

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban generals discuss
record of revolutionary army

— PAGE 8

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NATO-Russia 'deal' is part of U.S. war drive

Yeltsin: 'Biggest threat since Cuban missile crisis'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"Since Khrushchev's Cuban crisis, there hasn't been such a sharp issue in relations between Russia and the United States, which concerns Russia's interests to the degree that everyone should think about it, including Americans and Europeans," declared Russian president Boris Yeltsin on May 8. He was comparing the 1962 "Cuban missile crisis" to Washington's current drive to expand the NATO military alliance eastward.

In October 1962, U.S. president John Kennedy imposed a naval blockade on Cuba and came to the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union over Havana's acquisition of missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

"We stated and still state that Russia is against the expansion of NATO," Yeltsin said in a television interview May 14, after announcing a tentative agreement with Washington on the terms of the expansion. U.S. officials conceded virtually nothing in the pact, set to be signed May 27 in Paris.

During negotiations May 13-14 between Russian foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov and NATO secretary general Javier Solana, Moscow demanded that the imperialist military alliance promise not to put nuclear weapons on the territories of new NATO



Italian troops in port of Vlore, Albania. Imperialist military occupations of Albania and Yugoslavia show what Washington has in store for toilers in Russia and other workers states in region.

Militant/Natasha Terlexis

candidates. NATO officials rejected this demand and also refused to guarantee they would not build military bases on the soil of new members, including airfields, communications, and air defense systems.

Despite the Kremlin's objections, U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright insisted, "NATO enlargement will go forward with no delay." She told the Senate Armed Services Committee on April 23, "We do

not need Russia to agree to enlargement."

Ultrarightist Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy declared May 8, "We should immediately unite with Belarus, put 100 divisions there, and again aim our missiles at the United States and Brussels. Then nobody would move to the East."

With Washington's military pressure mounting on the Kremlin, Yeltsin approved

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Imperialists step up pressure for Albania vote

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS

ATHENS, Greece — On May 13 Albania's opposition parties — with the Socialist Party leading the pack — announced they would boycott the planned June 29 elections and reconsider participation in the interim government in Tirana. The next day, a spokeswoman for President Sali Berisha announced that the elections wouldn't be called until "the conditions for parliament to be dissolved are right."

Meanwhile, Italian occupation forces in Vlore, the hotbed of the working-class revolt in Albania, fired shots for the second time since their arrival in April.

The boycott announcement by the eight parties came after parliament voted up an election law favorable to Berisha's Democratic party, which holds an absolute majority in that body following rigged elections in March 1996. Berisha wants a system that will reinforce the top vote getter, as his is the largest party machine. The Socialist party and others in the opposition favor a proportionate system.

The day before, Albanian prime minister Bashkim Fino met with U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright in Washington,

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8,000 GM parts workers strike for one day over local contract in Ohio

BY BRAD DOWNS

WARREN, Ohio — More than 8,000 members of International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) Local 717 shut down Delphi Packard Electric Systems May 13. The walkout halted production and distribution at all 18 Delphi plants in northeastern Ohio. Delphi is a subsidiary of General Motors. Like the United Auto Workers (UAW) members currently on strike at GM

plants in Oklahoma City and Pontiac, Michigan, these IUE members struck for a local contract. Although a national IUE contract, which covers base pay and most benefits, has been settled, Local 717 member have been without a local agreement since September.

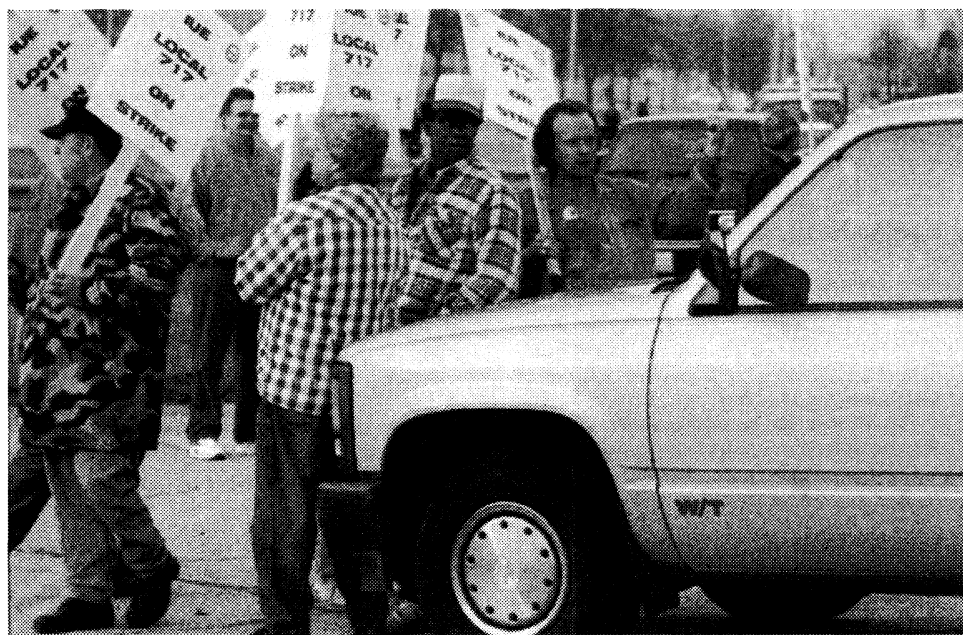
Workers rejected the company's first contract offer March 23 by a two-to-one margin. Strikers have complained about the

company's plans to outsource jobs, as well as the inferior wages and benefits that newer workers receive. Last year the company said it was eliminating 1,800 wire-cutting jobs from its plants in Ohio.

Previous national contract agreements established second- and third-tier wage scales. A second-tier hiring plan agreed to in 1984 allowed Delphi Packard to hire workers at 55 percent of base rate, then about \$7 an hour. These workers don't gain pay parity with first-tier workers for 10 years. Those hired under the third-tier plan established in 1993 receive 55 percent of the 1990 contract hourly base pay rate, about \$10 an hour, with reduced benefits. They never reach parity.

Delphi Packard supplies parts for 20 auto makers world wide. At the plants shut down by the strike, workers make wiring harnesses, printed circuit boards, battery cables, ignition cables, and other electronic components that are used in nearly all GM vehicles. After IUE officials reached a tentative agreement with the company, workers on picket duty were told to report to work for their scheduled shifts on May 14. Officials announced that details of the agreement would be given to the union membership after they returned to work.

Brad Downs is a member of UAW Local 1005 in Parma, Ohio. Mike Fitzsimmons, a member of UAW Local 2015 in Cleveland, contributed to this article.



Members of IUE Local 717 stop cars at Delphi plant in Howland, Ohio, May 13.

Clinton pushes 'war on drugs' in Mexico

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

U.S. president William Clinton and several other top U.S. officials used a May 5-7 visit to Mexico to push Washington's economic, political, and military domination of that country.

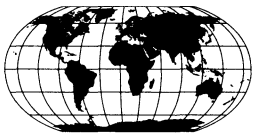
In what they cited as the high point of their talks, Clinton and Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo signed a "Declaration of the Mexican-U.S. Alliance Against Drugs." The declaration came two months after the U.S. Congress voted to "decertify" Mexico as cooperative in the so-called war on drugs, sparking outrage among many in Mexico. The declaration largely restates previous positions of the two governments.

Clinton sought to get agreement for the "hot pursuit" of alleged drug traffickers, which would make it legal for U.S. cops to penetrate sovereign Mexican territory, as well as authorization for U.S. agents to carry guns inside Mexico. While Zedillo formally refused those requests, the *Washington Post* states that "U.S. officials privately said that they reached a wink-and-nod agreement that the ban will not be vigorously enforced."

U.S. officials told the Mexican government they would send 50 helicopters and four C-26 surveillance aircraft for "antinarcotic purposes." U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, who took part in the talks, also offered Mexico City \$6 million to pay for the training of new Mexican antinarcotics group. The Mexican attorney general said he would consider the offer.

U.S. and Mexican officials presented a package of trade pacts under the North

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IN BRIEF

Tel Aviv tortures Palestinians

The Israeli government defended its "interrogation" tactics used on Palestinian prisoners at a May 7 hearing of the United Nations Committee Against Torture. Pointing to recent bombings in Israel by Palestinians responding to Zionist settlers' grabbing Palestinian-owned land, Tel Aviv officials said "physical pressure" was "essential" in the so-called fight against terrorism. "Moderate physical pressure" as it is called, includes violently shaking prisoners, sometimes to the point of death; tight handcuffing of feet and wrists, beatings, sleep deprivation, placing detainees in front of air conditioners overnight, and other methods.

At the hearing, Bent Sorenson, who runs a torture victim's rehabilitation center, noted an admission by late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin that 8,000 prisoners were subjected to severe torture.

Seoul textile company goes broke

The Yusung company — one of south Korea's largest textile companies — filed for bankruptcy May 7. Amassing huge debts beyond their means, they joined two major steel producers and several banks, including the country's 19th-largest conglomerate, the Jinro Group, which have collapsed under the capitalist economic crisis there.

Foreign bankers are comparing the economic crisis in south Korea to the conditions in Mexico in 1994 that led to the devaluation of the *peso*. Seoul's external debt increased by 33 percent, reaching \$104.5 billion in 1996. The government estimates it to surge to \$144 billion in 1997.

Chile miners protest pit closures

Nearly 1,000 coal miners marched in Santiago, Chile, May 5 to protest the closing down of the state run pits that operated for 150 years. They came from Lota, some 545 kilometers (215 miles) south of the capital. As demonstrators approached the presidential palace, they were blocked by a solid chain of 1,200 military cops.

Cops attacked the demonstrators, leaving seven activists injured and 30 detained. Six of the protest leaders made it to the palace. Initially removed from the palace, the unionists, accompanied by Roberto Alarcón,



Palestinian youth hit by Israeli soldier's rubber bullet in April during protest in Hebron against expansion of Zionist settlements in the West Bank. The conflict has sharpened since March when Tel Aviv began clearing land for more Israeli housing in East Jerusalem, which the Palestinians claim as their capital.

president of the Central Union of Workers (CUT), and Christian Democratic congressman Rodolfo Seguel, were let in to voice their demands.

Honduran *chortís* demand rights

On May 5, some 3,000 *chortís* (native Hondurans) began a march to Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras. They were protesting the killing of Cándido Amador and Ovidio Pérez, two of their leaders, and demanded the regime carry out reforms it promised.

They vowed not to leave until the government responds to their demands for educational and medical supplies, roads, technical assistance, government issued credits

to allow them to work the land, and other reforms.

States ban late-term abortions

In a bipartisan move, the New Jersey Assembly overwhelmingly voted to ban a type of late-term abortion. The Senate is expected to also pass the measure. Nearly a dozen states have passed laws that outlaw the intact dilation and evacuation procedure for late-term abortions. Michigan, South Carolina, Utah, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Mississippi, Montana, and South Dakota are among those states included. Twenty-one other states have bills pending.

The anti-choice legislation was voted down in eight states. Some capitalist politicians who supposedly support abortion rights are backing the ban. Democratic Senator Ernest Hollings, touted as a longtime supporter of abortion rights, justified his flip-flop by saying his "role up there in Washington is to represent the South Carolina view." Meanwhile, Congress is relaunching proposals for a federal ban to outlaw the procedure, defeated last year.

Clinton's "no sex" education

Under the proposed budget, the Clinton administration has offered \$250 million dollars to states that will teach "the virtues of abstinence" exclusively for sex education in classrooms. To qualify, no education of condom use or other forms of contraception

would be permitted. Local governments must also agree to teach, among other things, that sex outside of marriage "is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects." It is unclear how many states will accept the funds due to the restrictions.

Black church burned in Georgia

A church largely attended by Blacks in Marietta, Georgia, was set on fire on the early morning of May 7. Ignited in six different places, the 108-year-old cinder-block building was scorched in the front, and the rest of the church had smoke damage. The fire officials who put out the blaze, notified the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the FBI, who are "investigating" arsons of Black churches. Their findings: while some of the fires set are racially motivated there is no pattern behind them.

Court whittles at Fourth Amendment rights

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously April 28 that cops would get no blanket exemptions from the constitutional rule that requires them to knock on doors and announce their presence before bashing in on a search warrant.

The ruling was in response to a decision of the Wisconsin Supreme Court that would give police the right to forcibly enter any place they have a drug-related search warrant. At the same time, the high court upheld a Madison, Wisconsin, court ruling deciding that cops there who forcibly entered a man's house on drug possession suspicions were justified because alleged evidence could be destroyed as soon as cops knock on the door.

WTO ruling favors U.S. bosses

U.S. capitalists scored a blow against European Union (EU) bosses in a recent ruling by the World Trade Organization (WTO), when it deemed the EU ban on U.S. hormone treated beef was outside the bounds of multilateral trade rules. U.S. officials are hoping the EU will lift the ban, opening up a \$100 million annual market for U.S. beef barons. The WTO argued that EU gripes about the health hazard of hormones has no scientific basis. The EU has the option of paying a fine instead of lifting the ban.

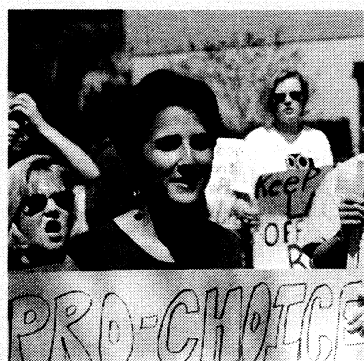
Washington is seeking a precedent that it can lever against other such trade barriers, like the one placed on imports of U.S. apples in Japan. Some trade officials argue that the ruling could backfire on Wall Street in relation to U.S. restrictions on southeast Asian imports of shrimp, which Washington insists are not harvested according to U.S. standards. One Clinton administration official noted, "On the essential questions, the WTO panel is on our side."

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Defend abortion rights!

The move by capitalist politicians to ban a type of late-term abortion is aimed at gouging the gains won by the women's movement. The 'Militant' provides coverage of defense of abortion clinics from rightist attacks and points to these mobilizations in the streets as the way to defend women's rights. Don't miss a single issue!



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Imperialists step up attacks on Tehran

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

A massive earthquake devastated 200 villages in northeastern Iran May 10, one month after imperialist regimes in Europe launched a campaign aimed at politically isolating Tehran.

The catastrophe killed at least 2,400 people, injured 6,000 others, and left some 50,000 Iranians homeless in a remote mountain region. Other reports put the death toll at 4,000. Most of the destruction spread along a 60-mile stretch of land between the towns of Birjand and Qain. Some destruction was also reported across the border in Afghanistan, where five people were killed. Iranian government officials estimated the damage in their country at \$67 million and have appealed for international assistance.

The May 10 quake was Iran's most severe since the Gilan disaster in 1990, which killed between 35,000 to 40,000 people and left 500,000 homeless. A major quake also struck Ardebil and Meshkindshahr on February 28, killing nearly 1,000 people. In early February, another earthquake hit the town of Bojnurd, killing 80.

In the Gilan quake, Tehran accepted international aid, including a paltry \$300,000 from Washington. The Clinton administration donated \$25,000 for the February 28 calamity and sent \$100,000 to the International Red Cross May 12. "We've had our disputes with the government of Iran for many, many years, but we don't have any arguments with the people of Iran," U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns declared as he announced this token contribution.

Washington has no diplomatic relations with Tehran and maintains a trade embargo against the regime, imposed since 1995. On April 30 the U.S. State Department charged Tehran with being "the top terror state." Earlier in the month, Washington cheered governments in the 15-nation European Union (EU) for an April 10 decision to suspend their policy of "critical dialogue" with the Iranian regime, after a court in Germany linked top Iranian officials with the murder of four Kurdish opposition figures.

'United front against Iran'

Pressing for more, an April 27 editorial in the *New York Times* called for "a united front against Iran," complaining that European governments' "unwillingness to help has undermined the sanctions."

"The critical dialogue has not succeeded," Burns chimed in. "We would be very pleased if the European governments moved to choke off trade with Iran."

Washington has also pushed — without any evidence — to link Tehran to the bombing of the U.S. military base in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia, last June that killed 19 U.S. GIs. According to the *Christian Science*



Iranians demonstrate outside German embassy in Tehran April 13 to protest a Berlin court's ruling linking Iranian government officials with assassinations in Germany.

Monitor, the Clinton administration has threatened "further retaliation" if it can successfully hang this charge on the regime.

The German court convicted four men for the 1992 murders of four members of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan at a restaurant in Berlin. Two of those convicted, one Iranian and the other Lebanese, were given life sentences; two other Lebanese men were sentenced to 11 years and five years in prison. The court asserted that a "Committee of Special Operations" ordered the assassinations of the Kurdish activists. This "committee" allegedly includes Iranian president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, chief of secret service Ali Fallahian, foreign minister Ali Akbar Velayati, and religious leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

The ruling was based on the testimonies of former Iranian president Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr, who lives in exile in Paris, and a former Iranian intelligence officer.

The Iranian government denied any involvement in the murders. "They [German prosecutors] believe the testimony of people whose sole mission in life is to discredit the regime," said an Iranian official, who dismissed the accusations.

After the verdict, the governments of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and all the countries of the European Union except Greece recalled their ambassadors from Tehran. Bonn also expelled four Iranian diplomats immediately.

Tehran responded by expelling four German diplomats and recalling its ambassadors to Germany and the other EU nations, except Greece. Hassan Rowhani, Iranian deputy speaker of parliament, said April 13

Tehran had suspended all trade contracts with New Zealand and canceled a scheduled visit by an Australian economic delegation. Iranian state television reported Rowhani called for a halt to investments in Germany and a ban on purchases of German equipment.

100,000 protest against Berlin ruling

On April 11, the day after the Berlin court decision, protests against it were organized in Iran. On the third day of nationwide demonstrations April 13, more than 100,000 Iranians marched on the German Embassy.

In the wake of the court ruling, imperialist regimes in Europe have downplayed the idea of imposing trade sanctions on Tehran. "An embargo doesn't seem the appropriate response," Jacques Rummelhardt, spokesman for the French foreign ministry said April 11. After an EU meeting of foreign ministers April 29, the government officials agreed to send their ambassadors back to Tehran. That meeting also decided to stop bilateral visits with Iran, deny visas to Iranians with intelligence and security posts, expel supposed Iranian intelligence personnel in EU countries, and maintain a ban on arms sales to the Iranian regime.

