

THE MILITANT

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of U.S. embargo on Cuba

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Hong Kong is China!

Millions celebrate end of British colonial rule

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

For weeks, hundreds of millions of people across China — at the beginning of the school day, on the radio, through the television set, and in the workplace — have counted down the days to July 1. That is the day Hong Kong reverts to Chinese sovereignty after more than 150 years of British colonial rule.

"Recovering Hong Kong is a time for our nation to rejoice," said Wang Xiuxhen, a 60-year-old Shanghai resident. "Chinese people will be ruled by Chinese people, not foreigners.... We can't allow colonialism anymore."

"Everyone I know cares about it because it's a moment in history when China can be proud" for "taking back something that was forcefully stolen from us," remarked Wang Zhining, a student in China.

Lin Ruimin, a 45-year-old electrician in Shanghai said, "Now we can go see Hong Kong. I want to go. I certainly want my children to go. After July 1 it will be much easier to go."

Even businesses people in Hong Kong are awaiting the transition. Ong Chin Huat, the society editor for *Hong Kong Tatler* magazine said, "Everyone I know is doing a party of some sort."

Hong Kong is a small island-city of 6.3 million people. At the end of June its last British governor, Christopher Patten, will be leaving for good. Ten thousand Chinese troops will move into Hong Kong to secure the transition. The region is to be granted a high degree of autonomy, but with Beijing in charge of defense and foreign affairs. Tung Chee-hwa, from one of Hong Kong's richest shipping families, is slated to head



Soldiers in Beijing rehearse for June 30 ceremony celebrating return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. London had held the territory as a colony since 1841.

the Hong Kong government for the next five years.

British prime minister Anthony Blair and U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, both of whom will be in Hong Kong June 30, say they will boycott the midnight swearing-in ceremony for the new government.

Meanwhile, U.S. president William Clinton's decision to renew China's "most-favored nation" (MFN) trade status — es-

entially normal trade relations — sparked another round in what has become an annual debate about what approach to take to Beijing.

In 1949, Chinese workers and peasants overthrew the imperialist-backed regime of Chiang Kai-shek, wrested control from the landlords and capitalists, and opened the door to the establishment of a workers state

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Tens of thousands march in solidarity with newspaper workers in Detroit

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — The chant "Hey, hey, Ho, Ho, Scabs have got to go" and the song "Solidarity Forever" rang through the downtown streets here June 21 as thousands of unionists and youth marched in support of newspaper workers fighting to regain their jobs at this city's two daily newspapers. Most newspapers estimated the crowd at

between 25,000 and 60,000.

The march and rally took on an air of celebration because of a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) judge ruled two days earlier that the newspaper bosses had engaged in unfair labor practices and had to rehire the former strikers. The companies quickly announced that they plan to appeal the finding, and those proceedings could

take years. But newspaper workers see the ruling as a victory and vindication of their fight. Gary Rushnell, a printer who was fired during the strike, described the judge's ruling as "the first nail in their coffin. It's a light at the end of the tunnel. It will help people like me because if the newspapers violated the law how can they claim our actions were illegal."

On July 13, 1995, some 2,500 editorial, production and distribution workers struck the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* and their joint business agent, the Detroit Newspaper Agency. They walked out to protect jobs, wages, working conditions, and their unions' right to negotiate jointly. On February 14, at the urging of their international union presidents, local officials of the six striking locals of the Teamsters, Graphics Communication International Union, Newspaper Guild and the Communication Workers of America, made an unconditional offer to return to work, formally ending the strike.

Since then the newspapers have only allowed about 200 of the strikers to return to work, at lower wages, and then fired at least two of them. The unions declared the companies' actions a lock-out and went to the NLRB requesting a federal court order returning the strikers to their jobs.

The demonstration and other actions here over the weekend attracted workers from across North America.

Other strikers from around the country

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Unionists from all over the Midwest and beyond joined June 21 Detroit rally

Brazilian peasant leader starts U.S. tour

BY RAY PEREZ
AND MAGGIE TROWE

DES MOINES, Iowa — Supporters of immigrant rights and family farm activists in central Iowa welcomed the opportunity to talk with José Brito Ribeiro in Iowa June 16-17, during the first stop on his U.S. speaking tour. Brito, a leader of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Brazil

Defend framed-up MST leader José Rainha!

— article p. 11, editorial p. 14

(MST), spoke at a meeting at Trinity United Methodist Church in Des Moines, and at St. Henry's Catholic Church in Marshalltown.

"The MST emerged in 1984, among those trying to defend their land," against landlords and big companies, mainly in the southeastern region of Brazil, Brito explained. "Our perspective is not to wait for the government to carry out agrarian reform as they promise, but to do whatever is necessary to get it."

With the deepening of the social and economic crisis of Brazil in the 1990s, Brito said, the MST grew into a nationwide movement that puts forward agrarian reform as a solution to the crisis working people face in both the city and rural areas. "We always direct our actions toward the cities," he said. "Our struggle begins in the rural areas but our victories happen in the cities."

Through land occupations the MST has organized 1,200 peasant settlements throughout Brazil. As a result, 140,000 families have won title to over 6 million acres of land, Brito said. He described the land occupations the MST has organized to achieve

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SWP holds national convention

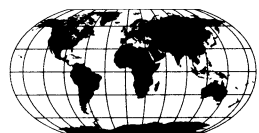
BY NAOMI CRAINE

OBERLIN, Ohio — More than 500 delegates, members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists, and guests from around the world gathered here June 11-14 for the 39th Constitutional Convention of the SWP.

