied in heavy rain in Belfast’s Dunville Park to celebrate the election of the two Sinn Fein candidates and to mark

the death of Bobby Sands, a republican prisoner who died on hunger strike on May 5, 1981. Sands himself was elected to the UK parliament in the course of that hunger strike. While addressing the rally, Adams had a message for the newly elected UK prime minister, Anthony Blair: “What Mr. Blair and the British government have to understand is that there is a huge opportunity here for the people of this island to come together in peace and in equality.” He continued, “Sinn Fein is ready to do business with the British government. We are ready to do business with the Unionists. We are ready to seek an agreement, to seek an accommodation. We make no apologies for wanting an end to British rule in our country. We make no apologies for being a party which wants change, a party which wants equality.”

Sinn Fein’s election success came despite warnings from the Dublin government. Irish prime minister John Bruton went out of his way to urge nationalists not to vote for Sinn Fein. The election win also came despite a step up in repressive measures against Catholics. A loyalist gang of 200 drove eight Catholic families from their homes in Limestone Road, north Belfast in April, as police and army riot squads looked on. There have also been several army raids on homes in the predominantly Catholic Ardoyne neighborhood. On April 28, the fifth loyalist bomb in as many weeks was discovered outside the Sinn Fein offices on the Falls Road in West Belfast.

The British government also used anti-democratic measures during the election. In an unprecedented step, the Home Office imposed searches and random bag checks at polling stations, as a response to alleged IRA bomb threats.

During the election campaign in

Manchester, local politicians and the *Manchester Evening News* led a successful campaign to block a Sinn Fein councilor from Derry, Mary Nellis, from addressing a public meeting. The city has 50,000 residents who were Irish born and 150,000 with Irish parents.

The only local candidate to speak out publicly in the defense of free speech was Tim Rigby, a chemical worker and the Communist League’s candidate in Manchester Central. Rigby was quoted in the *Evening News* arguing that “working people had the democratic right to hear Sinn Fein’s views.”

Sinn Fein’s electoral advances follow a growth in the self-confidence of nationalist fighters across northern Ireland. Community self-organization mushroomed last year in defense of Catholic communities from sectarian Orange Order marches. The Orange Order is a rightist group that stages provocative marches through Catholic neighborhoods aimed at terrorizing the nationalist population. This year the Orange Order have retreated from some, but not all, of the marches planned through Catholic areas.

The Conservative government, defeated in the general election of May 1, had excluded Sinn Fein from talks on the future of Ireland despite their success in the 1996 elections held to elect representatives to the talks. The Labour Party has made plain it will continue this policy. New Secretary of State for northern Ireland, Labour’s Marjorie Mowlam explained that “none of my colleagues will have any contact with Sinn Fein while the IRA makes that impossible.”

Labour’s prime minister Blair, writing in the *Irish Times*, maintained the position of the outgoing Major administration that “there must be a genuine cease-fire from the IRA. It must be proven to be genuine in both word and deed.”