Iran is the world's third-largest oil producer, exporting \$17.5 billion worth of goods to the EU, mainly oil and gas in 1995. Bonn is Tehran's leading trade partner in the EU, with commerce between the two totaling some \$1.2 billion in 1996. German capitalists argued against sanctions April 11 and the German Chamber of Industry and Trade emphasized it would not cancel the visit of a 26-member Iranian delegation to

Germany scheduled later in April.

Some 170 German-based companies continued to conduct business operations in Iran. Last year, the state-owned Westdeutsche Landesbank negotiated a \$160 million loan for developing Iran's Soroush oil field in the Persian Gulf, provoking howls from Washington. "You cannot reproach us for following our economic interests," declared German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel.

In addition, officials of the French oil company S.A. Total said they would continue developing Iran's Sirri oil and gas fields, defying the so-called D'Amato law — U.S. legislation that penalizes foreign companies investing in Iran and Libya.

U.S. rulers divided over Iranian policy

Some divisions have emerged among the U.S. imperialists over their policy on Iran. "The policy of unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran has been ineffectual," wrote former national security advisers Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*. "The attempt to coerce others into following America's lead has been a mistake."

The two bourgeois figures along with Richard Murphy, a senior official at the White House Council on Foreign Relations and a coauthor of the *Foreign Affairs* piece, said "the strident U.S. campaign to isolate Iran ... drives Iran and Russia together and its U.S. and Group of Seven allies apart."

At an April 16 news conference they urged the Clinton administration to relax its policy of "dual containment" against Tehran and Baghdad, but stated Washington must be prepared to use military force involving "effective and painful retaliatory action" if necessary.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government is pressing to beef up its military presence in the region in response to a supposed expansion of Iran's navy. The Clinton administration has deployed a carrier task force and three dozen vessels in and around the Persian Gulf, ostensibly to enforce economic sanctions against the Iraqi regime and to protect the dozens of U.S. and other imperialist warplanes patrolling a no-flight zone over southern Iraq every day.

The possibility for an explosive confrontation is mounting. Last October the U.S. warship *Gettysburg* was participating in a military exercise in the gulf when it collided with an Iranian patrol boat, and there have been several near misses in the past few months. "So far the confrontations have stayed small and contained," said a military officer. "As we enforce things like sanctions, there's more potential for collisions."

Swedish gov't moves to restrict rights

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The government here is using a campaign against child pornography as the latest in a series of pretexts to restrict democratic rights. Several hundred people marched in Stockholm April 26 for a total ban of possession of child pornography. The demonstration was organized by Ecpat, an organization that claims to protect the rights of children. The group also organized an international conference against commercial sexual exploitation of children in Stockholm last August.

The April 26 demonstration was sponsored by 20 organizations, among them Amnesty International and Save the Children. Filip Sörensen, a billionaire and the former owner of Securitas, the biggest security company in Sweden, also sponsored the demonstration. Among the speakers was Jean Lambrecht, whose daughter was murdered by pedophiles in Belgium in a highly-publicized case.

A commission in parliament is proposing to ban the possession of child pornography, which would open the door to arbitrary house searches. There are exceptions for journalists and organizations that protect children, as a safeguard against charges of restricting the freedom of the press and speech. Distribution of such material is already banned. The organizers of the demonstration said the commission's proposal is good, but not sufficient.

On April 22 the daily *Svenska Dagbladet* published an article by the majority in the parliamentary commission, which includes members from all the political parties, arguing for their proposal. In presenting the results of their own investigations, the authors revealed that scope of child pornography in Sweden and elsewhere is much less than the sensational coverage has suggested. They noted, for example, that of 6,000 video clips confiscated in Belgium, only three had child pornographic scenes.

The government has recently appointed the former vice-chairman of the teachers union, Solweig Paulsson, to investigate the feasibility of public schools and child care centers having access to the crime register in order to do background checks on potential employees.

Freedom of association under attack

The Swedish government is probing to restrict other rights as well. Citing heavy fighting between the Hells Angels and Bandidos motorcycle gangs, Justice Minister Laila Freivalds is proposing to make it punishable by law to be "an active participant" in an organization that is committing crimes. Her proposal is designed to avoid banning organizations outright, to sugar coat this attack on freedom of association.

The social democratic government is also moving to restrict the right to appeal, proposing that every appeal has to meet cer-

tain criteria. Current laws provide the right to appeal any verdict by the lowest court.

A legal review within the ministry of justice is proposing to give more powers to the police in dealing with gatherings declared to be "disturbing public order." The issue has come up around sports events, civil disobedience actions, and countermobilizations against fascists. The police had earlier been criticized by the justice ombudsman for mass arrests and searches, as several innocent people had been arrested or searched. Under the new proposal, the police would have increased powers to block off areas when a crowd is "disturbing public order."

In another move against democratic rights, the government has decided to review the possibilities for the police to use bugging, which has been illegal since 1975.

And later in May, parliament will discuss and vote on a proposal to give the police the right to gather information about people who are not themselves suspected for a crime, but are alleged to have connections to suspected criminals. This plan sparked debate after the cops in Kalmar, a town in southern Sweden, registered children who ordered vegetarian school meals. They argued the information was needed to prevent terrorist activities by militant vegans.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metal workers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

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Protest answers arson attack on Greensboro clinic

BY PETER THIERJUNG

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — More than 20 people picketed outside the Federal Building here May 9 to protest an arson attack that severely damaged the Piedmont-Carolina Medical Clinic, the city's only abortion clinic.

"Abortion: a woman's right to choose," "Stop the violence against women's rights," and "Keep abortion safe and legal" said the picket signs held aloft facing passing motorists. Many cars drove by, honked, gave thumbs up signals, and waved to protesters in support.

Members of the Greensboro National Organization for Women (NOW) chapter, high school, and college students, the Young Socialists, and other local political activists participated in and built the emergency action initiated by the Socialist Workers Party.

In the early morning hours of May 6, an arsonist pried open an air-conditioning vent on the clinic's roof, poured in flammable liquid, and ignited it. The fire caused tens of thousands of dollars of smoke damage before it was put out by firefighters. No arrests have been made. The FBI and the Federal Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms have joined the investigation.

The attack was the second intentionally

set fire in six years at the clinic. Robert Hugh Farley Jr. pled guilty in 1991 for the first fire and served time in federal prison.

Work has begun to restore the clinic, which clinic workers estimate will take more than a week. Jean Goldston, the owner, told the press that the facility will be reopened.

"The federal, state, and city governments must apprehend and prosecute to the full extent of the law those responsible for the attack," said Karen Kopperud, a spokesperson for the SWP told reporters.

She pointed out that the North Carolina legislature, like the federal government, is finalizing the most restrictive antiabortion bill since abortion was legalized. "We're at a critical point. For the first time Democrats and Republicans in Washington and North Carolina are making one kind of abortion technique explicitly illegal. This is part of creating an atmosphere that encourages these night riders to attack clinics with guns and fire."

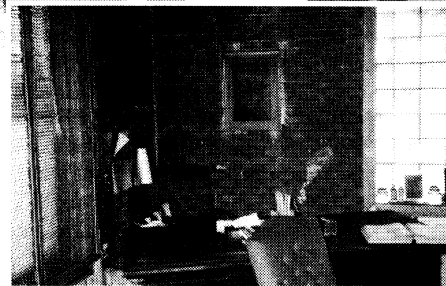
On May 1, the North Carolina House approved the antiabortion bill that now goes to the state senate for ratification and then to the governor for his signature.

Sara Naff, a former administrator for the now-closed Women's Pavilion-Options clinic, joined the protest. Options had been



Militant/Marty Boyers

Above, picket line at Federal Building for abortion rights. Right, fire-damaged clinic.



the only other abortion clinic in Greensboro until a few weeks ago, when the landlord refused to renew the lease. "Even though we have the right to choose legally, if there are no clinics in our city, it creates a huge barrier," Naff told the press at the protest. "Finding a new location for our clinic proved impossible. For a year, and intensively for eight months, I worked with every broker and followed every lead for a possible site." Property owners did not want to lease to Options for fear of repercussions from antiabortion forces, Naff explained.

NOW member Sarah Gibbs said, "Now that there's only one clinic, we have to do what we can to keep it open and safe for women to go and use the facility."

A May 9 Militant Labor Forum featured

a speak-out against the attack. Several activists attended and discussed the politics behind the drive against abortion rights and how to respond. "We have to turn the honkers into activists," said Dave Coker referring to supportive motorists passing the picket line. The protest and forum were announced and covered widely on television and radio, and in the Greensboro *News and Record*. An editorial in the *News and Record* against the arson attack publicized the Militant Labor Forum speak-out.

Scandal-ridden brass charge woman with adultery

BY MEGAN ARNEY

Air Force prosecutors plan to argue May 20 that Air Force Lieut. Kelly Flinn committed a crime when she had an affair with a married civilian. The charges include adultery, fraternization, disobeying an order, making a false statement, and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, adultery, sodomy, and fraternization are forbidden. These acts are not crimes under civilian law.

The charges against Flinn come after accusations of widespread rape and harassment of female cadets by officers at an Army training base in Maryland set off a broad investigation of sexual abuse in the military. The step-up in prosecutions for adultery is portrayed as an outgrowth of this investigation. Flinn, the first female B-52 bomber pilot, will be court-martialed. If found guilty she could face a fine, loss of benefits, discharge from military service, forced retirement, and prison time. The military brass has wide latitude in what sanctions, if any, to apply to charges such as adultery. In many cases, male officers accused of such offenses received reprimands or early retirement.

In Flinn's case, as in others, the military investigators' files are filled with graphic details of her sex life, habits, and interests. According to Tod Ensign, director of the group Citizen Soldier, in another recent case,

a 23-year-old lieutenant recently charged with having sex with an enlisted man was interrogated for five hours in court. She was asked "things like what kind of music was playing, how were you lying on the bed, did you talk about your sexual fantasies.... I believe it's a form of sexual harassment," Ensign said.

Meanwhile, a military judge sentenced Staff Sgt. Delmar Simpson to a 25-year prison sentence on May 6. Simpson was found guilty on April 29 of 18 rape charges involving six female trainees, and 47 counts of assault at Aberdeen Proving Ground, a military training center.

Simpson was sentenced, demoted to the rank of private, and dishonorably discharged. Prosecutors had asked for the maximum sentence, a lifetime in prison. The case will automatically be turned over to the Army Court of Appeals.

Simpson is appealing his conviction based on racial bias. He is one of 12 Black drill sergeants charged with sexual assault at

Aberdeen. Overall, about 60 percent of the 42 drill sergeants at the base are Black. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Congressional Black Caucus, have called for an independent investigation of the Army's handling of the cases.

The brass claims only low-ranking officers were involved in sexual abuse at Aberdeen. When the top base official, Lt. Col. Gabriel Riesco, was asked whether commanders were part of the problem there, he declared, "Absolutely not."

Meanwhile, other cases continue to crop up. The Army's top enlisted soldier, Sgt. Major Gene McKinney, has been criminally charged with making lewd remarks and physically assaulting a former aide, Brenda Hoster. McKinney stepped down from the armed services committee investigating the recent sexual charges. Since Hoster, three other women have come forward with charges that McKinney had also acted inappropriately with them.

Veterans Affairs officials announced April 17 that seven of nine senior VA Department executives accused of sexually harassing their employees in the past four years were allowed to retire. One was given a \$25,000 buyout, while another was simply transferred to a \$106,000-a-year post at a Florida hospital.

And Su Jin Collier, a female cadet at West Point Military Academy, may be expelled on charges of having consensual sex with another cadet. Collier said the classmate raped her last November. After finding the man not guilty, Army investigators recommended that Collier be expelled from West Point for lying about being raped, as well as having consensual sex. The investigator recommended the male cadet be suspended for his involvement.

The charges by Collier comes only three months after another male cadet at West Point was acquitted in military court of raping another female cadet at an off-campus party.

Rightist group draws protest in Minnesota

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON AND SARAH KATZ

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — A meeting of the antiabortion group Human Life International (HLI), held here April 16-20, sparked

controversy and protests. The group drew more than 2,000 people to its annual conference. HLI actively campaigns against women's rights, lesbians and gays, feminism, abortion, sex education, and contraception. It targets immigrants, Muslims, and Jews.

The public debate over the conference forced Archbishop Harry Flynn of St. Paul and Minneapolis to back out of giving the opening mass for the conference. He came under pressure from the American Jewish Committee and other Jewish religious leaders to disassociate himself from HLI and the anti-Semitism prominent in its propaganda. Rev. Paul Marx, who founded HLI in 1981, urges readers in his autobiography to "note the large numbers of abortionists... who are Jewish."

To counter the appearance of anti-Semitism, HLI conference organizers enlisted the support of Rabbi Yehuda Levin from New York. Rabbi Levin, who was a prominent supporter of ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan's presidential campaign, accompanied Rev. Marx in all his public appearances here. HLI took out a full page advertisement in the Minneapolis daily the *Star Tribune* appealing to the archbishop to change his mind. Flynn refused to address the conference, but allowed the group use of St. Paul Cathedral for its opening mass.

As the mass took place April 19, more than 150 demonstrators rallied on the church

steps chanting "Not the church, not the state, women must control their fate," and "Pro-life? Who are you kidding? You kill doctors and terrorize women." The demonstration, organized by a group called Fight the Right Coalition was advertised as a "kiss-in" and demonstration. Many students organized to come from high schools and colleges in the area. Adam Tressler, one of 25 students to come from Macalester College, said, "This is part of the struggle over space. They want to take this space from us. We have to stand up for our right to be ourselves in public."

The following Saturday another 150 people demonstrated against HLI at its conference site in the suburb of Bloomington, Minnesota. The demonstrators marched around the Radisson Hotel chanting, "Racist, sexist, anti-queer, HLI get out of here."

The demonstrators held an open mic in front of the hotel, in spite of the fact that police seized their microphone.

Earlier that day, about 50 of the rightists, most of them young people, had demonstrated outside the Robbinsdale Women's Center, a clinic that provides abortions and other health services, harassing patients and trying to prevent them from gaining access to the facility.

Sarah Katz is a member of the Young Socialists and Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 6-75.

Rally defends voting rights

BY LOU GINSBERG

SANTA ANA, California — Upwards of 2,500 mostly Latino marchers, many of them immigrant workers, overwhelmed 125 ultrarightist counter-demonstrators as a congressional committee convened hearings on allegations of voter fraud in the 1996 election of Democrat Loretta Sanchez over Republican incumbent representative Robert Dornan. The "March to Support Voting Rights," sponsored by several Latino civil rights groups, the Chicano student group MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán), and the Orange County Central Labor Council, took place here April 19.

The rightist, anti-immigrant Voices of Citizens Together called the counter-demonstration. They were joined by the John Birch Society, and a dozen students and youth from Young Americans for Freedom.

Last November Sanchez defeated Dornan, the long-time congressman from Orange County, by 984 votes out of 106,455 cast. Upon losing his congressional post to

Sanchez, Dornan charged his downfall was due to the massive influx of "illegal aliens" on voter lists, many of them registered by Hermandad Mexicana Nacional (Mexican National Brotherhood), a local immigrant rights and lobbying organization.

Both Dornan and Sanchez testified before the committee in Santa Ana on April 19. Dornan is attempting to win approval to impose a "citizenship test" on the more than 100,000 who voted in the fall election.

There were some heated exchanges between the voting rights supporters and right-wingers. "Why do you always speak Spanish?" one rightist angrily demanded of a group of young Latinos, "this is America."

"We speak Spanish," one youth retorted, in English, "because this is Santa Ana. Get used to it."

Among those marching were hundreds of workers in contingents of drywallers, asbestos workers, hotel employees, and other unions. Later, an array of Democratic party politicians addressed the crowd.

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Talking socialism with steel, rail workers

BY DOUG JENNESS
AND ANDY AARONSON

PITTSBURGH — Forty socialist workers, active members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), met here May 3-4 to assess their recent activities and to adopt tasks for the coming months. The meeting registered substantial progress in getting socialist literature into the hands of steelworkers and discussing the central political questions of the day with them.

The socialists sold 47 pamphlets and books distributed by Pathfinder to their co-workers in the USWA in April, an increase over the monthly average of 13 in the previous three months. The participants voted to raise their national monthly sales goal from 46 to 65 books and pamphlets.

"Selling this literature," Sheila Ostrow, member of Local 1843 at the LTV mill in Pittsburgh, stated in the opening report of the meeting, "lays the groundwork for helping to prepare for what capitalism has in store for us as its crisis deepens."

One of the central issues participants agreed needs to be discussed among workers is Washington's drive to enlarge NATO to include Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary as part of its preparations to use military force to try to restore capitalism in Russia.

In a presentation to the Militant Labor Forum during the weekend, Estelle DeBates, a garment worker from Morgantown, West Virginia, explained, "Increased trade and investment with Russia and Eastern Europe hasn't and can't restore capitalism to these countries. It's going to require military force."

Gaetan Whiston, a member of USWA Local 9198 in Minnesota, summing up the tasks ahead, urged the socialist activists to reproduce recent *Militant* articles on the imperialist war drive against Russia, fasten them together pamphlet-fashion, and distribute them among co-workers.

Latin American studies students snap up Pathfinder

BY MARGRETHE SIEM

GUADALAJARA, Mexico — Echoing the sentiment expressed by many who stopped at the Pathfinder booth, David Parker of the University of Arizona said, "I appreciate the fact that you are here." Pathfinder books help to broaden the range of ideas discussed at these conferences, stressed Parker, one of the 2,100 participants at 20th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, held here April 17-19. Nearly \$1,000 worth of Pathfinder books and pamphlets were purchased, making the New York-based publisher's booth one of the busiest. Pathfinder Press was one of the 70 exhibitors at the conference.

Nearly 1,000 promotional flyers and over 200 Pathfinder catalogs were distributed among the professors, students, and other academics and activists attending mostly from the United States, but also from Latin America and Europe.

Three students and a library worker from the University of Puerto Rico spent several hours at the booth discussing the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, and the challenges faced by the Cuban revolution today. One of them, Jacqueline, said she helps organize women workers in the tuna industry in Puerto Rico. She bought *Women and the Cuban Revolution: Speeches and Documents by Fidel Castro, Vilma Espín, and others*, which was one of the most popular titles. Together they bought more than \$150 in books that they will study together, including *Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings, 1922-23*, Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution*, Che Guevara's *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, and a subscription to the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The 144 books sold included 28 copies of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. Two of its issues, containing the articles "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War," and "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution," as well as the pamphlet *Peru's Shining Path: Anatomy of a Stalinist Sect* were the top sellers, followed by a wide range of titles on the Cuban revolution. Many were also interested in *The Politics of Chicano Liberation*, and in *Lenin's Final Fight*.