At the heart of the reports and convention discussion were the increased openings for socialists to link up with workers and young fighters who are resisting capitalist austerity — from the organizing drives of strawberry pickers in California to the explosive struggles by students and workers in Argentina and demonstrations for jobs and in defense of social welfare payments in France and elsewhere in Europe.

The delegates discussed how to respond to stepped-up war preparations by Washington and its imperialist allies, particularly the occupations of Yugoslavia and Albania and the drive to expand NATO to the borders of Russia. The imperialist powers are carrying out these war moves from a position of weakness, the delegates concluded, having

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Peru: 'Down with the dictator'

In one of the largest protests Lima has faced in recent years, thousands of Peruvian unionists and students chanted, "Down with the dictatorship!" Assembled near the site of the 34-nation Organization of American States (OAS) general assembly meeting during its closing ceremony June 5, protesters voiced opposition to President Alberto Fujimori's austerity measures, as well as recent attacks on democratic rights.

Three constitutional judges, who ruled that the law precluded a third term for the Peruvian president, were removed from office on charges of exceeding their authority and violating the constitution. The regime deployed police who fired tear gas in their attempts to defuse the action, but protesters

responded by hurling stones at the cops. Two other demonstrations were organized during the five-day OAS meeting.

Jury votes to execute McVeigh

A federal jury voted June 13 for Timothy McVeigh to be executed for allegedly bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building, which killed 168 people and injured 850 others. McVeigh's conviction and death sentence came after a barrage of media hype and daily testimony from survivors and relatives of those killed in the April 19, 1995, blast, who prosecutors paraded on the witness stand to tell the jury of their pain and suffering.

"Mr. McVeigh never shed a tear during heart-wrenching testimony that had men and

on the jury weeping and reaching for their handkerchiefs," the *New York Times* complained. McVeigh's mother, Mildred Frazer, who denounced the verdict, explained, "For two years now, since my son ... the day he was arrested ... he was convicted and sentenced to death by the media and the government."

Attica inmate win vindication

After nearly a quarter-century of court battles, ex-prisoner Frank Smith won a \$4 million lawsuit against former deputy warden Karl Pfeil, which the government must pay. In September 1971, Smith, then an inmate at Attica Correctional Facility, was brutally beaten and tortured by cops, during the government-sanctioned slaughter that

answered a prison rebellion there. He became a leader of the rebellion, was captured, and forced to lay naked on a table suspending a football under his chin. The prison guards threatened to castrate or kill him if the ball fell, while they struck his testicles with a baton. They also subjected him to Russian roulette. Smith and other prisoners were forced to run nude over broken glass, while correction cops bludgeoned them with night sticks. Police officers deemed these actions were necessary to establish control over the inmates.

Forty-three people were killed and more than 90 were injured in the rebellion, as state troopers and guards bombarded the facility for four days with tear gas and fusillade. Smith was the first to win damages in a 1974 civil liability suit. The claims of the other 1,280 prisoners are still pending. Pfeil's attorney said he will appeal the verdict.

Palestinians protest U.S. resolution on Jerusalem

Palestinian youth rallied in the streets and threw rocks at Israeli soldiers in Hebron June 16 for the second day of protests against a "nonbinding resolution" adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives that called on President William Clinton to affirm that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel. The June 10 resolution also allocated \$100 million to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu is being confronted with another crisis over a law proposed by Orthodox Jews requiring that conversions to Judaism must be conducted by Orthodox rabbis to be valid. Jews from the United States residing in Israeli attacked the bill as a humiliating attempt to reduce them to second-class status in the country. Conversion to Judaism is one step toward obtaining Israeli citizenship and the benefits accrued with that status.

— BY BRIAN TAYLOR
AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

70,000 workers demand jobs in France



Striking truckers in France, along with other truckers across Europe, participated in "Operation Snail" June 9, to demand higher wages, reduction in the workweek, and increased health benefits. They organized barricades blocking off traffic on the French borders of Spain, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Portugal. In France, dozens of barricades were set up by the International Transport Federation, causing traffic jams in Paris and other major cities.

BY DEREK JEFFERS
AND NAT LONDON

PARIS — Less than one week after the formation of the new French government led by the Socialist and Communist Parties, 70,000 workers rallied on June 10 in Paris for jobs, a shorter workweek, and against the closing of the Renault plant in Vilvoorde, Belgium. Thousands of Renault auto workers participated in the demonstration, including 600 people from Vilvoorde.

The large turnout for this national union-organized gathering showed the determination of working people to continue to press forward their demands, which was also reflected in their rejection of the Juppé government's austerity policies in the June 1 legislative elections. Many workers at the rally explained their hopes after the election results, but also their determination to watch the new government carefully.

"The financiers will impose their views if the masses don't move," Michel, a participant in the demonstration, told the national French daily *Liberation*. "It was proven to us in 1981 that voting isn't enough," he added. Michel is a unionist from the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT) at a SNECMA aerospace plant.

The last government led by the SP and CP was formed in 1981. Workers bitterly view that government as having betrayed their interests. Today, many people are discussing today how to avoid repeating the same experience.

The demonstration had been planned prior to the election, as part of a series of actions in European capital cities for jobs. All the major unions, with the notable exception of Workers Force (FO), called for the labor action.