A young woman from Mexico City, bought six issues of *New Internationalist* in both English and Spanish, a copy of *Habla Malcolm X*, and a pamphlet on abortion rights. She also bought titles on Trotsky and Che Guevara to share and discuss with her friends.



Above, rail workers protest unsafe conditions in Washington, D.C., in April. Socialist rail and steel workers sell communist propaganda and talk politics on the job.

Ostrow pointed to the seven-month steelworkers strike against Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. as an important battle that unionists throughout the country should support. The workers are striking eight plants in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Ostrow noted that "this is the longest strike ever in basic steel, yet none of the 4,500 union employees has crossed the lines."

The central issue is restoring the pension plan the workers had before the company declared bankruptcy in 1985. This plan, which is the same type that exists at the other integrated steel mills in the United States, would guarantee a defined monthly retiree payment rather than the company's proposal that it fall or rise according to company profitability.

Several participants in the meeting from Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cleveland, and Birmingham described efforts to organize solidarity with the striking workers in plants in their areas, including plant-gate collections.

Ostrow stated that several activists she talked to said the *Militant* was the best source of information about the strike. "Helping to get the paper out to co-workers," she explained, "is one of the best ways we have of informing people about the strike."

The day following the meeting, several of the activists visited the picket lines in Steubenville and Yorkville, Ohio. Edmundo Saballos, who works at a small USWA-organized plant in Miami, found that the strikers were surprised to learn that there was a USWA local in Miami. "They had trouble grasping that I make only \$5 an hour," Saballos said, "and still am in a union. When they heard that I was an immigrant they wanted to learn more about this."

He took photos of the picket lines and picked up fliers and stickers in the strikers' headquarters to show co-workers in Miami. The strikers welcomed

the visiting USWA members and the women's committee invited them to stay for lunch that was being prepared in the big union hall near Steubenville.

During the weekend meeting socialists also reported on visits to the picket lines at Goodyear, where USWA-organized rubber workers had been on strike.

Whiston also proposed that the socialist unionists get out the word about the 14th World Festival and Conference of Youth and Students in Cuba in July and August. He said "it's very possible that we can get some young coworkers interested in participating in this gathering." The festival, he said, will provide an opportunity for young people to get together and discuss all the big political questions of the day.

He also indicated the importance of weekly sales of the *Militant* at entrances to the factories and mills where we work. "This," he said, "can help stimulate interest in our literature and open the road to more political discussions in the plant."

Betsey Farley, a member of USWA Local 12014 in Birmingham, Alabama, reported that since the last national meeting of the socialist steelworkers in September, the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists members of both organizations in the same industry will jointly organize their political work in the unions. "This underlines," Farley said, "the importance of making sure, where it's possible, to draw younger activists into helping lead on socialist activity in the unions."

This stimulated a lively discussion. One Young Socialists member from Minneapolis-St. Paul explained that he had become active in the search for an industrial job together with other socialists, and decided to join the SWP about the same time as his hiring date.



BY MARGRETHE SIEM

SAN FRANCISCO — Socialist rail workers, members of the United Transportation Union (UTU), from around the country met here the first weekend in May to discuss

how to carry out socialist propaganda work on the job.

"Our main campaign is to provide co-workers with books that contain the history of the working class, and the class struggle throughout the world. We will also build the World Youth Festival and the International Workers Meeting that will be happening in Cuba this summer," said Sam Manuel, a UTU member from Washington, D.C., reviewing the campaigns of the socialist rail workers.

In April the UTU members sold 51 books and pamphlets on the job, about double their results from the previous month. The single most popular Pathfinder title was *American Railroads — The Case for Nationalization* by Dick Roberts. Other sales included books of speeches by Malcolm X, on labor history, the Cuban revolution, and the fight for women's liberation. Special "super sale" offers on selected Pathfinder titles will make it possible to have a May blitz as a way of reaching an increasing number of co-workers to discuss politics and to bring them into political activities, Manuel said.

The socialists also discussed the conditions workers on the railroad face on the job, as well as labor activities they had been part of recently. Andrea Morell, a conductor on the commuter rail road in Boston, pointed to how affirmative action is a central issue for the unions to fight for. She described how an official working in the building and bridges department had been physically harassed for advocating affirmative action. Amtrak, the owner of the railroad, said after an investigation, that "it doesn't seem to be a problem," and reiterated that it is an equal opportunity employer. However, among the 144 workers in that department only about a dozen are Black.

"Socialists working together at the same place can help lead discussions on the need for affirmative action and the fight for working people to unite," said Linda Marcus, also from Boston.

A number of the meeting participants had been part of a commemorative march in Washington, D.C., in April, organized by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE). It demanded a safer railroad, where engineers and other union members don't have to die due to the companies refusal to install adequate safety measures on the trains and on the rails.

Others reported on labor rallies they had participated in from the strawberry pickers march of 25,000 in Watsonville, California, to farm workers struggle to organize in Yakima, Washington.

A number of the participants at the meeting work for Conrail, and talked about the uncertain future for them and their co-workers. Manuel characterized the proposed acquisition of Conrail by CSX and Norfolk Southern as simply another way for the wealthy rail companies to squeeze more out of the workforce," he said.

Concessions by workers over the last two decades, such as cuts in crew sizes and greater safety risks, have paved the way for the big rail companies to continue the reorganization to maximize their profits today, he added.

Margrethe Siem is a member of the United Transportation Union in New York.

COME TO THE 14th World Festival of Youth and Students CUBA '97

Young students and workers will discuss issues including national liberation, anti-imperialist struggle, solidarity, sovereignty and self-determination, environment, employment, education, young women, health, culture, racism and fascism.

Applications to this international festival are due May 30. The total cost for the trip is \$600. This covers all expenses except airfare from the United States to Nassau, Bahamas, or Cancun, Mexico — the meeting points for U.S. participants.

For more information
U.S. Organizing Committee for the World Youth Festival
2565 Broadway #236, New York, NY 10025. Tel: (212) 866-7270



Cuban gov't presents facts indicating Washington conducts biological warfare

Below we reprint a statement presented by the Cuban government to the United Nations general secretary April 28. It details evidence that a recent plague of the Thrips palmi insect, which is devastating food crops in Cuba, is the result of biological aggression by Washington. U.S. officials have denied the charge.

I. Description of the facts

1. On October 21, 1996, at 10.08 hours, crew members of scheduled flight CU-170 of Cubana de Aviación (Cuban Airlines), on board a Fokker-27 aircraft, flying in the western region of Cuba, noticed a single-engine airplane flying from north to south, at about 1,000 feet (300 metres) above them, apparently spraying or sprinkling unknown substances — some seven times — in an intermittent manner.

2. At that very moment, Cubana de Aviación Fokker aircraft was located 25 to 30 kilometres south of Varadero, in Matanzas Province, flying at an altitude of 9,000 feet and at a speed of 400 kilometres per hour.

3. According to scheduled flights, objective radar control, and recordings of radio conversations between the airplanes and ground control, a fumigation aircraft Model SAR was flying south in the Girón corridor on a course perpendicular to the Cubana de Aviación flight. The aircraft's registration number was N3093M, of the civilian aircraft registry of the United States of America, operated by the State Department of that country, as stated in the flight authorization requested to the Institute registry of civilian aircraft. The above-mentioned airplane had taken off from the Patrick Air Force Base of the United States, in Cocoa Beach in the state of Florida, bound for Grand Cayman.

4. The Cubana pilot immediately reported to flight control on the release of unknown substances, in the form of a white or greyish mist, by the SAR airplane. The Cuban air controller established communication with the United States aircraft and asked whether it was having any technical problem, to which the pilot's answer was "No." He was also asked about the type of aircraft he was flying, answering that it was a single-engine AY-65. That conversation is recorded on tape.

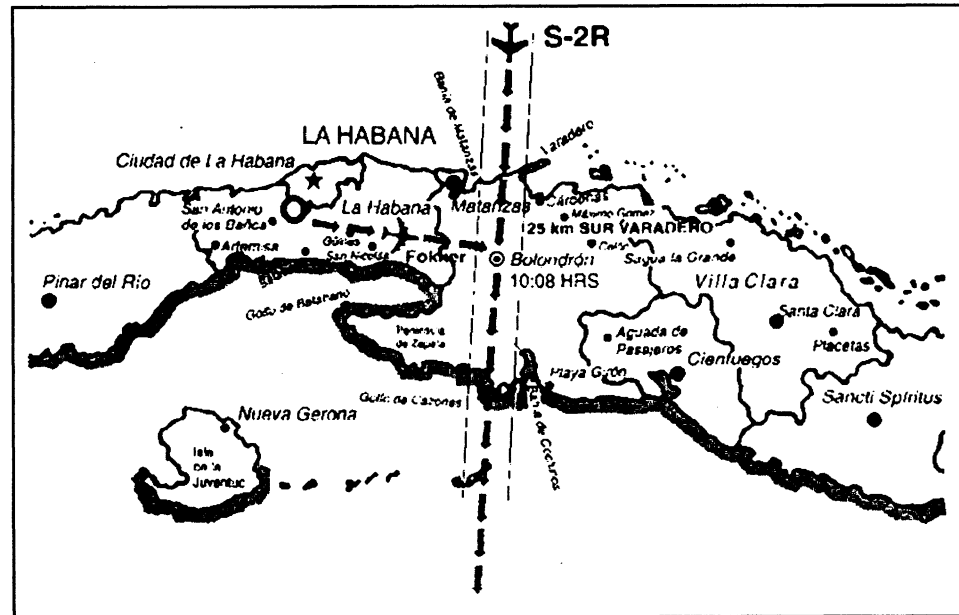
5. On December 18, 1996, the first signs of the presence of a Thrips plague appeared in Matanzas Province, at potato plantations of the Diamant variety, sowed 38 days before on the Lenin State Horticultural Farm in Javelins Municipality. Samples of these organisms were sent to the Central Quarantine Laboratory of the National Pest Control Center.

6. On December 26, 1996, the Cuban ministry of Foreign Affairs presented a note of complaint to the United States Interest Section in Havana regarding the incident that occurred in the Girón corridor, urging the United States to take appropriate measures aimed at the clarification of the event.

7. On February 12, 1997, the United States Interest Section in Havana handed over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba a reply to that note, stating that on the day of the incident, the United States pilot had, during his flight, seen a Cuban commercial airplane flying below, and as he was not certain of having been seen, "following caution and safety procedures, and with the purpose of securing a positive visual contact, the pilot used the 'smoke generator' of his aircraft, in order to indicate its location," adding that "the smoke vanished and no fluid was poured from the airplane."

8. On February 14, 1997, the Central Quarantine Laboratory confirmed that the insect examined was the Thrips palmi karay, foreign to Cuban territory until that moment.

9. The Thrips palmi is indigenous to Asia. Since 1985 it has scattered across certain Caribbean zones, including Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica. It is a polyphagous phytophagan that infects practically all crops, weeds, and ornamental plants. It is reported to be a vector of viruses such as that known as TSWV. It is an insect that is difficult to diagnose, unknown to the majority of Cuban specialists. It is self-propagated within a field, and into neighbouring ones, disseminating mostly when seedlings, fruits and vegetal material,



Map from Cuban daily Granma shows paths of Cuban Fokker-27 and U.S. S2R

including topsoils, are moved from one place to another. It also scatters by aerial means, particularly its larvae. It is resistant to temperature changes. Its reproductive cycle lasts between 15 and 21 days, depending on the host plant.

10. Examining the levels of highest density of the insect population, it could be ascertained that the primary source of the outbreak was located on the above-mentioned Lenin State Horticultural Farm. Smaller outbreaks were pinpointed in fields close to the villages of Máximo Gómez and Bolondron, also in Matanzas Province, a few kilometres away from the main source.

11. In the first half of January 1997, outbreaks of the same insect were spotted in municipalities south of Havana Province, bordering Matanzas, affecting corn, beans, pumpkins, cucumbers, and other crops.

12. Once the insect was identified, the Government of Cuba adopted a program of emergency measures to fight it, including chemical control, through the purchase of pesticides, which in spite of its high cost, have not achieved effective results.

13. At the end of March 1997, the Government of Cuba, complying with international regulations, informed the Secretary-General and the United Nations Center for Disarmament, about the presence of Thrips palmi karay in its territory, and notified this finding to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to which Cuba applied for technical and financial assistance to fight the pest.

14. At present, Thrips palmi is spread virtually throughout Matanzas and La Habana provinces, in two municipalities of Cienfuegos Province, in some municipalities of Pinar del Rio Province, and in the

Island of Youth. Its presence has not been detected in the central and eastern provinces of the country.

II. Results of the investigation

15. The SAR aircraft, register N3093M, is used by the State Department of the United States in the struggle against drug trafficking, to destroy crops. The aircraft utilizes two sprinkling systems: one for the use of aerosols and liquid particles and another for dropping solid particles. No smoke generator is known to be installed aboard this aircraft.

16. The specialists appointed by Cuba to clarify the event considered unlikely a voluntary or involuntary leakage of fuel or oil, which is confirmed by the answer given by the United States airplane pilot himself to the Cuban air controller.

17. The argument used by the United States in its note of reply regarding the smoke release appears, from the technical point of view, weak and in contradiction with the conversation held during the flight. On the other hand it is not a standard procedure established for this kind of situation. The pilot of the Cuban Airline Fokker asserts, on the basis of his visual observation and his previous experience as a fumigation airplane pilot, that the release made by the United States aircraft was not of smoke but of a substance.

18. Bearing in mind the place where the unknown substance was released, it can be established that the most risky area for infection is a zone covering 15 to 20 kilometres to the west and 20 to 25 kilometres to the east of the Girón air corridor, although the whole territory of Matanzas Province is considered a prob-

able infected zone. These zones match those actually infected both by the primary and secondary outbreaks.

19. Considering the insect population found on December 18, 1996, as the main source of the outbreak, specialists of the Cuban National Pest Control Centre estimated the beginning of the plague to date back to three or four previous generations. Bearing in mind the reproductive cycle of this insect, the beginning of the infection can be ascertained as approximately October 21, 1996, which was precisely the date when the United States S2R aircraft flew over this point.

20. Mindful of the distribution of the agent in countries like Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica, it would be expected that any natural occurrence would be in the eastern region of Cuban territory, the closest to those countries. Its appearance more than 600 kilometres away from the region is, therefore, odd and suspicious.

21. Although at first sight it could be expected that the height of the flight of the S2R aircraft was not the most appropriate for the dissemination of biological agents, information is available regarding experiments made by North Americans themselves in which that type of agent was dropped from even higher altitudes. On the other hand, the sturdy characteristics of the insect, especially in its larval state, make its survival possible at those altitudes.

22. Because of its nature of being a polyphagous phytophagan that strikes and severely damages practically every crop, and its resistance to a considerable variety of pesticides, the Thrips palmi can be considered ideal biological agents able to inflict heavy damage on agricultural food crops. In a document entitled "Report of the Subgroup for Investigation of Claims of Use or Escape of Agents which Constitute Biological or Toxin Weapons," of February 29, 1996, prepared by the Federation of American Scientists, Thrips palmi are included among the invertebrate that could come within the purview of the Convention on Biological Weapons.

23. In this particular case, the behavior of the plague in Cuba shows a polyphagia bigger than the one described in the scientific literature.

III. Conclusions

24. The analysis of the facts and the results of the investigations allow us to relate, with a high degree of accuracy, the appearance of Thrips palmi in Matanzas Province with the dropping, on October 21, 1996, of an unknown substance by an aircraft operated by the United States Department.

25. There is reliable evidence that Cuba has once again been the target of biological aggression.

Clinton pushes 'war on drugs' in Mexico

Continued from front page

American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) May 6. These included lifting a Mexican ban on Florida citrus and U.S. restrictions on wheat and pork imports. The volume of trade between the two countries is nearly \$150 billion a year, up 37 percent since 1994.

Before leaving Washington for Mexico as part of the delegation, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin declared, "NAFTA really proved its mettle during [Mexico's financial] crisis." When the peso collapsed at the end of 1994, the White House put together a "bailout" package that included a \$12.5 billion loan, which has since been repaid with interest. Rubin took the opportunity to once again brag that Washington made "a substantial profit on that loan." The U.S. rulers have praised Zedillo as the savior of the Mexican economy for paying off the loan, selling off state-owned industries, and opening them up for foreign investment.

But working people have been squeezed even tighter. Workers suffered a roughly 35 percent drop in wages in the wake of the peso crisis, and the Zedillo government has imposed a range of austerity measures. These include recently renewed wage controls that are less than projected inflation.

Over the last year there have been strikes by sugar workers, teachers, and others; vari-

ous peasant struggles, and guerrilla actions by the Zapatista National Liberation Front and the People's Revolutionary Army. One recent reflection of the climate of resistance can be seen from the May Day demonstrations that took place there. Organized by independent unions, protesters demanded wage increases, condemned the government's austerity drive, called for an end to repression of peasants in the state of Chiapas, and protested the upcoming Clinton tour. The pro-government union refused to organize marches on this international workers' holiday to avert any possibility of mass expressions of discontent.

Throughout the tour, Clinton feigned respect for Mexican independence and even spoke a few mangled words of Spanish. Everywhere he went, Clinton was met with small-scale demonstrations. An urban squatters' protest in front of the U.S. embassy was the first to greet Clinton and his aides. They were protesting Zedillo's decision to have Clinton's tour begin on May 5, Mexican independence day. Another demonstration of 600 teachers — many of them indigenous people from some of the poorest regions — attempted to march past the embassy, but were blocked by local cops. They chanted, "Clinton, you stole from the peoples of the world. You are not welcome."

In a formal address May 7, Clinton tried to defend Washington's new immigration restrictions, which are very unpopular among working people in Mexico. "We must also take effective action to stop illegal immigration," he stated. "Just as those who obey our laws are welcome, those who break them must face the consequences."

For the first time in U.S. presidential history, Clinton met with two main opposition parties for 15 minutes each. Felipe Calderón of the National Action Party (PAN), and Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the Revolutionary Democratic Party both tried to convince Clinton of their potential to bring about "stable political change" in Mexico.

Following his visit to Mexico, Clinton visited Costa Rica and Barbados. There he refused to back off the U.S. government's opposition to European trade rules that favor Caribbean banana exports. Washington recently won a World Trade Organization ruling against its European rivals on this question. Clinton also rejected calls by many governments in the region for "NAFTA parity," that is better trading status with the United States. The U.S. president signed treaties with the governments of Barbados and Jamaica that would allow U.S. cops access to their territorial waters and airspace in the name of fighting drug trafficking.

Papers stolen 70 years ago tell history of communist movement in United States

BY MIKE TABER

A number of letters and documents written by U.S. communist leader James P. Cannon in late 1928 have recently come to light.

These items appear to be part of the material stolen from Cannon's apartment during two burglaries committed in late December 1928 and mid-January 1929. Copies have turned up in the papers of Jay Lovestone, general secretary of the Communist Party of the United States at the time. Lovestone's papers, deposited at the Hoover Institution for War, Revolution and Peace in Stanford, California, have recently been opened to the public.

A former organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World, James P. Cannon was a founder and central leader of the Communist Party of the United States after 1919. He later was the founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party, and was the SWP's national chairman emeritus at the time of his death in 1974.

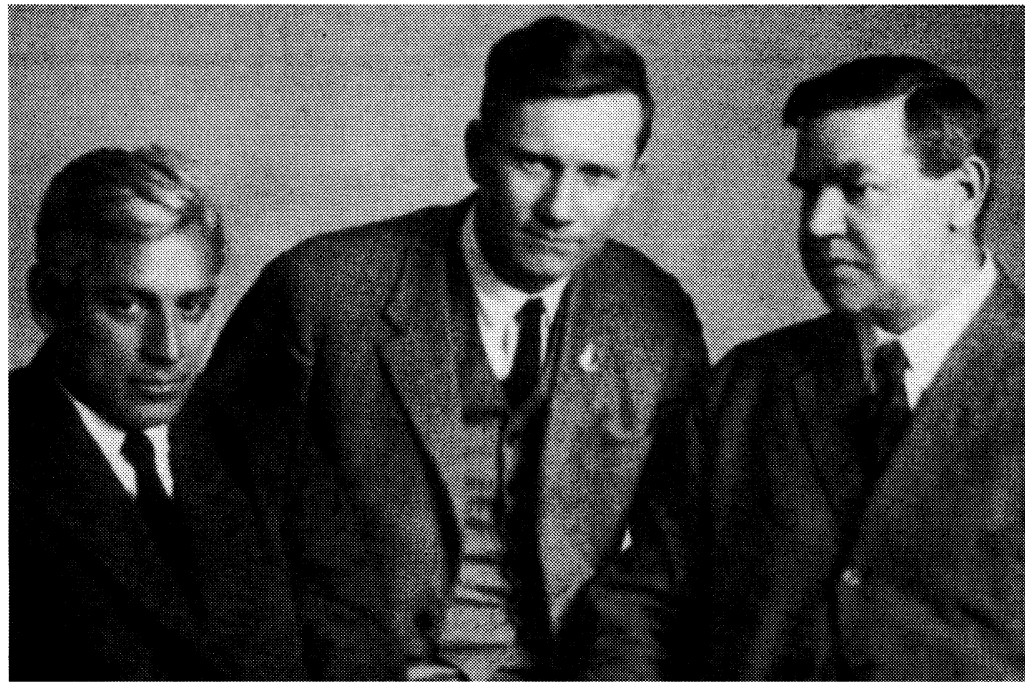
In July and August 1928, Cannon was in Moscow attending the Sixth Congress of the Communist International as a delegate from the Communist Party in the United States. He and Canadian communist leader Maurice Spector — members of the congress's program commission — were given copies of a document addressed to the congress by Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the Bolshevik team that had led the Russian revolution of October 1917.

Trotsky defends Marxist course

Trotsky's work — published subsequently in the book *The Third International after Lenin* — was a defense of the Marxist course that guided the Communist International in its early years. The document counterposes proletarian internationalism and a scientific analysis of world developments to the views and methods of a rising privileged petty-bourgeois social layer — whose leading representative came to be Joseph Stalin — that was seeking to gain control of the Communist Party and Soviet state apparatus. Trotsky headed the fight waged by the Left Opposition to restore the CP and the Comintern to a communist course. In early 1928, he and other Opposition leaders were exiled to remote parts of Soviet Asia.

Under Lenin, the open exchange of views was a hallmark of the internal life of the Bolshevik Party. But the faction of the apparatus headed by Stalin put an end to this norm, and by 1928 the Opposition's writings were suppressed. Through an evident slipup in the bureaucratic apparatus, however, the Opposition document drafted by Trotsky was distributed to a handful of delegates, among them Cannon and Spector.

Reading Trotsky's explanation of world politics helped the two North American



From left, U.S. revolutionaries Max Eastman, James P. Cannon, and William D. Haywood in Moscow in 1922. Cannon and others were expelled from the Communist Party in 1928 for defending a revolutionary internationalist course against that of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

delegates see the political underpinnings of the sharpening factional conflicts in the communist movement in the United States. They were able to appreciate the devastating impact of the political line of the Stalinized Comintern, bringing about defeats for workers' struggles from Germany to China.

Convinced by Trotsky's Marxist explanation, Cannon and Spector smuggled copies of the document back to North America. Passing it from hand to hand, the two communist leaders won over a nucleus of party members to the Opposition's views.

Within several weeks Cannon was bureaucratically expelled from the party for these views, together with other leading working-class cadres. Anticipating this move, the Oppositionists readied the first issue of the *Militant* newspaper as a vehicle to get out their views. Shortly afterward, Spector and other supporters in Canada were expelled from the Communist Party there.

In early 1929, the expelled communists from the United States and Canada joined together to form the Communist League of America as a public faction of the CP, oriented to the thousands of working-class fighters belonging to the party.

An account of these events, which gave a powerful boost to the international communist opposition, can be found in Cannon's book *The History of American Trotskyism*.

Cannon recounts in that book how the Stalinist leadership of the CP, led at the time by Lovestone, attempted to suppress the views of the communist fighters, up to the point of thuggery. *Militant* salespeople were

physically attacked, and goon squads were organized to break up public and internal meetings. Communist Party members who even questioned the expulsion of Cannon and the others were themselves expelled.

Burglary of papers

One event recounted in *The History of American Trotskyism* was the burglary of Cannon's apartment a few weeks after his expulsion.

"One Sunday afternoon, returning from a meeting of our first New York branch," Cannon wrote, "I found the apartment ransacked from top to bottom. In our absence they had jimmied the lock on the door of my home and broken in. Everything was in disorder; all my private papers, documents, records, correspondence — anything they could lay their hands on — were strewn over the floor. Evidently we had surprised them before they could cart the plunder away. While I was on tour a few weeks later they came back and finished the job. This time they took everything."

Excerpts from some of these items were published at the time in the *Daily Worker*, newspaper of the Communist Party, and the Canadian CP paper *The Worker*.

In an article in the *Militant*, Cannon listed what was taken: "Our letter file, account book, receipt book, editorial material, some manuscripts, bank book, partial list of subscribers to the *Militant*, and some other material of this kind."

The items in the Lovestone papers match Cannon's description. They include correspondence to and from Cannon, receipts for the *Militant*, manuscripts of speeches, mailing list names, leaflets, and blank *Militant* stationery.

Also included in Lovestone's Cannon file are letters to and from members of the Communist Party who had written to Cannon for more information. Most of these individuals subsequently joined the Communist League.

Cannon-Spector correspondence

A substantial part of the material in the Lovestone file consists of correspondence between Cannon and Spector, reflecting the close collaboration between the two leaders during the early stages of the fight.

In a letter to Spector written November 5 — one week after his expulsion from the CP — Cannon told of the initial progress in winning party members to the Opposition.

"We are building a rather firm base considering the time in which we have had to work," he wrote. "There is a Hungarian group which has been maintaining a small weekly for 36 weeks on the platform of the Russian Opposition.... We have a definite Italian group of eight comrades who have had a formal meeting with us and agreed to the program.... A dozen or more individual comrades in New York mostly left needle trades workers, are with us and we expect to recruit many more in this field." He added, "The Minneapolis group has also wired for more information and [is] asking for advice on procedure, which is surely a

favorable indication."

The method Cannon urged was simple and clear-cut: "Straight open propaganda, calling everything by its proper name."

Founding the 'Militant'

In his November 5 letter Cannon informed Spector about plans to start a newspaper:

"It will be eight pages, half regular newspaper size, printed at first twice a month. We plan to call it *The Militant*."

"We plan to get the first number off the press this weekend. We are keeping it secret and nobody appears to suspect that we are prepared to take such a bold step. Printing a paper is a hazardous and somewhat speculative enterprise as we all know. But I have confidence that the *Militant* will make its way and become a weekly."

As a postscript, Cannon wrote: "By the way, if you don't like this name and can think of a better one, there is still time to change it up till Friday."

In a December 1 letter, Cannon reported to Spector on the success of the *Militant*'s first issue:

"We printed 15,000 of the first issue altogether. This was an extravagance, but it enabled us to saturate the party and its environs. They were all distributed except about two hundred for the file. It was a very expensive operation, however, the postage alone costing over \$150. This week we printed 7,500. They will all be disposed of. Bundle orders and subs are trickling in. Through them we are getting the skeleton of an organization all over the country and the project of a weekly *Militant* is becoming feasible."

Discussing how to meet the enormous financial challenge posed by this undertaking, Cannon wrote:

"Every feasible resource should be exhausted to raise this money by contributions or loans. Our cause and our own effectiveness for years in the movement depends on it. We are in the position of Lindbergh when he ran into a storm more than halfway across the ocean. 'There is nothing to do but keep on going,' he said to himself. You should impress this question very strongly upon all the comrades and see if a few hundred dollars cannot be raised in some way for these purposes. We have already raised and spent about five hundred dollars and are broke again now."

International perspective

From the beginning the expelled communists saw the fight as an international one. Among the material in the file is correspondence with leaders of communist opposition groups from France and Germany, who had also been bureaucratically expelled from the Communist parties in their country.

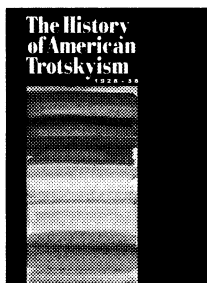
By 1933 it became clear to Marxists that the Communist International and its member parties could not be reformed. This fact was demonstrated beyond any doubt by the disastrous policies of the German Communist Party, which prevented organized resistance to Hitler's rise to power, and the failure of any party in the Comintern to draw the lessons of this defeat.

The international communist opposition then set a course toward building new parties. In the United States the efforts to build a new communist party led in the next few years to the founding of the Socialist Workers Party.

As for Lovestone, his reign at the top of the Communist Party was to be short-lived. He himself was expelled from the CP on Stalin's orders in 1929. After World War II Lovestone became international affairs director of the AFL-CIO and was an open supporter of Washington's cold war policies. He died in 1990.

While containing no new revelations, the Cannon documents that have come to light give a flavor of the struggle to continue building a communist movement in North America.

Other writings by James P. Cannon on this period can be found in the Pathfinder books *The Left Opposition in the U.S.: Writings and Speeches 1928-31* and *The First Ten Years of American Communism*.



The History of American Trotskyism

REPORT OF A PARTICIPANT, 1928-38

James P. Cannon

"Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine," Cannon says, "but the restoration, the revival of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and in the early days of the Communist International." In this series of twelve talks given in 1942, James P. Cannon recounts an important chapter in the efforts to build a proletarian party in the United States. \$18.95

The Third International After Lenin

Leon Trotsky

Trotsky's alternative to Stalin's course toward gutting the revolutionary program of the communist International. Addressed to delegates attending the 1928 congress of the International in Moscow, Trotsky's critique was banned in the Soviet Union. But its publication in other countries helped gather together the forces that would continue to fight for an international communist perspective. \$25.95

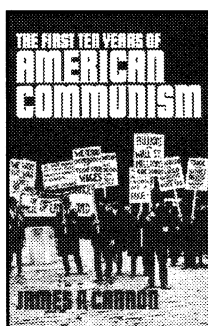
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REPORT OF A PARTICIPANT

James P. Cannon

An account of the early years of the U.S. communist movement, by a founding leader. \$19.95

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Cuban generals discuss record of Revolutionary Armed Forces

Secretos de Generales (Secrets of Generals), by Luis Báez; Si-Mar Publishing, 1996; Havana, Cuba; 546 pp.; in Spanish.

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA, Cuba — "Where did you serve on your first mission as an internationalist?" Cuban journalist Luis Báez asks Ulises Rosales del Toro, division general of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) and chief of staff of the FAR.

"In October 1963, in Algeria, as chief of staff of the Tactical Combat Group during the war Morocco launched at the border with the goal of forcibly annexing sections of Algerian territory," the Cuban general says.

The Algerians had recently gained their independence from France, Rosales del Toro continues. "They had just begun to govern the country, and their armed forces had not been fully established. For these reasons they



Algerian people celebrate newly won independence from France in 1962. Cuban volunteers responded to request for aid from the revolutionary government in Algiers, when Morocco, supported by imperialist powers, attacked Algeria in 1963. Ulises Rosales del Toro (inset), Chief of Staff of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces today, was among the Cuban revolutionaries who did a tour of duty in Algeria at the time.

BOOK REVIEW

were at a disadvantage in confronting Morocco, which enjoyed the support of the great powers. Faced with this situation, Algerian president [Ahmed] Ben Bella asked for Cuba's help."

"What do you draw from your experiences?" asks Báez.

"It was my first trip abroad and my initial contact with the revolutionary movement in another country," says Rosales. He was 21 years old then.

"At the time, Algeria was a school for African revolutionaries. You could see African combatants there preparing to go and fight for national independence in their countries.... In addition, I got to know the poverty and the social difficulties facing the Algerian people, who, just like us, had begun the process of building a new society.

"I also saw our FAR operate as a combat unit, engaging in action, maintaining a high level of cohesiveness and readiness to fight far away from our country. It was an unforgettable experience.

"I stayed in Algeria until May 1964," Rosales says. "Our unit did not engage in combat. But our determination to do so and our presence in the middle of a war zone was of great importance to me."

The interview with Rosales concludes the book *Secret of Generals*, published here in Cuba earlier this year.

Forty-one stories

The book comprises 41 interviews with the top military officers of Cuba's armed forces. Báez is a veteran journalist for the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina.

As Raúl Castro, minister of the FAR, says

in his preface, *Secrets of Generals* "is not a textbook on the past, but living history. It is an opportunity to share 41 stories of the Cuban epic in the second half of this century." The book, he says, will contribute to passing on "to new generations the treasure of moral values and accumulated combat experience."

These stories are told by 26 brigadier generals, 13 division generals, one army corps general, and one vice admiral of the navy. The officers explain who they are and how they joined the revolutionary movement. They talk about their experiences around the world as they fought alongside national liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Many, like Rosales, come from peasant families, or working-class backgrounds. Some learned to read and write only after the triumph of the revolution.

Like Rosales, most took part in the revolutionary war in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba. That war, launched in December 1956 by the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army under the leadership of Fidel Castro, toppled the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista on New Year's Day in 1959.

Thirty-three of the officers interviewed fought with the Rebel Army, and five joined the FAR after the triumph of the revolution. The remaining three had been officers in the Cuban army who opposed the Batista dic-

tatorship and participated in attempts to organize coups against it.

The FAR was forged out of the men and women who fought in the Sierra Maestra.

Book attracts attention

Secrets of Generals has generated considerable interest in Cuba. The small first printing immediately sold out. In recent weeks *Granma*, the main Cuban daily, the weekly *Juventud Rebelde* (Rebel Youth), and other Cuban newspapers have run several of the interviews published in *Secrets*. The Cuban weekly *Granma Internacional* ran a review of the book in its March 26 issue. At the end of last year, Cuban television broadcast a 17-part series of documentaries on episodes from the revolution's history, based on narrations by many of the same generals Báez interviewed.

The book has also caught the attention of some media in the United States, especially the Spanish-language press. The *Miami Herald* and its sister publication in Spanish, *El Nuevo Herald*, ran reviews of the book in March as did the Los Angeles-based Spanish-language daily *La Opinión*. These articles zero in on the comments by the Cuban generals regarding the internationalist missions in which they participated.

Moncada and Bayamo

Brigadier general Calixto García, 66 years old today, participated in the July 26, 1953, attack on the Bayamo garrison — one of the very first battles against the Batista dictatorship. The assault was carried out simultaneously with the attack on the nearby Moncada barracks, the main army garrison in Santiago de Cuba, by revolutionaries under the command of Fidel Castro. The 160 combatants did not succeed in taking either garrison and over 50 were captured and murdered. Another 28 were tried, convicted and imprisoned; they were pardoned in 1955 in response to a massive amnesty campaign.

But the assault on Moncada launched the insurrection against Batista. Out of that action and the subsequent political campaign to free the imprisoned combatants the July 26 Movement was born.

García escaped arrest in Bayamo and managed to get out of the country. He spent almost a year in Costa Rica and Honduras before making his way to Mexico, where he was later reunited with Fidel Castro and other revolutionaries.

While in San José, Costa Rica, he says, "I became friends with Che Guevara, whom I used to see at the Soda Palace, a cafe at the center of the city where many exiles used to meet at all hours of the night.... I think I

was the first to talk to Che about Fidel, Cuba, and our July 26 Movement."

Ernesto Che Guevara, Argentinean by birth, joined the Cuban rebels in Mexico and became one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution.

García took part in the landing of the *Granma*, the yacht that transported Castro, Guevara, and the other fighters from Mexico to eastern Cuba, where they began the revolutionary war in the Sierra Maestra in late 1956. By the end of the war, García was a commander of the Rebel Army. He later served as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party from 1965 to 1980. He is now retired from the FAR.

Prison rebellion

One of the most interesting accounts in the book is the story of the prison break-out that coincided with the *Granma* landing. It is told by Raúl Menéndez Tomasovich, known as Tomás, who is today a division general.

While a teenager, Tomás worked as a messenger in Rubio, a factory that produced rope-soled shoes in Santiago de Cuba. In 1952 he was imprisoned for "a common crime," as he puts it, "for counterfeiting official documents. I falsified the signature of the mayor of Santiago de Cuba, Felipe Fernández Castillo, in order to withdraw a bunch of pesos from his bank account."