Later on June 10, under pressure from the new government and the protest actions, Renault announced it had asked "an independent expert" to examine all possible alternatives to the closing of the Vilvoorde plant and to report back by the end of June.

THE MILITANT

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London ends talks, N. Ireland heats up

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON — London broke off talks June 16 with Sinn Fein, under the pretext of responding to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) killing of two Royal Ulster Constabulary policemen. Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams answered London's move saying, "I'm not going to knee jerk in response to this tragedy. These deaths must act as a huge incentive on those of us in political leadership to redouble our efforts to get the peace process restored."

London briefly reopened bilateral talks with Sinn Fein in response to the gains made by the Republicans registered in the recent elections. London had continued to exclude Sinn Fein from multiparty talks, however, while admitting all the various unionist and loyalist parties. This takes place against the background of sharpening attacks on Catholics in the lead up to the rightist Orange marches through Catholic areas held traditionally on July 12.

Adams and chief negotiator Martin McGuinness were elected May 1 to the UK Parliament. However, both were denied access to their full rights as Members of Parliament. The Speaker of Parliament ruled that they must swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen of England in order to enter the legislature; both refused to do so. "The ruling is discriminatory and refuses to accept the right of voters in Ireland to elect representatives of their choice," said Adams.

The election of Adams and McGuinness, as well as the local council elections in Northern Ireland May 21 and parliamentary ballot in the Republic of Ireland June 6, registered the political gains won by the republican movement. The nationalist party won 16.9 percent of the vote in the council elections — up slightly from its vote in the UK election — for a total of 74 seats.

The two largest parties, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), saw their votes decline. Additionally, the Unionist control of Belfast city council was ousted for the first time.

Two major city councils in Northern Ireland — Belfast and Derry — are no longer dominated by Unionists, through whom London has ruled since the 1921 partition of Ireland. Sinn Fein also won a seat in the Irish parliament, or Dail, for the first time in 16 years. Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin won a seat in Cavan/Monaghan, a district bordering Northern Ireland. Overall, Sinn Fein received 2.5 percent of the vote, double its total in the 1992 Irish elections. In the past Sinn Fein members had refused to take their seats when elected to the Dail, as a denial of recognition to the Republic of Ireland. The party has since changed that policy, and Ó Caoláin will take his post.

London, Sinn Fein hold talks

Since the May 1 election of the Labour government in the United Kingdom, Ireland had been a central question in politics here. The first foreign head of state to visit Britain was Irish premier John Bruton. Speaking in Belfast May 16, Labour prime minister Anthony Blair agreed to hold bilateral talks between Sinn Fein and government officials. The Irish government made a similar offer. Previously both governments had refused any talks with Sinn Fein outside of an IRA cease-fire.

Blair's Belfast speech, made during his first trip outside London since being elected, was widely heralded by the media as a new move toward peace. But while agreeing to preliminary talks with Sinn Fein, Blair still maintained that there could be no multiparty talks including Sinn Fein without an IRA cease-fire. Blair's speech was shaped by its pro-unionist stance. He declared, "I believe in the United Kingdom, I value the union." Also definitively breaking from Labour's previous "unity by consent" framework, he stated, "My agenda is not a united Ireland.... Let me make one thing absolutely clear. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom." Blair emphasized, "The government will not be persuaders for unity."

Despite protests by the unionist parties, the talks between British officials and Sinn Fein representatives took place May 21, the day of the local council elections. The same day, London's Northern Ireland minister Marjorie Mowlam met with nationalist resi-

dents groups, as well as leaders of the rightist Orange Order, to discuss the forthcoming marches organized by the Orange Order through Catholic areas.

While welcoming these initial talks, Adams described Blair's speech as "barren of new thinking," in an interview with the *Irish News*. "Nationalists felt disturbed to hear Mr. Blair declare himself a unionist with such gusto," the Sinn Fein leader stated. Indicating the questions the Sinn Fein leaders have sought from London, Adams said London "should state clearly that Sinn Fein will join the negotiations immediately following an unequivocal restoration of the IRA cessation of August 1994."

Adams added that the Sinn Fein will be looking for a series of confidence building measures too, including steps towards equality and democratic rights, steps to demilitarize, the release of political prisoners, and the repeal of emergency legislation.

U.S. president William Clinton, visiting Britain May 29, told the press, "The goal of this peace process [in Ireland] is inclusive talks, because they are the ones most likely to succeed. But that can only succeed if there is an unequivocal cease-fire."

The multiparty talks on Ireland, chaired by U.S. Senator George Mitchel, resumed at Stormont Castle in Belfast June 3. When Adams and a Sinn Fein delegation attempted to enter, the gates were barred to them.

Leading up to the elections in the Republic of Ireland, opposition leader Bertie Ahern pre-empted both the British and Irish premiers' moves by meeting with Adams. An electoral coalition led by Ahern's Fianna Fail party won a near majority in the Dail elections, and he is expected to become the next prime minister.

Reflecting the political gains of the republican struggle, British officials finally granted bail to Roisín McAliskey June 3, after months of international protests demanding her release. The young woman, who was pregnant during her incarceration, was being held without being convicted of anything, and faced extradition to Germany over accusations of involvement in an IRA action there.