In the Boniato prison, Tomás solidarized with a hunger strike by the revolutionaries who had carried out the assault on Moncada, many of whom were jailed in that same penitentiary for a while. As a result of that action, he was locked in solitary confinement for 50 days. In jail, Tomás met and talked with leaders of the July 26 Movement, becoming a firm supporter. After four years of imprisonment, he organized a prison break-out that was coordinated with strikes and demonstrations called by the July 26 Movement to coincide with the *Granma* landing.

Tomás, two other prisoners convicted of common crimes, and four leaders of the July 26 Movement escaped "at seven o'clock in the morning, after disarming various policemen, soldiers, and prison officials." The break-out, he says, was authorized by July 26 Movement leader Frank País and was carried out on Nov. 30, 1956. "That same day the actions in Santiago to support Fidel's landing took place as well."

Tomás then became an active member of the clandestine movement against Batista in Santiago. One of his tasks was working in an underground facility making grenades. He later joined the rebels in the Sierra Maestra, rising to the rank of Rebel Army commander. In 1961 and 1962, he served as chief of operations against the bandits in the Escambray mountains, organized by the CIA, who carried out a guerrilla campaign against the revolution. Later he took part in training the combatants who went with Guevara to Bolivia. In 1966 and 1967, Tomás took part in internationalist missions in the Portuguese African colony of Guinea Bissau and in Venezuela, and subsequently in Angola.

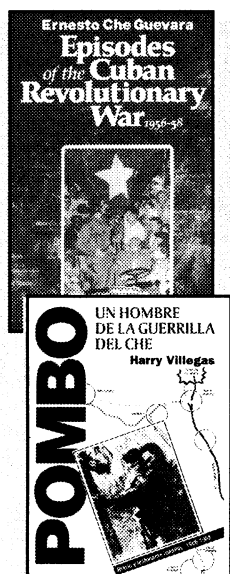
The story of the Boniato jail break-out is described in greater detail by Menéndez in the book *Prison Rebellion*, written together with José Gárciga Blanco, a lieutenant colonel of the FAR. A launching of this book, just published by Editora Política, was held in Havana April 25.

In another account in *Secrets of Generals*, Delsa Esther Puebla Viltre describes how young women took leadership responsibility and acquired combat experience in the Sierra Maestra, overcoming strong initial objections by several commanders. Puebla, now a brigadier general of the FAR, was the first woman to rise to this rank in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces.

First major defeat of U.S. empire

The revolutionary struggle against Batista reverberated within the dictator's army, and a number of officers were involved in various military coup conspiracies. A few were won to the side of the revolution and played

Continued on Page 10



... from Pathfinder

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58

Ernesto Che Guevara

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Harry Villegas

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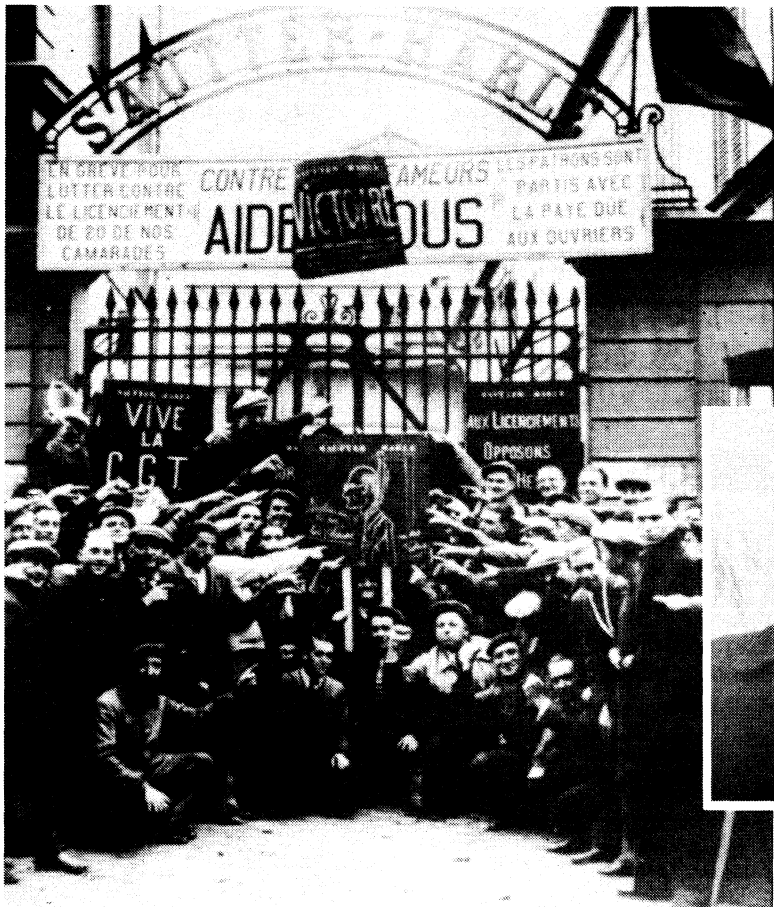
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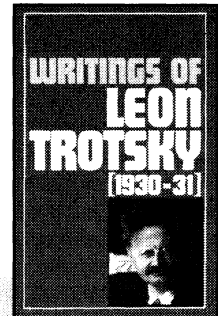
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Communist leader Leon Trotsky led the fight inside the Communist Party in the Soviet Union and in the Comintern to continue the course of the party under Lenin. Trotsky was exiled from the Soviet Union in early 1929 by the dominant and reactionary current in the party leadership whose central figure was Joseph Stalin. From then until his assassination at Stalin's orders in 1940, Trotsky worked to draw together forces who sought to build communist parties around the world, collaborating with revolutionary forces in numerous countries. His writings from these years address the key questions of Marxist politics and theory, as well as the problems and challenges of building proletarian parties in the years leading up to the second imperialist world slaughter.

Writings of Leon Trotsky is a fourteen-volume set covering the years 1929-40, consisting of material not included in Trotsky's other books from these years. All together, the volumes contain 1,700 separate items, amounting to more than 7,000 book pages.

THE Communist International IN 75% Lenin's Time

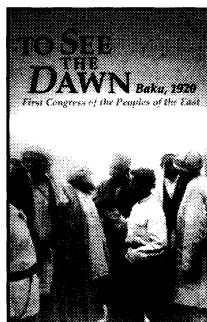
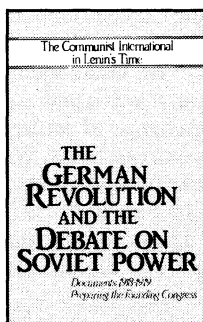
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Cuban Generals

Continued from Page 8

important roles in building the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Enrique Carreras Rolas, now division general of the FAR, had been an officer in Batista's air force. After agreeing to participate in a military plot against the regime in mid-1957, he was jailed by the dictatorship and remained in prison until the triumph of the revolution. In early 1959, Carreras was named head of the revolutionary air force, which at that point had only a handful of fighter planes and only three pilots with any combat experience. He began training classes for new pilots, held at the military base of San Antonio de los Baños, in Havana province. Washington had built the base in the 1940s in order to refuel its planes flying to and from South America, Carreras says.

"I can tell you, without fear of contradiction, that the revolutionary combat air force was born and created at that air base in San Antonio de los Baños," he notes.

Carreras, like most generals interviewed in the book, is a veteran of the Playa Girón battle in 1961, usually called the Bay of Pigs in the United States. That's when the popular militias and the Revolutionary Armed Forces inflicted a crushing defeat on the U.S.-organized mercenaries who invaded Cuba in a failed attempt to overthrow the workers and peasants regime. In a recent speech on the 36th anniversary of this historic battle, Raúl Castro described its outcome as "the first great military defeat inflicted on the United States on this continent."

During the mercenary invasion, Carreras notes, "the enemy forces had approximately a 5-1 advantage on planes and a 12-1 advantage on pilots."

The small, ill-equipped, and newly trained Cuban air force played a central role in the defeat of the counterrevolutionaries. "In less than 72 hours, 10 pilots with eight dilapidated planes flew 70 missions," Carreras explains. Between April 17 and April 19, 1961, Carreras and the other Cuban pilots downed nine B-26 bombers. "We also sank two army transport ships, three LCT boats carrying tanks, and five landing boats." In bringing down the enemy planes, the Cubans killed 14 counterrevolutionaries, including four U.S. instructors.

Later, Carreras headed a Cuban air force mission to Vietnam during Washington's war against the Vietnamese people that also ended with the defeat of U.S. imperialism in 1975.

How *tanquistas* were trained

Division general Néstor López Cuba completed a training course on operating tanks at the Managua military camp near Havana in 1959 and stayed on at the school as an instructor.

In face of mounting military threats and economic pressure from Washington, the new Cuban government began receiving aid from abroad, López Cuba explains in the book. "In October 1960 Soviet technical aid began arriving," he tells Báez. "They said it came from Czechoslovakia, but the T-34's and SAU-100's were Russian tanks."

"Commander Guillermo García asked me to select the best graduates of the two courses on American tanks we had just completed and organize classes on operating the Soviet tanks. I picked 22 graduates.... It was a very intense period of training. Everything we learned in the morning from the Soviet instructors we had to teach at night to the rest of the *compañeros* using whatever tools we had at our disposal....

"In February [1961] we carried out combat practice in Guanito, Pinar del Rio. With that exercise we finished the first course on Soviet tanks."

The newly trained *tanquistas*, led by López Cuba and other officers of the FAR, were essential in crushing the mercenary invaders at Playa Girón.

Another officer who describes the events leading up to and during the Bay of Pigs invasion is brigadier general José Ramón Fernández Álvarez, today vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers.

Fernández was part of a revolt by officers in Batista's army, called *Los Puros* (the pure ones), on April 4, 1956, for which he was imprisoned. "Among the officers in that group, I was the most radical," Fernández says. "I thought we had to arrest Batista and execute him for his responsibility in the killings of thousands of people. I had proposed that we needed to carry out an agrarian re-

form, purge the armed forces, implement the 1940 constitution, and confiscate the goods stolen by public officials. That's as far as I got at the time."

The big majority of inmates incarcerated with Fernández at the infamous Isle of Pines prison were members of the July 26 Movement, and they had a big impact on him. Fernández joined the revolutionary movement after Batista was toppled and was chief of military operations at the Bay of Pigs battle.

Fernández says he went to Playa Girón with great enthusiasm. Even though he had rebelled against Batista, he tells Báez, "I hadn't had the opportunity — as the *compañeros* who fought in the Sierra [mountains] and the llano [plains] did — to put my life in danger to demonstrate the justice of the ideas we believed in."

"Girón meant for me putting my own body on the line in defense of the revolution and socialism."

Internationalist missions

Army Corps General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, known as "Furry," participated in the clandestine struggle against the Batista dictatorship in Santiago de Cuba and joined the Rebel Army in 1957 at age 17. Like many others, he comes from a working-class family. His mother was a worker in a biscuit factory and his father was a cook. Today he is a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba and minister of the interior.

In 1962, Colomé left Cuba for an internationalist mission in Argentina and Bolivia that lasted two years. The goal of the expedition was "to prepare the conditions for a guerrilla uprising in Argentina that would be headed by journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti, who had developed strong ties with his compatriot Ernesto Che Guevara," Colomé says.

"At the time I was 22 years old. Considering my age, I was given tremendous responsibility. I had to travel in the area several times to study and prepare the terrain."

Masetti had gone to Cuba's Sierra Maestra in January 1958 and joined the revolutionary movement there. After the triumph, he became founding director of Prensa Latina, the press service launched by the new revolutionary government in Havana.

Masetti was killed in 1964 while leading the guerrilla nucleus he helped launch in the Salta mountains of northern Argentina. After Masetti's death, Colomé returned to Cuba. Eleven years later, he went to Angola as chief of the Cuban military mission there.

In another interview, brigadier general Harry Villegas Tamayo, also known by his nom de guerre Pombo, talks about what he calls the most important period of his life: the ten years he fought alongside Che Guevara — from the Sierra Maestra to the internationalist missions in the Congo and Bolivia.

Villegas went to the Congo (now Zaire) in 1965. "We stayed on Congolese territory for several months," Villegas says, "but because of the position taken by the Organization of African States — that aid could only be provided to the movements fighting against colonialism — we had to leave."

"Che insisted that the request to withdraw our forces be put in writing, so that history could record with absolute clarity Cuba's position in giving internationalist aid to the Congolese people."

In Bolivia, Guevara headed a guerrilla front that set out to build a revolutionary movement of workers and peasants capable of taking power and leading toward socialist revolutions in South America. Che was captured on Oct. 8, 1967, and killed in cold blood the next day by Bolivian army officers after consultation with Washington.

After Che's death, Pombo commanded the six combatants who fought their way out of the encirclement by the U.S.-aided Bolivian armed forces. He tells the story of the Bolivia campaign in detail in the book *Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla*, the En-



Photos courtesy of *Granma*
Cuban soldiers at Playa Girón after defeat of U.S.-organized mercenaries, April 19, 1961 (above), as U.S. warship *Houston* sinks, hit by fire from SAU-100 tank crew. José Ramón Fernández (at center of photo on right), chief of military operations at Playa Girón and brigadier general of the FAR today, inspects some of the weapons captured from mercenary forces at Bay of Pigs, April 1961.

glish-language edition of which will be released next month by Pathfinder Press.

Many of the generals describe internationalist missions about which little or nothing has been said in writing before.

In Syria and Nicaragua

Néstor López Cuba, for example, describes the mission Cuban internationalists were part of in Syria between 1973 and 1975. In October 1973 the Syrian and Egyptian governments fought a brief war against Israel in an effort to retake sovereign territory occupied by Tel Aviv in 1967 as part of the Zionist regime's decades-long effort to bolster its dispossession of the Palestinian people.

In Syria General López Cuba headed a tank battalion that later grew to a regiment. While the Cubans did not participate directly in combat to take back the Golan Heights, he says, "We maintained a unit in the front for a year. It was a tank squadron. There was some exchange of artillery fire. They damaged two of our tanks. We lived in a hole, in a *chabola*, in conditions of a military campaign. In February 1975 we returned to Cuba. They had promoted me to commander." Ten months later he left for Angola.

López Cuba was also chief of the Cuban military mission in Nicaragua. "It was the most complex, difficult, dangerous, and risky task I ever had," he says.

After the July 1979 revolution in that country that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza, Washington organized and financed a counterrevolutionary army, known as the *contras*, which fought against the government of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. The *contras* were defeated militarily by 1987.

"It was an irregular war, you never knew precisely where the enemy was," López Cuba says. "We had centers of instruction spread throughout the war zone, and our policy was to visit and support these people constantly."

"We traveled in three or four vehicles through routes where we faced ambushes, mine fields. Sometimes we flew in helicopters at low altitudes, just above the tree tops, or between enormous mountains in a little AN-2 plane. On one occasion they hit one of our escort helicopters. We played with our lives every day."

Advising the Nicaraguan army, "was another complex task with great political content," López Cuba tells Báez. "It's much easier to fight than advise."

The Cubans themselves had gone "through the experience of the Soviet advisors. We couldn't impose our criteria. We had to be very careful and consistent.... I can say with no doubt that, during the three years and three months I spent in Nicaragua, I carried out the most politically complex mission, and militarily the most difficult and risky task, I ever had."

Many of the generals talk about their ex-



periences in Angola.

"In Angola we gave substantial support to the struggle against apartheid and the battle for the liberation of Namibia," says Ulises del Toro. "The blood spilled shaped forever the identification of the Cuban revolution with the African peoples, an unblemished feat that will one day be recorded in history for what it was."

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans served on internationalist missions in that country from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s. Cuban volunteer troops helped defeat successive invasions of Angola by South Africa's apartheid regime, which joined with U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary efforts to block the Angolan people from realizing their hard-fought independence from Portugal.

The apartheid army was dealt a decisive military defeat at Cuito Cuanavale in March 1988 by the combined forces of the Cuban volunteers, the Angolan army, and fighters from SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation).

The victory at Cuito Cuanavale paved the way for the independence of neighboring Namibia. By puncturing once and for all the myth of the white supremacists' invincibility, it gave another impulse to the battle to bring down the apartheid regime itself, which the South African people succeeded in doing half a decade later.

An 'uncontrollable' army

Division general Leopoldo Cintra Frias spent a total of nine years in Angola between 1975 and 1989. Asked about the preparedness of the South African army, he responds, "There are three uncontrollable armies: the South Africans, the Israelis, and the Cubans. The three have different ideologies. The Soviets were never able to control us, even though they tried to on more than one occasion."

"The war in Angola strengthened us politically and ideologically," Cintra Frias says. "It has proved decisive for what we have been able to accomplish during the special period."

Special period is the term Cubans use to describe the extremely difficult economic conditions they have faced since aid and favorable trade relations with the Soviet bloc countries ended abruptly at the beginning of the 1990s and the U.S. economic embargo has been tightened.

"Three hundred thousand Cubans passed through those lands [Angola]. The experience revitalized us, just like in 1959."

Tensions in Albania

Continued from front page

D.C. According to State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, Albright declared support for efforts "to restore civil order and lay the groundwork for free and fair parliamentary elections" in Albania and "stressed the importance of reaching a consensus on the election law immediately." She also announced the resumption of \$12 million in aid to the Tirana government. This includes funds for "election support," "democracy assistance," and technical and agricultural aid provided by several U.S. companies.

The rift in the coalition government breaks apart an agreement reached the previous week between the Socialist and Democratic parties to hold elections on June 29 under the tutelage of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This agreement had been reached with heavy pressure from OSCE coordinator Franz Vranitsky, in hopes to put an end to a mass armed rebellion that began in early February against the pro-capitalist Berisha regime. Vranitsky is to sit on the Central Elections Commission and make the final report on the election process, which cannot be questioned by any party.

Under Vranitsky's pressure, Fino has backed off from giving a measure of support to the rebel committees that control many Albanian cities. For his part, Berisha agreed to set aside a law prohibiting leaders of the former Communist Party of Albania from participating in the elections. This law would have kept out several party leaders, including Socialist Party head Fatos Nano.

Rebel committees remain an obstacle

Despite the support of the 6,500-strong intervention force headed by Rome, the coalition Government of National Reconciliation faces serious stumbling blocks to consolidating governmental authority: the insurgent workers and farmers, especially in the southern part of the country, who have retained their arms.

During the rebellion — which was sparked by the collapse of investment schemes sponsored by the Berisha-led government, in which hundreds of thousands lost their life savings — citizens committees were formed in Vlore, Tepelene, Sarande, and other cities and villages. In some cases they took on the character of alternative local governments.

"The rebel committees," declared Berisha in a May 8 meeting with the Socialist Party and the OSCE representative Franz Vranitsky, "the armed wing of the opposi-

tion, are against holding elections. To be proud of the support from such committees, led by bandits, smugglers and mafia... is an irresponsible attitude," he continued. Fino has denied the Socialist Party has anything to do with the committees and has now agreed they should disband. The Democratic and the Socialist parties had agreed, with wholehearted support from Vranitsky, that the committees must dissolve by May 14, some 40 days prior to the election date.

Showing no signs of dissolving, however, representatives of the committees met and responded that they had "invited the 10 parties and the OSCE representatives [to meet with us] on May 16, and we want to ask them whether truly free and fair elections will take place." The president of the Sarande Committee, Tzevat Kucia, went on to state, "They will have to guarantee to us that this will be done. Whatever future government will have to guarantee the return of our money [from the pyramid schemes] and the removal of Berisha from power."

Although the committees are holding out and workers and farmers maintain their arms and voice their determination, the multinational imperialist intervention force weighs heavily on the side of Berisha, who is consolidating his power base and continuing a terror campaign. Over the weekend of May 10-11 Socialist Party leader Skender Ginoi was beaten in Tirana, according to the party. Albert Gaihtari, a member of the Committee for the Salvation of Vlore, was also beaten in front of the SP offices in Tirana. According to the May 14 Athens bourgeois daily *Kathimerini*, 14 people were killed in Vlore in a four-day period, and the local police chief there has resigned. On May 14, Italian troops reportedly broke up "an armed dispute" in Vlore by "firing into the air." This was the second such incident

Auto workers continue strike at GM in Oklahoma City



Militant/Barb Graham

Strikers at GM in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, continue strike begun April 5, demanding more jobs. Above, UAW Local 1999 members on picket line in April.

in that city.

A week earlier, on May 7 several bombs went off in Vlore's sewage system. When rumors spread that Berisha's people were responsible, working people took to the streets in the thousands. They gathered at the central square chanting "hang Berisha!" Kalashnikov rifles were clearly visible among the demonstrators, according to news reports.

Wider role for imperialist troops

Prime Minister Fino has requested a wider role for the imperialist military force, including guarding the country's customs installations at border posts. An unnamed source

is quoted by Agence France Presse as saying the European Union had decided to prolong the mandate of the intervention force another three months.

Many working people tolerate or support the presence of the foreign troops in the belief that they will be impartial, can guarantee democratic elections and the installation of a government that will remove Berisha and his secret police, and reimburse the stolen money. The troops have installed themselves largely due to the cooperation of the local committees, but questions are mounting.

"We have promised to help them for one

Continued on Page 14

Six-year contract signed at Goodyear

BY BETSY FARLEY

GADSDEN, Alabama — After nearly three weeks on strike, more than 12,500 rubber workers, members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), voted to approve a new contract with Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. The agreement, which extends until the year 2003, will now set the pattern for the industry.

Provisions in the six-year contract include an increase in hourly wages of 29 cents Jan. 1, 1998, and 35 cents the following year, and no takebacks in the Cost of Living Al-

lowance (COLA) won by the union in past battles. Pension benefits will also increase, providing \$1,520 per month for those who retire at age 55 with 30 years of service.

Workers at three Kelly Springfield plants — a subsidiary of Goodyear — will be included in the contract reopener after three years, although not in the master agreement. The union had pushed for a common expiration date of contracts at all Goodyear-owned facilities. The Kelly Springfield workers also voted to approve a new 6-year agreement on May 8.

"At least we'll all be together and the company won't be able to use us against each other," said Donald Hill, a bead builder with 32 years at the Gadsden plant.

But some workers are not so satisfied with the two-tier wage scale the new contract introduces for the first time. "We held the cost of living and got a small raise," explained Philip Ashby, a worker at the Danville, Virginia, plant. "But I don't think it's right that a new worker beside me doing the same job won't get the same pay as I do for three years."

New hires will start at 70 percent of the full wage and will not reach parity with senior workers for three years.

The company was able to keep language prohibiting continuous operation of its plants out of the contract, opening the door to work schedules being changed on a plant-by-plant basis.

Continuous operation, while more profitable for the company, means longer hours and irregular schedules for workers. At the Gadsden plant, workers have been on 12-hour shifts for some time.

"I hate the 12-hour schedule," said Gene Miller, a tire curer at the Gadsden facility. "We're not getting much in this contract, but we're not really losing much either. We definitely did better than if we hadn't gone on strike," he continued.

While the company attempted to maintain limited production with supervisory personnel during the strike, virtually no union members crossed the picket lines. And Goodyear had not been able to stockpile to prepare for the strike.

"I feel it is good because we held our own," explained Danville worker Harry Hughes. "The company wanted to impose a Bridgestone/Firestone contract but they didn't get it." A major competitor of Goodyear, Bridgestone/Firestone was able

to achieve lower labor costs after a 10-month strike and 19 months of a consumer boycott led by the USWA International.

Union members began returning to work on May 10 at the nine striking Goodyear plants in Alabama, Kansas, Ohio, Nebraska, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin, as well as the Kelly Springfield plant in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Betsy Farley is a member of USWA Local 12014 in Birmingham, Alabama. Jim Rogers, a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees Local 294-T in Eden, North Carolina, contributed to this article.

Chrysler engine workers settle month-long strike

BY JEAN LUC DUVAL
AND DOUGLAS DOUTHAT

DETROIT — After nearly a month on the picket line, members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 51 at Chrysler's Mound Road Engine Plant returned to work May 10 after ratifying a new contract.

At a May 9 ratification meeting, strikers were given a one-page list of highlights of the proposed settlement and 2 pages of a letter of understanding as they walked in. Voting began while presentations were being made on the settlement, and many of the workers had left before the meeting's end. The contract was approved by a vote of 1,009 to 182.

The UAW highlights emphasized Chrysler's promised to invest \$75 million in the plant over the next three years, including setting up a engine new block line. Also, Chrysler agreed that Mound Road workers can transfer with full seniority to the new Mack Avenue Engine Plant currently under construction. The settlement allows Chrysler to outsource drive shaft work to the Dana Corp., with a promise that the work will return the work to Mound Road Engine in five years.

"We got a lot of issues settled," said Robert Lile, a worker at Mound Road Engine Plant, after voting on the contract. "We helped stop outsourcing. Once you lose those jobs you never get them back."

General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford are all pushing to increase the use of

outsourcing — sending parts work to lower-cost manufacturers — as a way to cut costs and increase profits.

Dana Corporation, a Toledo-based maker of drivetrain, engine, and chassis components, is the sixth largest auto parts supplier in North America. Dana has about 30,000 employees in North America. Only about 30 percent of its factories have union representation. A UAW organizing drive at a plant in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, was defeated last September. The union charged that management threatened to close the plant if the union won the election.

The 1,800 members of UAW Local 51 went on strike April 10. As a result of the strike, Chrysler shut down 19 plants and laid off nearly 25,000 workers in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. In the last week of the strike, Chrysler filed petitions in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio trying to block unemployment benefits to laid off workers, seeking to undermine solidarity for the strike. According to Saloman Brothers, Inc. of New York, the strike has cost Chrysler \$430 million through the lost production of 95,000 vehicles. The 29-day walkout was the longest at Chrysler in 30 years.

"It was worth striking," said LaMont Troupe of the Mound Road Engine Plant. "We took a stand here and hopefully it will encourage others to take a stand."

Jean Luc Duval and Douglas Douthat are members of UAW Local 235 in Detroit.

American Airlines pilots approve contract

BY JANET POST

MIAMI — On May 5 pilots at American Airlines approved a new contract by a 69 percent margin. This follows three years of negotiations between the Allied Pilots Association and American Airlines, as well as a brief February 15 strike that was blocked by President William Clinton minutes after it began. Clinton then appointed a Presidential Emergency Board to propose a settlement.

Over the life of the five year contract, pilots will gain a 9 percent pay raise and elimination of the two-tier wage scale that pays junior pilots less. They will also get \$5.75 million in stock options. However, the pilots lost the main issue in dispute — the right to fly the fleet of small jets American is planning to buy. These regional flights, with some restrictions on their length and duration negotiated into the new contract, will be flown by lower paid pilots at the company's commuter affiliate, American Eagle.

The sentiments of the pilots was closely watched by both the government and big business. South Florida pilots, who had been portrayed in the media as a "hotbed of union militancy," voted 52.9 percent for and 47.1 against the contract.

NATO 'deal' advances U.S. war drive

Continued from front page

a new security policy that mandates the right to use nuclear weapons first if attacked. "We are not speaking of making a first strike in order to secure an advantage, but if we are driven into a corner and are left with no other option, we will resort to nuclear weapons," said Boris Berezovsky, deputy head of the Security Council, who announced the policy change in a radio interview May 9.

Berezovsky's remarks echoed Security Council chief Ivan Rybkin, who said in February that the Russian government was reversing a pledge by former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev that the Soviet Union would not be the first to use nuclear weapons in a military conflict. Washington has always refused to adopt a formal no-first-use nuclear policy.

The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland are expected to be invited to join the imperialist military alliance at the NATO meeting scheduled for July 8-9 in Madrid. Czech president Vaclav Havel, who says "expanding the alliance was a step forward," is scheduled to meet with Defense Secretary William Cohen May 16 at the Pentagon.

"We will do everything to minimize the consequences for Russia's security of a possible expansion of NATO," Yeltsin told *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the defense ministry newspaper. The Russian president said Moscow would strengthen relations with neighboring regimes such as Belarus and China.

Moscow moves closer to Tehran

"Russia turns to Oriental states to counter NATO expansion," said the Russian newspaper *Kommersant Daily*. "We have good, positive relations with Iran, which shows a tendency to grow," Yeltsin said April 11 during a meeting with Ali Akbar Nateq-Noori, the head of the Iranian Parliament. Nateq-Noori spoke before the Russian Parliament and was interviewed on the television program "Hero of the Day."

Moscow's vow to strengthen ties with the Iranian government is linked to the development of oil fields in Caspian Sea region. The Russian government controls the main export pipelines from the region. While the imperialists have searched for new export routes for Caspian Sea oil, Iran offers the most viable alternative pipeline route — if U.S. sanctions against the country were removed.

Capitalist energy companies including Unocal, Exxon, Amoco, Total SA, and others have signed oil contracts worth more than \$15 billion with the government of Azerbaijan in the Caspian Sea region. Transporting oil from the Caspian has been a major concern for the imperialists, since a territorial dispute between the regimes in Armenia and Azerbaijan is threatening to flare up into a major armed confrontation.

Moscow has backed the Armenian military, sending 100 T-72 Russian tanks and more than 50 infantry vehicles. An April 14 commentary by Glen Howard in the *Wall Street Journal* complained, "Despite the magnitude of the economic and strategic stakes, the U.S. has done little to protest Russia's hand in the escalation." The writer demanded Washington stop "this coddling of Moscow" that poses "a serious threat to U.S. interests."

Charles Clover and Robert Corzine of London's *Financial Times* noted in a May 1 column that "Baku, [Azerbaijan] was one of the birthplaces of the world's oil industry and contributed much to the fortunes of the Rothschild and Nobel families." The properties of these capitalist families were expropriated in the 1920s by the workers

and peasants government in Azerbaijan, which came to power on the heels of the victory of the 1917 Russia revolution.

While pressing the NATO expansion toward their goal of overthrowing the workers state in Russia and reestablishing capitalist property relations, the U.S. rulers are also building up their military presence in the Persian Gulf. Washington is pressing the United Arab Emirates regime to buy \$6 billion worth of warplanes and the Bahrain government announced it was planning to purchase 20 F-16 fighter jets from U.S.-based companies.

Clinton faces growing scandals

These war moves take place as the Clinton administration is increasingly in hot water. On May 5, liberal *New York Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal wrote that he now disbelieved statements by Clinton and his wife, Hillary. He implied that the president should be impeached for "obstruction of justice," the charge that forced Richard Nixon's resignation in the Watergate scandal in 1974. Such calls have been made before over the last year, but primarily from conservative commentators.

Attorneys for the White House appealed

to the Supreme Court May 11 to block investigator Kenneth Starr's demand for their notes relating to the Clintons' involvement in the so-called Whitewater scandal. The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had ordered the Clinton administration to release the notes, citing as a precedent the 1974 case of the *United States v. Nixon* in which the Supreme Court rejected Nixon's assertion of executive privilege and ordered Watergate tapes turned over to a special prosecutor.

Starr has stated that Hillary Clinton is a "central figure" in the investigation, which involves Webster Hubbell, her former law partner. Hubbell resigned as Associate Attorney General in 1994 and served an 18-month sentence after pleading guilty to fraud charges linked to the theft of almost \$400,000 from the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, Arkansas. In the eight months between his resignation and entering his plea, Hubbell was paid more than \$400,000 by various businesses, many of them with close ties to the administration. Prosecutors suggest this was "hush money." White House press secretary Michael McCurry claimed the criminal charge facing Hubbell "was not fully known to anyone until he pled guilty."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

IOWA

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Build the World Festival of Youth and Students. A panel answers questions about the July 27-August 6 conference taking place in Cuba. Fri., May 23, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. 2724 Douglas Ave. Donation: \$4. Dinner: \$4. Tel: (515) 277-4600.

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Solidarity with Fighting Labor, from the Strawberry Fields of California to Electrical Workers and Teamsters in Massachusetts. Speakers: Andrea Morell and others. Fri., May 23, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. (corner of Mass. Ave). Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

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Defend Democratic Rights! Oppose Megan's Law! Speaker: Jennifer Benton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Mayor of Minneapolis. Fri., May 23, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. W. Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 874-9028.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Revolutionary Cuba Today: An Eyewitness Report. Speaker: Martin Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*. Fri., May 30, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad St., 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Revolutionary Cuba Today: An Eyewitness Report. Speaker: Argiris Malapanis, staff writer for the *Militant* newspaper. Sat., May 24, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6 p.m. Party to follow forum program. 59 4th Ave (corner of 4th Ave. and Bergen St.) Donation: \$5. Dinner: \$5. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

TEXAS

Houston

The Crisis in Mexico. Speaker: Aaron Ruby, Socialist Workers Party. Recently attended Latin American Studies Association international congress in Guadalajara, Mexico. Fri., May 23, 7:30

p.m. 3260 South Loop West (at South Main and 610, just west of the Astrodome) Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (713) 349-0090.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

No to the Death Penalty. Speakers: Mark Thompson, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Mary Martin, Socialist Workers candidate for D.C. Council Chair; Representative, Amnesty International. Fri., May 23, 7:30 p.m.

Equal Rights for Immigrants! Speakers: Joshua Carroll, Young Socialists National Committee and others. Fri., May 30, 7:30 p.m. Both events held at 1930 18th St. NW (corner of 18th and Florida, entrance on Florida). Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 287-2185.

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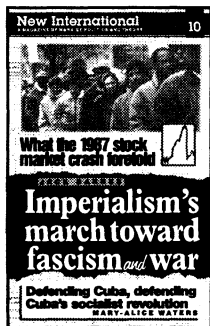
Montreal

Solidarity with the Acadians of New-Brunswick, No to the Closing of French Schools. A team of worker-correspondents for the *Militant* will report on trip to St. Sauveur, New-Brunswick. Fri., May 23, 7:30. 4581 St.-Denis. Donation: \$4. Tel: (514) 284-7369.

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Socialist Educational Weekend. Class: "Marxism and Feminism." 3 p.m. Militant Labor Forum: "Capitalism's World Disorder: The Place of Working-class Resistance." Sat., May 24, 7:30 p.m. Class: "Black Liberation and Socialism." Sun., May 25, 11 a.m. Fund-raiser BBQ (location to be announced). Except for BBQ, all other events to take place at: 242 Walnut Street. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

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Reykjavik: Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: gphssg@treknet.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Compuserve: 100035,3205

Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

"We value your call..." — Phone calls from patrons of the NationsBank chain will be handled on the basis of contribution to the banks bottom line. The top third of



Harry Ring

patrons will get ID numbers to put their calls through. The non-affluent will, as usual, be left on hold.

Still seems that way — Bre-X Minerals of Canada marketed stock in a Borneo gold mine that was billed as the richest on the planet. But, alas, it was a giant hoax. Signed

a *Los Angeles Times* reporter: "Until it began to unravel... the Bre-X story seemed like a capitalist fairy tale come true."

The justice system — Convicted of murder, Joe Spaziano has been on Florida's Death Row since 1976. Two years ago, when the principal witness against him recanted his testimony, Spaziano escaped execution by nine days. Now, a new trial has been ordered. The state supreme court found that Spaziano was convicted almost exclusively on the basis of the testimony of a witness who admits he lied to the police and the jury.

Touchy? — In Jakarta, a magazine cited a survey which showed that only nine percent of Indonesians bought the government story

that "subversives" incited a riot in which five people were killed last July. The publisher got 30 months for insulting President Suharto.

It's only poison — Last July and August, seven ruptures occurred in a pipeline from Mountain Pass Mine, a Unocal subsidiary in eastern California. Some 300,000 gallons of waste water, containing radioactive refuse and other toxins, sprayed the surrounding area. The company was given until February to clean it up. But there was disagreement over "details," and the cleanup never started. Currently, the mine has a July 31 deadline.

The 'human rights' gang — The *New York Review of Books* reproduced a Department of Commerce document approving sale to

the Saudi police of U.S.-made helmets, handcuffs, and shields used for torture.

'Praise the Lord' — It turns out that the planes sent by evangelist Pat Robertson's "Operation Blessing" to aid refugees in Zaire in 1994 were used almost exclusively for his diamond mines there. In a TV broadcast at the time, he showed snapshots of an airstrip being built "by natives with machetes and mattocks.... they were so thrilled to have a little airport." He forgot to mention that the strip was built to bring in mining equipment.

A deadly system — In the next quarter of a century, the cancer rate is expected to double in the "developing" countries, reports the World Health Organization. In the indus-

trialized countries, a 40 percent jump in the cancer rate is expected.

Social disease — Fifteen million U.S. people are afflicted by asthma. Each year, half a million of them are hospitalized and 5,000 die. An extensive study found that allergies to roaches are a major cause, explaining why those who live in the run-down housing of poor, nonwhite communities are hardest hit, children in particular.

On the cultural front — The British *Guardian* deemed it newsworthy that a four-piece set of Chippendale furniture may fetch as much as £2 million at a Christie's auction. Meanwhile at Christie's, New York, someone coughed up \$3.5 million for Andy Warhol's painting of a Campbell's soup can.