The progress registered by Sinn Fein has



Sinn Fein won several electoral races in Northern Ireland and the Republic. Above, Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin is carried by Gerry Adams, left, and Martin McGuinness.

been mirrored by a crisis among the Unionist (pro-British) parties. This is especially fueled in the lead up to the Orange Order marches. These supremacist marches celebrate the system of discrimination against Catholics and the Unionist rule over Northern Ireland. Many of them have in the past gone provocatively through Catholic areas. In the last few years, though, Catholic and nationalist resistance to this has gained the moral high ground. Fearing a boost to Sinn Fein, the Orange Order leaders retreated from a series of marches planned prior to the election.

Crisis of Unionist parties

The Orange Order leaders announced June 16 that they would press ahead with their marches through Garvaghy Road after receiving tacit backing from Majorie Mowlam. In response, Garvaghy residents have announced plans for a festival to counter the Orange march.

The crisis of unionism is marked also by a shift further to the right by a minority of Unionists. In the elections to the UK parliament the most prominent of these figures, Ian Paisley, suffered a blow when his Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) lost the mid-Ulster seat to Sinn Fein.

More than 200 members of the rightist

Apprentice Boys, including Paisley, clashed with police May 18 as they tried to march through the predominantly Catholic village of Dunloy. On June 1 a policeman who had been on duty that day at Dunloy was kicked to death by a loyalist gang.

Throughout Northern Ireland violent attacks and harassment of Catholics have accelerated. In Portadown, near the Garvaghy Road, a Catholic man Robert Hamill was beaten to death May 9, by a gang of 30 loyalists shouting, "Die Fenian, Die." The police were forced to launch an inquiry after widespread reports that the local police watched as the gang beat Hamill.

In Ballymena loyalists rioted for four hours following a picket of a Catholic church on June 7. Petrol bombs damaged the church, whose membership have been picketed now for 39 weeks.

In Bellaghy, Mid Ulster, where McGuinness won his seat, a 62-year-old Catholic man who was chairman of the local Gaelic Athletic Club was kidnapped and murdered May 13. Blasting the UK government for refusing entry for Sinn Fein to all party talks while talking with all the factions of Unionism, including those clearly associated with these attacks, McGuinness said, "People can see through this smokescreen and double standards."

Thousands protest Australian fascist

BY MARNIE KENNEDY AND BOB AIKEN

NEWCASTLE, Australia — Some 4,000 people gathered outside the Civic Theatre and at a cultural festival here to protest a May 30 rally featuring fascist politician Pauline Hanson. It was the first public event of Hanson's One Nation party in New South Wales.

In a tense confrontation, the 1,200 ticket holders who attended Hanson's meeting, were loudly heckled by a section of the protesters as they approached the theater in single file behind a line of cops 50 meters long. The jeering was interspersed with chants, including "Pauline Hanson, you're a failure! No White Australia!" referring to the government's racist attacks on immigrants and Aborigines, and "Land rights, yes! Racists, no!" in support of the fight for Aboriginal land rights.

Despite the protest being widely publicized by organizers as peaceful, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* reported that nearly 300 police were to be deployed in case "violence erupts."

The majority of demonstrators were youth and local people, and a contingent from the National Union of Students, who traveled three hours from Sydney. As the crowd gathered in front of the police barrier, speakers were addressing a rally called by the Newcastle Anti-Racist Alliance next to the theater.

In her speech to the Newcastle meeting, Hanson was reported as saying that Abstudy, the financial assistance program for Aboriginal students, should be scrapped and the funds redirected toward job creation in Newcastle. She repeated her statements against the "Asianisation" of Australia.

Hanson also attacked the union movement for supporting the Australian Labor Party, which she accused of betraying Newcastle workers by not "protecting" the

Australian steel industry. She proposed "a scheme for BHP workers to take over the plant, and tariffs on imported steel," and said that she wanted "to sit down ... with fair dinkum [white] Aussies and talk about what can be done." She warned of an economic takeover of Australia by international forces, and repeated her call to stop immigration to end unemployment.

Protester Neil Willnet, an Aboriginal medical student at Newcastle University, said Hanson is "touching a nerve" in her comments against Aborigines.

Another protester, Fiona Keegan, also a student at Newcastle University, remarked, "It's a time when a lot of people are feeling insecure about where Australia's going. The easy solution is to blame immigrants." She pointed to BHP's recent announcement that it will close its Newcastle steel mill in 1999 cutting the last 2,500 jobs, and said Hanson will "use the closure to her advantage."

Keegan's classmate, Lucy, expressed surprised by the turnout, "I didn't realize how much opposition there was in Newcastle."

The large turnout was fueled by events in the days before the meeting. A parliamentary debate began over the recent report on the Aboriginal "stolen generations," which recommends compensation to those who were victims of the decades-long policy of forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities. As many as 100,000 Aboriginal children were snatched from their families between 1910 and the early 1970s. The federal government of Prime Minister John Howard has refused to pay compensation.

This controversy comes on top of an ongoing political fight over Aboriginal land rights, and has deepened a political crisis for the Howard government, which faces enormous pressure from within the governing Liberal-National party coalition to nullify native titles on pastoral leases. The High

Court ruled in the *Wik* decision last December that Aboriginal title may coexist, as a subordinate right, in some circumstances, on these leases.

In response, Aboriginal Land Councils are leading a campaign against such a "land grab," which would further erode Aboriginal land rights. Pastoral leases cover some 40 percent of Australia's land area ranging from small family farms to vast capitalist holdings.

Hanson continues to claim that she is not a "racist," telling Parliament May 27 that she was sorry for the "terrible things that were done" to Aborigines "in the past." She added, however, "We cannot and must not foster or champion Aboriginal culture as an alternative society to our own."