Trotsky: 'Workers, you need your own party'

How can communists bridge the gap between objective conditions that are overripe for the overthrow of capitalism, and the relative weakness of the revolutionary vanguard? This was the key question Leon Trotsky addressed in 1938 in drafting "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," often called the "Transitional Program." This document was adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in the United States and then by the founding conference of the Fourth International, the regrouping of revolutionary forces on a world scale that followed the degeneration

BOOK OF THE WEEK

and betrayal of the Russian revolution and the Communist International by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Trotsky was living in exile in Mexico at that time. Leaders of the SWP participated in many discussions with him that helped prepare the program and the Fourth International congress. Transcripts of these discussions are published along with the program itself in the book *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*.

Among the many questions taken up was the approach communists should take to the possibilities of building a labor party — a political party based on the trade unions — in the United States. The previous few years had seen the explosive rise of the labor movement and formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). With this came the beginnings of a movement for working-class political action independent of the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties. The excerpt below is from Trotsky's remarks at a July 23, 1938, meeting on that subject.

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BY LEON TROTSKY

Of course the question of the labor party cannot be considered independent from the general development in the next period. If a new prosperity comes for some time and postpones the question of a labor party, then the question will for some time become more or less academic; but we will continue to prepare the party in order not to lose time when the question again becomes acute. But such a tremendous prosperity is not very probable now, and if the economic situation remains as now, then the party can change in a short time.

The most important fact we must under-

line is the total difference in America in comparison with a working class from Europe. In Europe — let us say in Germany before Hitler, in Austria, France now, Great Britain — the question of a party for the workers was looked upon as a necessity; it was a commonplace for the vanguard of the working class and for a large stratum of the masses themselves.

In the United States the situation is absolutely different. In France, political agitation consists of the attempts of the CP [Communist Party] to win the workers, of the SP [Socialist Party] to win the workers, and every conscious or semiconscious worker stands before a choice. Should he adhere to the SP or the CP or Radical Socialist Party? For the Radical Socialist Party it is not such a problem, since that is mostly for the foremen, but the workers have to choose between the SP and the CP.

The first step in political education

In the United States the situation is that the working class needs a party — its own party. It is the first step in political education. We can say that this first step was due five or ten years ago. Yes, theoretically that is so, but insofar as the workers were more or less satisfied by the trade union machinery, and even lived without this machinery, the propaganda in favor of a working class party was more or less theoretical, abstract, and coincided with the propaganda of certain centrist and communist groups, and so on.

Now the situation has changed. It is an objective fact in the sense that the new trade unions created by the workers came to an impasse — a blind alley — and the only way for workers already organized in trade unions is to join their forces in order to influence legislation, to influence the class struggle. The working class stands before an alternative. Either the trade unions will be dissolved or they will join for political action. That is the objective situation, not created by us, and in this sense the agitation for a working class party becomes now not an abstract but a totally concrete step in progress for the workers organized in the trade unions in the first instance and for those not organized at all.

Revolutionists can't be sectarian

In the second place it is an absolutely concrete task determined by economic and social conditions. It would be absurd for us to say that because the new party issues from the political amalgamation of the trade unions it will of necessity be opportunistic. We will not invite the workers to make this same step in the same way as abroad. Of course if we had any real choice between a reformist party or a revolutionary party, we would say this is your address (meaning the revolutionary party). But a party is absolutely necessary. It is the only road for us in this situation. To say that we will fight against opportunism, as of course we will fight today and tomorrow, especially if the working class party had been organized, by blocking a progressive step which can produce opportunism, is a very reactionary policy, and sectarianism is often reactionary because it opposes the necessary action of the working class.

We can imagine in schematic form three types of labor party in the United States in the next period....

If the party is loose enough to accept us, it would be stupidity not to enter. If



Trotsky, right, speaks with Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs in Mexico.

we enter with the possibility of working in it as a party, then the labor party is a loose opportunistic party. The fact that such a party accepts us itself signifies that the opportunists are not strong enough to eliminate us. It signifies good conditions of a sort. (I consider now that we enter as a party — that conditions become so critical that a labor party is formed, and that we, the Socialist Workers Party, enter as a section. This would be an extremely favorable situation.)

Then it can be a labor party created in a less critical period, in less turmoil, in rather calm conditions, quiet conditions, with the predominance of the conservative reactionary leaders, with a more or less centralized machine which will keep us out as a party.

Then, of course, we continue existing as a party outside such an opportunistic party, and we consider only the possibility of penetrating such a labor party — but as a party we remain outside such a centralized, opportunistic party.

If in the labor party we become the predominant tendency, a revolutionary tendency with the leaders our leaders, the ideas our ideas, etc., then we become the advocates of centralizing this loose party. We demand that the workers eliminate the fakers, etc. It is the third type, the last stage of evolution, the stage in which our party dissolves in this labor party in such a manner that it determines the character of the labor party. In the first step we say: "Workers, you need your own party."

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



May 19, 1972

MAY 16 — Well over 60,000 people demonstrated in cities across the United States on May 13 in an emergency response to Nixon's mining of North Vietnamese ports. The demonstrations, called by the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) and the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC), were the prelude to a march on Washington, D.C., being organized for May 21 by NPAC and the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice.

The largest action on May 13 occurred in Minnesota, where more than 15,000 people march 11 miles, from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis to the capitol in St. Paul.

According to *Militant* reporter David Riehle, the march on May 13 was preceded by several days of massive student actions, particularly at the University of Minnesota. Rallies of several thousand occurred there on both May 9 and May 10.

In New York on May 13 more than 6,000 people marched from Times Square to the Central Park band shell. A rally held there was attended by almost 10,000. All of the speakers urged a big turnout at the May 21 march in Washington.

A similar demonstration of 8,000 to 10,000 was held in Chicago May 13.



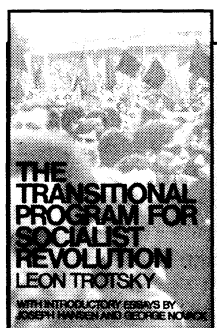
May 24, 1947

SAN FRANCISCO, May 16 — The high point of the five-day convention of the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards, CIO, which concluded its sessions here last Friday was passage of a resolution calling for a "new political party based on the trade union movement and composed of farmers, white collar workers, professional people, veterans and minority groups."

The resolution was a committee compromise between two Stalinist-submitted resolutions calling for a coalition of all "progressive forces" including "liberal" capitalists — and a resolution submitted by Dave Bers, calling for a "labor party and labor candidates." The contradictory character of the resolution was pointed out by David Bers and Harry Press, union militants.

Bers based his support of the resolution on such clauses as one stipulating that the new party should move forward "under a new political banner and electoral apparatus with its roots in the trade union movement, its program and policy stemming from labor and its allies."

Harry Press stressed the need of having the proposed new party's name correspond to its class character. The resolution called for "A People's Party," Press advocated the name "Labor Party."



The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution

Leon Trotsky
\$20.95

Available from Pathfinder stores listed on Page 12.

What 'cold war' couldn't do

The following is a statement released by the Communist League in Sweden on May 8.

The campaign to expand NATO into Eastern and Central Europe — incorporating Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into the ranks of the Atlantic imperialist alliance, and at a later stage including republics of the former USSR like the Baltic states and Ukraine — means war preparations by Washington against the Russian workers state are well on their way.

The recent statement by Russian president Boris Yeltsin — a proimperialist politician — that the looming clash is the most serious confrontation between the two powers since the October 1962 (Cuban missile) crisis shows the stakes involved.

The Clinton administration has realized that the only way to destroy the social relations created by the October 1917 Russian revolution, and open up the Soviet republics to profitable capitalist investment, is through direct military confrontation. Washington is acting on this conviction. The U.S. rulers hope that by speeding the day when they can accomplish this goal they may come out of the depression their world market system has plunged into since the opening of the 1990s and enter a new period of capitalist expansion. Other imperialist powers share Washington's view on this matter.

The Swedish imperialists stand on the front-lines of this war drive. Both Carl Bildt and Göran Persson, the former and present Swedish prime ministers, have cooperated with Washington to establish Stockholm as the dominant imperialist power in the Baltic Sea region — especially vis-à-vis Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This area is one of the most strategic areas in the world from the military point of view. During the "cold war" Moscow concentrated many of its military installations in the Baltic republics to counter an attack from NATO.

Finland is the imperialist country with the longest border with Russia. And Sweden is the strongest imperialist power in Scandinavia. That's why Washington has placed both Stockholm and Helsinki high on its list for possible NATO membership in the near future.

Before they can defeat working people in Eastern Europe and Russia and reestablish the complete domination of the wages system there, however, the imperialists have to go through workers and farmers in their home countries.

That's why, as the capitalist powers intensify their military provocations against the workers states, we see increased attacks on democratic rights such as the ones unfolding in Sweden now. The right to asylum, the right to demonstrate, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and the right to strike are under assault. What most workers perceive as social rights — unemployment benefits, sick leave payments, and retirement-pensions — are being undercut.

In Sweden, these attacks have come both from the

former conservative and the current social democratic regimes. Their purpose is to break down human solidarity between working people and make it harder for us to defend our rights. These attacks have also opened up space for extraparlimentary activity by rightist forces, such as the newly formed network *Peoples Will and Mass Immigration* that is pushing for new restrictions on the rights of immigrants. They have also fueled the cynical exploitation of the aversion for child pornography to push for the introduction of arbitrary house searches. These political campaigns pave the way for the rise of incipient fascist movements, an important feature of any drive toward war.

These war preparations also frame the maneuvers by the Swedish bourgeoisie on the customs union, monetary union, and a military pact within the European Union. The Swedish rulers want to expand the EU to the east, especially to include the Baltic states, while they have a "wait and see" attitude toward the projected monetary union. The majority of the Swedish ruling class firmly opposes Paris's course of pushing for a greater military role for the Western European Union as an alternative to NATO. Stockholm is currently allied with London and Washington — the dominant power in Europe on the economic and military front. On the other pole of the interimperialist rivalry, Paris, in the first place, and Bonn, to a lesser degree, are pushing for the monetary union and a military pact within the EU.

Mounting tensions among the competing powers in the European Union may sooner or later lead to the brake-up of the EU.

That's why the current campaign by several groups on the "left" for a referendum on Swedish withdrawal from the EU can become a realistic alternative for the Swedish rulers themselves. This petty-bourgeois nationalist effort will only bind working people and youth in Sweden to Swedish imperialism's attempts to strengthen its ties with Washington, as both powers intensify military provocations against the Russian workers state.

The campaign for Swedish affiliation to the European Monetary Union (EMU), which is advanced by the Metalworkers union leadership among others, also revolves around reactionary nationalistic themes. It is aimed at strengthening the Swedish capitalists' position in face of tougher competition for markets in Europe and North America. These two campaigns are objectively part of the war drive against Russia because they seek to draw working people and youth in Sweden to support the interests of the ruling class and weaken our ability to defend our rights, oppose austerity, and independently stand up to imperialism and war.

Working people must raise our voices to loudly oppose any restrictions on democratic rights, reject identifying with either the pro- or anti-European Union campaigns, and demand: Swedish, U.S., and other imperialists hands off Russia!

Imperialist hands off Iran!

What is it that haunts imperialist governments — from Bonn to Paris and Washington — in the Middle East and Central Asia? It is the specter of the Iranian revolution of February 1979. That's when the toilers of Iran launched an insurrection that overthrew the hated monarchy of the shah, the most important client regime for U.S. and other imperialist interests in the region for decades. The toppling of the shah altered the relationship of forces in that part of the world to the detriment of the capitalist powers vying for control of the vast oil reserves and the strategic, and profitable "silk road." The U.S. government and its imperialist allies in Europe never forgave the working people of Iran for that feat.

That's what's behind Washington's embargo on Iran, its campaign to pressure other imperialist governments it competes with to join in the trade sanctions, the insultingly paltry donations by the White House for the victims of the recent earthquakes, and the deployment of additional U.S. naval and air power in the Persian Gulf. That's what's also behind the recent decision by Bonn to brand the Tehran regime as "terrorist" and the subsequent rupture of diplomatic relations with the German and other imperialist governments.

And that's why tens of thousands of Iranians poured

into the streets of Tehran in April to condemn the latest attacks initiated by the government of Germany.

The immediate mobilization within Iran of thousands of relief volunteers to the quake-stricken areas is another reflection of the lasting impact of the revolution and how profoundly it changed the social consciousness of working people.

The regime that came to power after the 1979 revolution was a capitalist government that has defended the interests of Iran's capitalists and landlords and has progressively eroded the initial gains of the working-class rebellion. It needs to be replaced by a workers and peasants government. But the regime in Tehran, having come to power through revolutionary means and as a result of a deeply anti-imperialist struggle, remains in fundamental conflict with imperialism.

In this confrontation, working people in the United States and around the world should side unequivocally with the Iranian people and in defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The labor movement should demand unconditional and massive aid for the victims of the recent earthquakes, lifting the U.S. embargo and all other trade and economic sanctions, and restoring normal diplomatic relations.

crossing into the Republic of Macedonia May 12. One Albanian was killed and two Macedonian soldiers wounded. The Macedonian troops arrested 80 Albanians who had crossed into the border. One thousand NATO troops from the United States, Greece, Italy, and Turkey along with soldiers from the Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria are now carrying out joint maneuvers in Macedonia. The maneuvers, known as "Rescuer '97," are to last for five days.

Again on the Labour Party

Some readers have raised questions about the Communist League's stance toward the Labour Party in the recent British elections. The League ran candidates in London and Manchester, and supported the election campaign of the Irish republican party Sinn Féin in northern Ireland. As the *Militant* reported at the time, "The League urged people in British constituencies where no Communist League candidate is standing to nonetheless involve themselves in the League's campaigning; on election day it advised them to vote Labour." This position was correct, and is in continuity with the approach communists have taken for decades in relation to the British Labour Party and other such formations.

The British Labour Party was born out of the trade unions as they were forced to go beyond purely economic struggles at the turn of the century. It remains to this day a

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

party rooted in the trade unions, that holds the adherence of millions of workers. In that fundamental respect, it is different than a liberal bourgeois party like the Democratic Party in the United States, though its leadership has an entirely capitalist program and policies.

Like in the United States and the other imperialist countries today, the communist vanguard in the United Kingdom is a tiny nucleus. To effectively argue for a revolutionary program and course of action, communists cannot take a sectarian stance toward mass workers parties. Doing so would only serve to isolate the working-class vanguard from the big majority of the toilers, giving free reign to the class-collaborationist misleaders who dominate the trade unions and labor-type parties.

James P. Cannon, a central leader of the U.S. communist movement, explained this well in a 1948 report published in *Aspects of Socialist Election Policy*. "The formal program and the holiday speeches of the leaders mutter something about socialism, but in *practice* the British Labour Party is the governing party of British imperialism," he said. "It is the strongest pillar holding up that shaky edifice. That makes it a bourgeois party in the essence of the matter, doesn't it? And since 1914, haven't we always considered the Social Democratic parties of Europe as bourgeois parties? And haven't we characterized Stalinism as an agency of world imperialism?"

"Our *fundamental* attitude toward such parties is the same as our attitude toward a bourgeois party of the classical type — that is an attitude of irreconcilable opposition," Cannon continued. "But the composition of such parties gives them a distinctive character which enables, and even requires, us to make a different *tactical* approach to them. If they are composed of workers, and even more, if they are based on the trade unions and subject to their control, we offer to make a united front with them for a concrete struggle against the capitalists, or even join with them under certain conditions, with the aim of promoting our program of 'class against class.' We try to push them into class actions against the bourgeoisie. But we do not paint them as genuine organs of the working class in the political sense."

"It would be a good thing to read over again Lenin's advice to the British communists back in 1920," Cannon noted. "He explained that they ought to support the labor party candidates for parliament. But he said, 'Support them in order to force them to take office so that the masses will learn by experience the futility and treachery of their program, and get through with them.' It was not solidarity with the labor reformists but hostility which dictated the tactic that Lenin recommended. I think his advice still holds good. The labor party is not our party and will not be our party unless it adopts our program. Otherwise it is an arena in which we work for our program."

Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky raised some relevant points in discussing the fight for a labor party in the United States (see excerpt from *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* on page 13). "Workers, you need your own party," he declared. The working class needs to organize itself politically, independent of the bourgeoisie and all of its parties. "Are we in favor of the creation of a reformist labor party? No. Are we in favor of a policy which can give to the trade unions the possibility to put its weight upon the balance of the forces? Yes," Trotsky explained. A labor party "can become a reformist party — it depends upon the development. Here the question of program comes in.... We must have a program of transitional demands, the most complete of them being a workers' and farmers' government. We are for a party... of the toiling masses who will take power in the state."

This approach is in continuity with the course advocated by the earliest communist leaders. In the 1880s, for instance, Frederick Engels celebrated the stirrings of independent political action by the working class in the United States, despite the "muddle-headed" politics of the existing leadership. He urged collaborators in the United States to not abstain, but to work to bring clarity and direction to workers coming into political life (see *Marx and Engels on the United States*).

— NAOMI CRAINE

Imperialists push Albania vote

Continued from Page 11

reason — in case they are hit by Berisha's secret police and we get the blame for it," said Gioleka Malai, head of the Tepeleni Committee, in an interview with the Athens daily *Eleutherotypia*. Malai is a 27-year-old who worked for two years in Greece. "They have come for something else and not to distribute aid. We haven't figured out yet if they are playing the game of Fino or Berisha."

Meanwhile, Macedonian troops fired on Albanians

Railroads merge yet again, cut more jobs

BY BILL ARTH

NEW YORK — Over the last decade, a series of mergers has reduced the number of major railroads in the United States from around 40 to just 4. Meanwhile, the number of rail workers has dropped 59 percent since 1980.

The latest step in this process was the decision of CSX and Norfolk Southern (NS) to split Conrail between them, after a seven-month battle over who would acquire the carrier. On April 8, CSX and NS revealed the initial details of their plan to split Conrail. CSX will pay \$4.3 billion for 42 percent of Conrail's assets, and NS will pay \$5.9 billion for the remainder. They will divide up most Conrail lines, and jointly operate a shortline "feeder" railroad in New Jersey, probably to be called Conrail. They are expected to file the terms of the agreement in June with the Surface Transportation Board (STB), the governmental body that must approve railroad mergers. A ruling on the proposal could take up to a year.