In a radio interview on the same day as her Newcastle meeting, Hanson distanced herself from comments by West Australian Liberal Party Sen. Ross Lightfoot on May 28 who asserted that Aborigines were the "lowest colour on the civilization spectrum." Hanson claimed, "I have never denigrated the Aboriginal people," adding "I am concerned for their well-being...but we are all Australians together."

Meanwhile, three prominent rightist politicians in Tasmania who are associated with Hanson, were defeated in elections for the Tasmanian Upper House. Two of the candidates campaigned against the recent repeal of antigay laws.

The "message sent out by these elections is that working-class people have rejected the politics of minority-bashing," said Rodney Croome, the spokesperson for the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group, and one of the organizers of a protest against Hanson in Hobart, May 9.

Marnie Kennedy and Bob Aiken are members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union in Sydney.

Sam Stark: a life dedicated to workers party

BY DAVID CREED

LOS ANGELES — A celebration at the Pathfinder bookstore here June 1 honored the life and political contributions of Sam Stark, a longtime member of the Socialist Workers Party who died from complications of a stroke on May 2 at the age of 86. Some 40 people attended the event, including his son Sherman Stark, other relatives, friends, and comrades of the SWP and Young Socialists.

Eli Green, a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, chaired the event. On display were front pages of the *Militant* highlighting major world political events that Sam participated in over his six decades in the communist movement. Messages from comrades who knew and worked with Stark over the years were read throughout the meeting.

Laura Anderson, a young airline worker and member of the International Association of Machinists, gave opening remarks. She read a message from Betsy McDonald, who worked with Stark as a member of the Los Angeles SWP branch for many years. "No assignment was drudgery," McDonald said. "Even the simplest tasks were important to Sam.... I think his lighthearted ways and sense of humor contributed to his proletarian perseverance and staying power."

Francisco Picado, a member of the SWP National Committee who is currently working a stint in the printshop that produces Pathfinder Press titles in New York, also spoke at the event.

"The most important thing that I and others from my political generation can thank Sam for is his contribution to the steady, disciplined functioning that is essential to build a proletarian vanguard," said Picado. In a message to the meeting, Betsey Stone and Joel Britton noted that "Sam was a vital part of regularizing hours during which you could be sure the bookstore would be open."

A reminder of the importance of having the bookstore open at regular hours occurred during the event. Ten people, most of them youth, came in, bought \$100 worth of revolutionary books and stayed for the celebration. Some attended a Young Socialists class on the Nicaraguan revolution afterward.

Turn to industry in 1980s

Having radicalized as a youth through experiences in his native Nicaragua, Picado joined the communist movement in Los Angeles at the height of the Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions in the early 1980's. "Sam not only embraced these revolutions, but many other young immigrant workers like me who came around thirsty for politics," he noted.

Picado was convinced to join the effort in Los Angeles for some party members to get into union-organized garment plants to be able to carry out political work among this layer of the working class, composed mostly of recent immigrants and members of oppressed nationalities, with lower wages than many other industrial workers.

"There were some folks in the party at the time who disagreed with the Nicaraguan, Grenadian, and Cuban revolutions and opposed forming fractions in the industrial unions," Picado noted. "They boycotted and split from the party in this period. Some of them argued especially against the turn to the needletrade unions, saying it was not worthwhile to orient to workers who were illiterate and ignorant. Sam and his companion May Stark not only disagreed with these faint-hearts, but would sell the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in the garment district with me and others.

"Neither was proficient in Spanish," he continued, "but they would give me competition selling *Perspectiva Mundial*. They along with the leadership of the branch understood that even those workers who were illiterate were not ignorant. They couldn't read a book, but they could organize a demonstration or a fight. The intense political fight around this issue in the branch and the building of these industrial fractions in Los Angeles forged my loyalty to the SWP."

John Benson, a leader of the Los Angeles branch of the SWP and member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, spoke about how Sam became a communist and his experiences in the communist movement dating back to the 1930s Depression.

Stark was born on March 16, 1911, in New York. His family immigrated to the United States from Warsaw because his father faced the Czar's draft. Sam left school

WORKERS OF NEW YORK! Stop the Fascists

PICKET MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, MON., FEB. 20, 6 P. M. !

The fascists are mobilizing at Madison Square Garden Monday night. Hitler's German-American Bund gangsters, Pelley's Silver Shirt scum and Coughlin's mob of labor-haters have hurled a brazen challenge at the workers of New York. Wrapping themselves in the cloak of patriotism and "Americanism", the fascists prepare to spew their anti-labor and anti-Jewish poison throughout New York City. These gangs have already gone too far. They must be stopped.



A 50,000-worker strong mobilization, initiated by the SWP against fascists (left) was one of Sam Stark's first political activities with the party in 1939. Above, Stark (at right) participates in 1972 meeting protesting the Vietnam War.

after the eighth grade to help support the family, first working at his father's bed repair and sales store. He began boxing and had three professional fights. Sam did experience some difficulty finding work. Some places made clear that "Christians only need apply." Finally, he found work as a delivery driver in the garment center in New York.

As the depression deepened, Sam began to look for answers to the crisis of the 1930's. His brother had joined the Communist Party earlier and explained to Sam that capitalism was the source of the crisis and the Russian revolution pointed the way toward a solution for working people. Sam joined the Communist Party in 1934.

As the Spanish revolution was heading toward defeat as a result of the betrayals by the Stalinist, anarchist, and centrist misleaderships, Sam began to disagree with the Communist Party's policies. He especially opposed their use of force against those who disagreed with them. He began reading Leon Trotsky's articles in the *Socialist Appeal*, the name of the *Militant* at that time. He was expelled from the CP in 1938 and soon joined the SWP.

One of his first activities in the SWP was a rally in 1939 to protest a meeting of the German-American Bund and other fascist organizations at Madison Square Garden. Some 50,000 workers showed up to protest the fascists, in an action initiated by the SWP. Quoting from a *Socialist Appeal* article describing the antifascist demonstration, Benson said, "Surrounded by an unbreakable phalanx one SWP speaker after another lifted on the shoulders of huskies made terse and militant speeches to the workers who cheered so lustily they could be heard, literally, from blocks away." Sam Stark was one of those huskies.

While in the Bronx branch of the SWP Sam was asked to help a new member, Mamie Ordin (later known as May), study the *Socialist Appeal*. She became his lifetime companion. Like Sam, May Stark remained an active member of the Socialist Workers Party until her death in 1996.

As the preparations for the imperialist slaughter of World War II picked up, many middle class elements who had been attracted to the U.S.S.R. became panicked, refused to continue defending the Soviet Union, and buckled under the pressure of

the U.S. war drive, especially after the 1939 Stalin-Hitler pact. This was reflected in the SWP and led to a split. The party's majority turned to the working class and young members began working in basic industry. Sam and May were part of this majority.

Following W.W.II the U.S. rulers were unable to stop the struggles of colonial people for independence or overthrow the Russian revolution. Sam welcomed the rise of the colonial revolution, especially the Chinese revolution.

Victimization by political police

The rulers began preparations for new wars. As part of these preparations the Truman administration began restricting democratic rights and attacks on labor's right to organize and strike. "Sam had direct experience with the political police several times in the 1950s," said Benson. "They visited his home asking questions, but as a worker communist he knew that you can't talk to the political police of the capitalist class, and refused to cooperate."

At this time Sam was member of the United Rubber Workers, working at the Firestone tire plant in Los Angeles. At the height of the Korean War, Sam was a committeeman in his local union and was elected delegate to the 1952 California CIO Convention. He was fired from this job after the FBI visited the plant. Sam would find work for several weeks or months and then be fired. Finally he began working as a cabinet maker and remained in the Carpenters Union until his death.

Sam's experience with anti-Semitism made the fight for Black rights especially important to him. He was a member of the NAACP and worked alongside other members of SWP to help build the beginnings of the what became the civil rights movement.

In their letter, Stone and Britton said of Sam's work in the 1960's, "Sam had been inspired to redouble his party-building efforts when the Cuban revolution and the movement against the Vietnam war led to an increase of recruitment of youth in the 1960s. One of his weekly tasks in the mid-1960s was to visit several bookstores in the Los Angeles area, which took the *Militant* and some of our pamphlets and books on consignment. He was proud of the Socialist Workers Party's support to Malcolm X and

the nationalist awakening in the Black community. Some of the bookstores he serviced so consistently with gratifying results were in the Black community."

Andrea Morell, a member of the Los Angeles branch of the SWP from 1972, sent a message. She described this period, including the bombing of Cambodia and subsequent student strike, the Chicano moratorium, the imposition of the War Powers Act in Quebec, firebombings of the offices of the Party and YSA by counterrevolutionary Cuban exiles, and the opening battles to win women's right to choose abortion. Morell wrote, "Sam and May were veteran communist workers who, by their presence in our movement, were testimony not only to the revolutionary capacity of working people but to their ability to construct the needed revolutionary instrument."

In the mid-1960s Sam supported a position that the Chinese Communist Party ceased to be Stalinist and became a revolutionary party in order to carry out the Chinese Revolution. Most members of the SWP who held this view quit and joined Progressive Labor, a Maoist split from the Communist Party (CP). "Sam opposed this, saying, 'They left the CP because it was not Stalinist enough,'" Benson stated.

Gale Shangold, a member of the Union of Needletrades Industrial and Textile Employees, and the chairperson of the SWP in southern California, also spoke at the event. She made a fund appeal for Pathfinder Press in honor of Sam's life, which raised \$680 for the publisher of the revolutionary books Stark worked so hard to distribute.

Carlos Hernandez, a member of the Los Angeles chapter of the Young Socialists, read a message from Diana Newberry, a YS leader and member of the SWP National Committee who worked with Sam in Los Angeles several years ago. "Comrades like Sam and May were like magnets to me," Newberry wrote. "They were talking about revolution and were inspired by struggles taking place in the U.S. and around the world. Sam was able to remain a rebel because he had a party and a program. He had a lifetime of experiences to contribute and he welcomed the youth that were coming into the movement. This is what is available to youth today. A party of equals who draw on the strengths of each individual to build a movement that will lead our class to the socialist revolution."

Hernandez, a recent graduate at Occidental College, added that he had seen and talked with Sam at that school's library, where Sam regularly went to read and study. "He had a reputation among the students of reading every periodical available."

"Sam considered he had the most fulfilling life one could choose," said Benson in his closing remarks. "He never lost confidence in his party or the working class. His attitude towards the party is best put in his own words: 'The party enriches you. It doesn't take from you. It gives to you.'"