The expense of the acquisition has led credit agency Standard and Poor's to place all three companies on "CreditWatch with negative implications," while it carries out an analysis to "compare operating benefits expected to accrue to each company with the need to service approximately \$2 billion of Conrail debt, in addition to each company's acquisition-related debt."

Some analysts predict that there will now be mergers that will reduce the industry to two transcontinental railroads, with moves by Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific in the western United States to acquire NS and CSX.

Conrail was the product of a government takeover of six bankrupt northeast railroads in 1973. Some \$7 billion dollars in government subsidies were poured into Conrail to rebuild its infrastructure, which had been allowed to deteriorate by its former owners while they invested their capital in real estate and other speculative ventures. In 1981, Conrail lost over \$1.5 billion. By 1984, it turned a profit. In 1987, the 85 percent government stake in Conrail was sold for \$1.6 billion, and it became a private corporation.

Along the way, Conrail reduced its workforce from 96,000 in 1976 to 23,500 today. They forced deep concessions in union contracts, and abandoned thousands of miles of track, leaving many former customers without service. In the fourth quarter of 1996, Conrail reported profits of \$147 million on revenues of \$943 million. Over the course of the bidding war between NS and CSX, Conrail management campaigned to win Conrail workers to support a merger with CSX. Conrail chairman David LeVan sent a letter to Conrail employees last December

stating, "We have structured this transaction to ensure that the new company will be our new company — one in which we have a strong and equal voice." The bosses ran newspaper ads, sent letters to employees, and organized a "demonstration" in support of CSX at a special shareholders meeting on January 18.

Layoffs projected

With the latest turn of events, many Conrail management jobs will be eliminated. The 2,926 non-union employees will divide up \$1.15 billion in severance pay. LeVan has negotiated a \$22 million "golden parachute" for himself. The 79 senior managers will get about \$1.5 million each; 1,187 midlevel managers, secretaries and nonunion engineers will get an average of \$420,000; and the 1,659 nonunion employees expected to remain with the new railroad will get bonuses averaging \$300,000.

Meanwhile, Conrail's union workers are left wondering if they will have a job, and if they do, for whom and under what working conditions. In recent weeks, Conrail has gone on the offensive against workers in Northern New Jersey with the elimination of brakeman positions on most of the jobs that still had one, the cancellation of on-the-job training for new engineers, a push to speed up work, and layoffs of many recently hired workers.

Similar concerns are being raised by NS and CSX workers. CSX management recently explained that it was demoting two new engineers in Miami because the Florida Business Unit was spending too much and had to save money for the merger. CSX wanted them to move to West Virginia to keep working as engineers.

George Queen, who had to move from the Midwest to Florida to get a job with CSX, said, "Well if they can do this to me, they can do it to Conrail workers too."

In one of its many "cost-cutting" measures, NS has ended the practice of stocking engines with "crew packets" containing paper towels, toilet paper and trash bags. Now, crew members must go to a mechanical supervisor to check them out. "Sure, they've got billions of dollars for Conrail, but not enough to give us adequate paper towels for the trips," a conductor in Salisbury, North Carolina, declared.

The loss of union jobs due to rail mergers is covered by federal regulations codified in the New York Docks Agreement. Under these regulations, laid off workers who meet stringent criteria may be eligible for pay and benefits for up to six years if they lose their jobs. A statement by the New York AFL-CIO pointed out that it is "extremely difficult for employees to obtain such benefits if



Militant/Lisa Hickler

Norfolk Southern rail yard in Greensboro, North Carolina.

the carrier contests their eligibility."

A recent notice to the members of UTU Local 1445 in New Jersey explained, "Under the provisions of the New York Dock Agreement, any guarantee that you may be entitled to will be determined by your earning performance of the twelve months immediately preceding the official turnover of our employer Conrail to the CSX. The purpose of this notice is only to make you aware that your protections will be determined by

how much you work, in other words, 'make hay while the sun shines.'"

Bill Arth is a member of UTU Local 1447 at Conrail in New Jersey. Also contributing to this article are: Kay Sedam, member of UTU Local 113 and engineer for CSX in Miami; Ruth Nebbia and Lee Oleson, recently laid off by Conrail in New Jersey; and Jane Roland, member of UTU Local 783 and engineer for NS in Salisbury.

UK auto boss pushes through contract cutting pay 15 percent

BY MARTIN HILL

LUTON, England — Some 1,200 auto workers at IBC Vehicles here have accepted concessions equivalent to a wage cut of around 15 percent. The company, mainly owned by General Motors, proposed April 16 that workers' contract of employment be amended to suspend a clause that guarantees basic pay if workers are sent home for lack of work. They proposed to schedule 11 non-production weeks between now and December 1998. In these weeks, employees would be sent home with no pay from the company, although they would receive £73 (£1=\$1.62) a week in state benefit pay. This would mean a loss of between £3,000 and £4,000 in wages for most workers over this period.

The company stated that if this proposal was rejected, they would instead switch to single shift working. Such a change would mean workers losing their shift premium,

which is 15 percent of total wages, and could be implemented without a change in contract. A ballot was held April 22, and the company proposal was accepted by 698 votes to 414. Most of the "No" votes came from members of the Transport & General Workers Union, which represents most production line workers.

Many workers felt that they had to choose "the lesser evil" between single shift working and the company proposal. Others, however, thought that a "Yes" vote meant the company would push for more concessions in the future. "Now we'll still be working shifts, but we won't be paid for it," commented chassis line worker Bob Snoxall. "This is just the tip of the iceberg," he added, predicting further attacks from the company.

Martin Hill is a member of the Transport & General Workers Union 1/1935 branch at IBC Vehicles in Luton.

— LETTERS —

Youth protest Klan rally

Bedford, Pennsylvania, county seat of Bedford County, located in southwestern Pennsylvania, did everything to try to prevent an April 26 Klan rally.

The county commissioners passed a law outlawing the wearing of masks at public rallies and demanded that the KKK had to have the sponsorship of two Bedford citizens. The American Civil Liberties Union came to the Klan's defense, and a U.S. district judge temporarily blocked the law, so the rally took place.

At the rally a contingent of anti-Klan youth, mostly white began to chant: "Hey, hey, ho, ho, the Ku Klux Klan has go to go!" Local newspapers estimated the anti-Klan forces to number between 140 and 200 people.

The Klan rally was organized by KKK Grand Dragon C. Edward Foster. Foster had also organized the KKK rally in Pittsburgh held on April 5 and protested by thousands. Foster claimed he was planning a cross burning in nearby Somerset County to protest a gay bar.

The Bedford United Methodist Church also sponsored a mini-rally a few blocks from the courthouse.

Nicholas Brand
Loretto, Pennsylvania

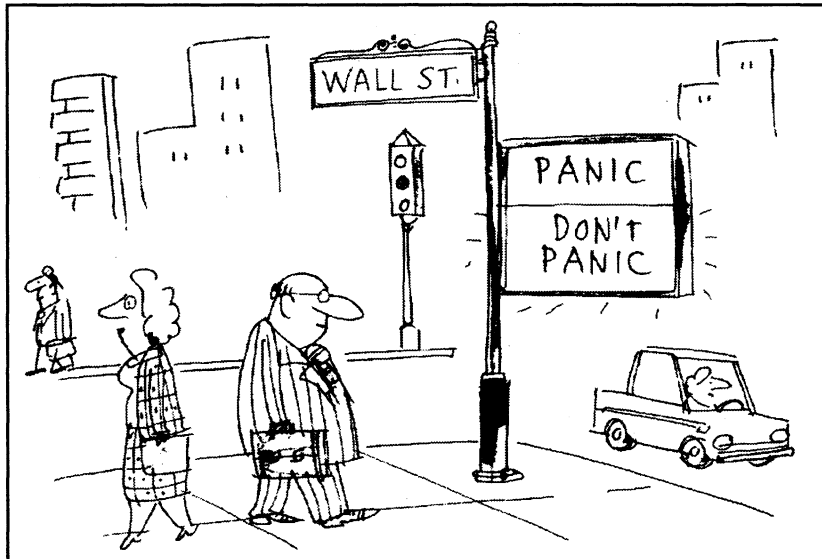
'Black' not a nationality

I am writing in response to Pete Seidman's letter in the *Militant* of 3/3/97, in which he addressed the issue of upper-case "B" in the word "Black." the *Militant* capitalizes the names of all nationalities, but "Black" is not a nationality like Italian or Russian. Senegalese and South African, for example, are nationalities of people coming from particular countries on the African continent. "Nationality" indicates one's country of origin.

"Black" is no more precise than "white" at all because Black people are only guaranteed a continent in common — Africa — as all white people have the continent of Europe in common. Seidman makes it sound as if all Black people come from the same national origin and social class, that all Blacks share the same political perspective!!

Everything that Seidman writes about whites in the second and third paragraphs of his letter could be applied verbatim with the same amount of validity to Blacks.

The explanation that "white" is not "scientific and is "a social and political category that feeds a racial myth" is accurate, but those facts don't make the designation of "Black" any more scientific. In fact,



neither designation could exist in the mythology of racism without the other because there is no such thing as white and black people in regard to color in the first place. Fred Dube gives a great explanation of the political/etymological roots and meaning of these terms. There is also a strong scene in Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* in which Malcolm in the prison library learns of the racist manipulation of language.

I write this letter not to split hairs, but to ask my fellow socialists to avoid the temptation to "bend the stick too far back the other way," to

paraphrase Lenin, just to win an argument. It makes it harder for me to explain the issues to an astute reader. Isn't it better to state that "Black" should be capitalized because Blacks historically have been oppressed by the ruling class? Isn't their struggle against that oppression and exploitation for centuries what earned them their vanguard role and upper-case "B"?

Ian Harvey
Naples, Florida

Letters from inmates

I recently observed your name

and address in a prison publication, and I am very much interested in your literature. Therefore, I am requesting any information you may have available to send me.

A prisoner
Jefferson City, Missouri

I would first like to say, may this correspondence find you well. In addition, I would like to state I would appreciate a copy of the socialist newspaper.

A prisoner
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

I am writing you in regards to the publication you print. I am interested in subscribing to the *Militant*. I would like any information you can send me on a subscription or if you accept donations.

A prisoner
Cocoran, California

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.

May Day marchers protest racism and unemployment in France

BY IAN GRANT
AND RAFIK BEMALE

PARIS — Thousands of workers marched here on May 1 in one of several demonstrations called by the major trade union federations in France. The theme of the May Day marches was opposition to racism and unemployment — central issues in the upcoming elections. French parliamentary elections will take place in two rounds at the end of May and beginning of June.

Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the fascist National Front (FN), also staged a rally the same day in central Paris.

This was the first time in 14 years that the main rival union federations allied to the Socialist Party (PS) and French Communist Party (PCF) have called joint actions to mark the international working-class holiday. The two political parties have also agreed to an electoral coalition pact. Other delegations in the Paris demonstration included those from the *Sans Papiers* (Without Papers), immigrant workers who are campaigning for legal status, and antiracist organizations. Contingents of Tamil and Kurdish workers also participated. A contingent of Guyanese immigrant workers carried signs calling for "France Out of Guyana" and "Self-determination for Guyana."

Estimates of the crowd ranged from 23,000 to 60,000. The march was the largest May Day action in years. *L'Humanité*, the daily paper of the French Communist Party, reported on provincial marches of several thousand each, including in Marseilles, Toulouse, and Bordeaux.

The National Front rally reportedly drew 8,000.

Elections to the French parliament, due in 1998, have been called nearly a year early by the ruling conservative coalition. The Union for French Democracy (UDF) and Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR), while holding a commanding majority in the French parliament, aim to win a new mandate in this ballot.

Previous efforts to make French workers pay to shore up the employers' falling profit rates through cuts in the social wage — pensions, unemployment compensation, and health care — were met with huge labor mobilizations in 1995. But the French rulers have carried through some social cuts and have continued their probes for taking back more. The impact of these struggles still inspire militant actions by various groups of workers and youth seeking to defend themselves from the effects of the economic depression.

In order to advance their competitive position through improving profitability at home, and fully use their weight as a military and nuclear power to carve out access to markets in the Balkans, as well as in Asia

and Africa, the French capitalists face a pressing necessity to confront the resistance of workers at home and effectively implement such measures. At the same time they loathe the social explosions their policies may ignite.

Interviewed in the April 27 *Journal Du Dimanche*, Didier Pineau-Valencienne, president of Schneider, an international business consortium with operations in 130 countries, voiced his agreement with French president Jacques Chirac's decision to call early elections. "The stakes are so high that the country needs a renewed majority, with a new legitimacy," he said.

"My American, British, German, and Asian colleagues don't understand us any longer. They ask themselves why France, with so many economic trump cards is unable to take advantage of them. Everywhere, there are blockages, instabilities that impede us from modernizing of the country," Pineau-Valencienne continued.

"Public spending still represents 56 percent of the wealth produced in France," he added. "In other countries it's 30 or 40 percent. This is an unbearable overload for the French 'horse' that's prevented from running despite being a thoroughbred."

According to an article in the British *Economist*, taxes stand at 45.6 percent of Gross Domestic Product, the highest in any major capitalist country in the western hemisphere. A quarter of all workers are em-

ployed by the state, compared to 1 in 6 in the United Kingdom and 1 in 7 in the United States and Germany. Despite recent sales of shares of nationalized companies to private investors, the public sector in France is still one of the largest in western Europe.

The pressure exerted by the resistance of French workers over the last two years to the austerity plans of the ruling class are reflected in the program put forward by the electoral coalition of the Socialist Party and French Communist Party.

The joint PCF/PS platform outlines as goals the creation of 700,000 jobs for young people and the "progressive reduction" of the working week to 35 hours without cutting pay. The document says this will be made possible by increased productivity and cancellation of the planned sale of the state-owned companies Air France, Thompson, and France-Télécom. Unemployment in France hovers just under 13 percent — one of the highest in Europe.

The joint platform also proposes to get rid of the "Pasqua-Debré laws" named after interior ministers Charles Pasqua and Jean-Louis Debré. These laws impose restrictions on immigrants' rights to travel, marry French citizens, and renew residence permits. Large demonstrations opposing these bills took place in Paris while they were being debated in parliament in March. But the social democratic/Stalinist coalition promises to implement "new ways to fight

against illegal immigration," impose "vigorous sanctions against companies who flout the law" by hiring undocumented immigrants, and establish greater political cooperation with other governments to control the flow of immigrants.

In a move aimed at winning support among workers, Le Pen took the opportunity at his May Day address to advance the FN's policy of raising the minimum wage to 7,000 French francs [US\$1 = 5.5 FF]. The FN claims it would solve the problem of unemployment by encouraging women to leave their jobs and stay at home, and by imposing what Le Pen refers to as *préférence nationale* — laws imposing severe penalties on employers who hire immigrant workers and abolishing labor provisions banning race and sex discrimination.

According to opinion polls published in the daily *Le Monde*, two thirds of those asked saw no meaningful difference between the ruling conservative coalition and the PS/PCF alliance in their policies on unemployment. Half of the respondents said the policies of the two main electoral blocs on immigration and on achieving the projected European common currency are pretty much the same.

Ian Grant is a member of the Transport and General Workers Union in London. Rafik Bemale is a member of the Young Socialists in Paris.

Supporters of Irish freedom struggle demand release of Róisín McAliskey

BY MARY NELL BOCKMAN

BOSTON — Chanting, "Free Ireland, Free Róisín," 50 demonstrators marched through downtown Boston May 3 to demand the British government free Róisín McAliskey, a young Irish nationalist held in a London prison since November 1996. McAliskey faces extradition to Germany for questioning about the bombing of a British military base there. The action was called by Boston Irish Northern Aid and endorsed by a dozen other organizations, including Irish solidarity committees, women's rights groups, union locals, and civil liberties organizations.

Protesters marched from the British to the German Consulate, carrying large Irish tricolors. The demonstration took place just two days after the election victories in Northern Ireland for Sinn Féin candidates Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. Sinn Féin is the leading nationalist party fighting to end British rule in Northern Ireland. The marchers were well received by passersby, who honked car horns and applauded. It was the first march for Irish freedom in Boston since the 1981 hunger strikes by Irish republican prisoners.

McAliskey, a 25-year-old social worker from the north of Ireland, has been subjected by British authorities to months of solitary confinement, strip-searched over 100 times, denied sleep and exercise, harassed by guards and held under the most restrictive conditions without bail. She has not been charged with any crime. McAliskey is nine months pregnant and is now in serious medical danger, due to inadequate medical care and prison authorities' refusal to transfer her to a hospital, as recommended by her doctor. McAliskey's struggle for freedom has gained widespread international support with demonstrations, rallies and fund-raisers held around the world.

The charges against McAliskey in Germany have unraveled as all of the witnesses produced by the government have been unable to identify photographs of her. Despite



Militant/Nancy Cole

More than 50 opponents of British occupation of Ireland picketed an appearance of former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher in York, Pennsylvania, May 7. Thatcher was in office when 10 Irish political prisoners died on hunger strike in 1981.

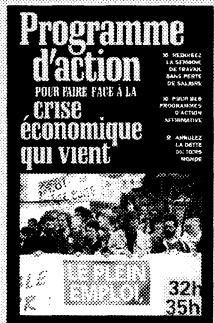
this, McAliskey was denied bail on May 6 for the third time by a judge in London. Her petition for bail has been supported by neighbors in Coalisland, her hometown, who have agreed to put up their homes as guarantee. McAliskey could not attend her most recent hearing because of her deteriorating medical condition.

The U.S. government has also stepped up its persecution of Irish nationals residing in this country who were active in the movement against British rule. Brian Pearson served 12 years in Long Kesh prison outside Belfast after his 1975 conviction in a Diplock court and is facing deportation from this country based on that conviction. Pearson, a U.S. resident since 1988 and married to a US citizen, was granted political asylum by Immigration Judge Philip Williams on March 27 who ruled that

Pearson's conviction in Northern Ireland was for a political act and the "respondent has a well-founded fear of persecution" if deported. The Immigration and Naturalization Service filed papers to appeal this ruling and proceed with deportation.

Six other men are facing deportation on the basis of their participation in the Irish freedom struggle as well. One of them, Noel Gaynor, has been denied the right to an asylum hearing and could be deported any day. Jimmy Smyth, who was deported by the U.S. government to Maze prison, was savagely beaten by prison guards a few weeks after his deportation. Information on how to support Brian Pearson, Noel Gaynor, and the other Irish nationals facing deportation can be obtained from Irish Northern Aid, 363 Seventh Avenue Suite 405, New York, NY 10001. Tel: (212) 736-1916.

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