Texas activists say: Stop executions now

BY ALEJANDRA RINCÓN

HUNTSVILLE, Texas — Nearly 60 protesters from cities across Texas rallied on May 24 against the death penalty outside the Walls Unit of the Huntsville Prison, which houses the execution chamber of Texas. The protest occurred two days after the execution of a seventh inmate in May.

On June 17 prison authorities here killed Eddie Johnson, the 23rd inmate executed in Texas this year, breaking the 1935 state record of 19 inmates put to death in a single year. There were four executions during the third week of May and the first week in June.

"There are many states that don't see four executions in 25 years and we have it in one week," said David Atwood, coordinator in Houston of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. In Texas at least 11 executions are scheduled for June. Some 3,000 people are sitting on death row in the United States, including more than 900 prisoners

in Texas and California.

Since 1982 when Texas reinstated the death penalty, the state is leading the nation with nearly 130 inmates executed as of June 18. About 386 executions have been carried out since 1976 when the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment. Virginia and Florida ranked second in legalized murder with 39 each since that year. The pace of executions has accelerated this year through new laws designed to rush the appeals process of longtime inmates.

Irineo Montoya, an undocumented Mexican, was put to death June 18, after spending nearly a dozen years on death row.

Beatriz Torres, head of "Madres Unidas Defendiendo la Libertad de sus Hijos" (United Mothers Defending their Children's Freedom), explained Montoya was coerced into signing a document that he was led to believe was a deportation order back to Mexico. The authorities instead had de-

ceived him into signing a confession written in English stating that he had committed murder, despite the fact that he does not speak English. Although this was admitted as evidence, Montoya was convicted and sentenced to death. The Mexican government issued a protest against the execution, but Texas governor George Bush rejected the request for a delay. Out of the 33 Mexican citizens on death row in the United States, 10 of them have been sentenced to death in Texas — second only to the state of California where 12 inmates face execution. There is a growing campaign in Mexico to demand clemency for Mexican death row inmates. Protests were held at the U.S. embassy in Mexico during President William Clinton's visit there May 5.

Opponents of the death penalty are planning a number of activities in the coming weeks. For more information contact NCADP at (888) 286-2237.

Book sale is feature at SWP convention

BY MEGAN ARNEY
AND SARA LOBMAN

OBERLIN, Ohio — A big feature of the June 11–14 international socialist conference here was the book tables that were the centerpiece of the exhibit and display center. The conference was interwoven with delegated sessions of the Socialist Workers Party convention that took place over the same four days. During every meal break and late into the night hundreds of conference participants — some attending their first socialist convention, others longtime veterans of the communist movement — could be found pouring over the more than 10,000 books that were available for sale, discussing the lessons for working-class struggle they contained, choosing titles to read and study over the coming weeks and months, and mapping out plans to help get more of the books into the hands of other fighters.

By the end of the convention only a few dozen books remained. More than 5,000 had been purchased by individual conference participants; another 5,000 were taken home for sale to workers and youth at factories, picket lines, demonstrations, working-class communities, and college campuses around the world. All told, the sales totaled \$36,971.

Among the biggest sellers were four new titles published by Pathfinder and available for the first time at the conference. *Pombo: A Man of Che's guerrilla* by Harry Villegas tells the story of the 1966–68 revolutionary campaign in Bolivia led by Ernesto Che Guevara. Villegas, known by his *nom de guerre*, Pombo, was at the time a member of Guevara's general staff, a young Cuban fighter still in his 20s and already a veteran of a decade of struggle around the world.

Conference participants purchased 769 copies of the book and more than 900 copies of a pamphlet — published simultaneously in both Spanish and English — that contains recent interviews with Villegas, today a brigadier general in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba.

Also available for the first time at the conference was *El rostro cambiante de la política en Estados Unidos: La política obrera y los sindicatos*, the Spanish-language edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Union* by Jack Barnes. This book, more than any other, is a guide to a new generation of workers and youth—from Argentina and Albania to the United States and New Zealand—who are looking for a road forward, out of the wars, racism, and economic depression created by capitalism today.

At a rally the second day of the convention, Martín Koppel explained how eagerly young *fogoneros* (bonfire starters), leading the fight against government austerity measures in Argentina, had reached for the book. Koppel had taken the first 24 copies off the presses on a reporting trip to the southern cone country the week before the conference opened. Some 120 copies were sold at the conference. The French edition of the book will be available later this year.

Giant reproductions of the covers of the Villegas book and the French and Spanish editions of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* hung behind the stage at the convention sessions and major conference events.

A pipeline of communist literature

The book sale at the socialist conference was part of a more than year-long effort by socialist workers to place the production and distribution of communist books and pamphlets at the center of their efforts to build proletarian parties capable of leading the fight for socialism. The giant sale at the conference was a culmination of a supersale by Pathfinder Press during which a total of some 45,000 books were sold — Marxist classics, speeches of revolutionary leaders, books on the history of the SWP and class

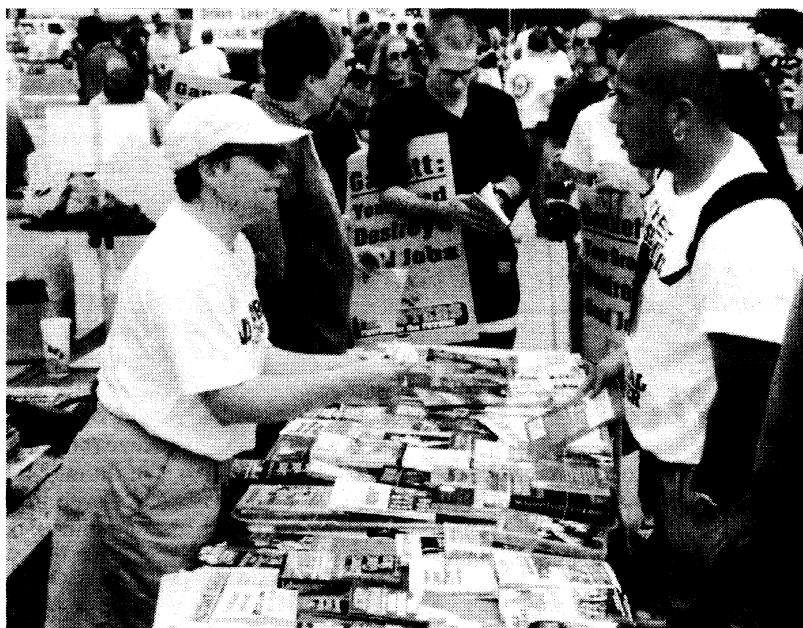
struggle in the United States, and titles on the fight for women's liberation and the Black struggle. Many conference participants already had several months' experience under their belts, taking advantage of the sale to increase political discussions and sales of revolutionary books to co-workers in the industrial unions and other workers and youth.

The sale also opened up possibilities to take a big step forward in the production and distribution of the books from the printshop and publishing house in New York. In the months and weeks leading up to the convention, volunteers in New York put in place a clean, uncluttered distribution center that makes it possible to pick, pack, and ship Pathfinder books quickly around the world.

The successful sale means there is now adequate space on the shelves for new titles coming off the presses and for reprints to be scheduled whenever stocks get low. Maintaining just-in-time inventories and rapid reprinting of books means transforming all departments of the printshop — from prepress to the bindery — and the attention Pathfinder's editorial office pays to reprinting this revolutionary arsenal.

At a workshop on selling Pathfinder books and pamphlets in the trade unions, socialist workers noted the increased opportunities to get the revolutionary literature into the hands of their co-workers.

Shelia Ostrow, a steelworker from Pittsburgh, kicked off the discussion by explaining what socialists at LTV steel mill in Pittsburgh have done in solidarity with the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel strike. She talked



Book sales at June 21 labor rally to support Detroit newspaper workers

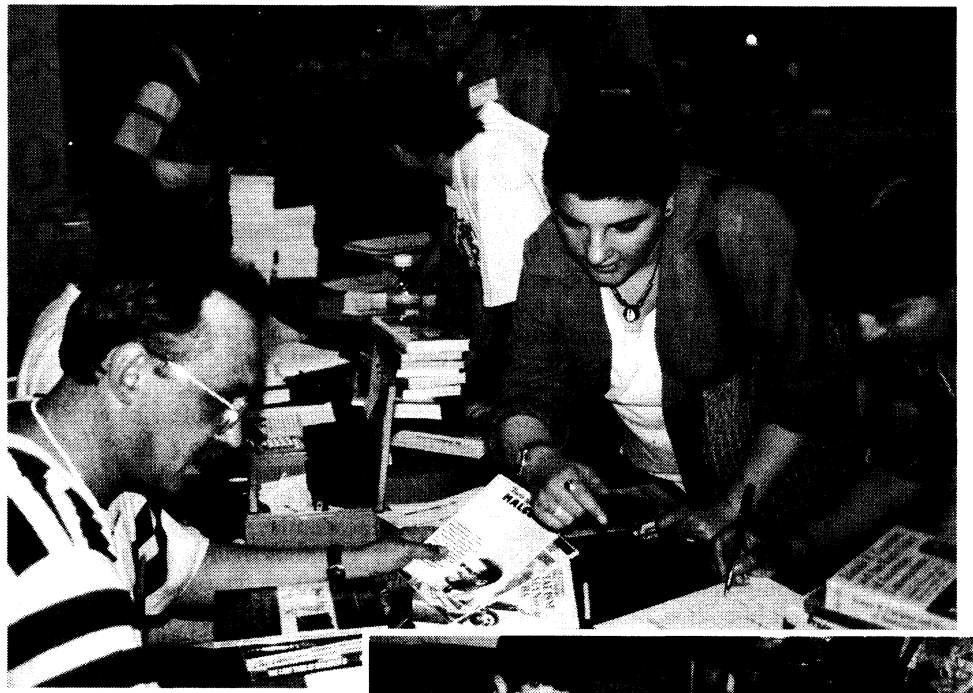
about building up solidarity in her plant for the strike, getting other unionists to the picket lines, and doing a plantgate collection for the strikers at her plant, which along with selling communist propaganda is part of doing politics on the job.

Sarah Katz, a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers and of the Young Socialists from St. Paul, Minnesota, talked about selling the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books at factory gates. "We've made plant gate sales part of a weekly rhythm. Communicating with socialists inside the plant is important. We were able to change single issues sales into subscriptions, and introduce those interested in communist politics to socialists in the plant," Katz explained.

"But we're not just book vendors," Al Duncan, a railworker from New York explained. "We have the perspective of recruiting our co-workers to communist politics and the party."

Young socialists build Marxist libraries

Young Socialists at the conference were among the most enthusiastic participants in the book sale. The four YS members who attended from Sweden bought more than 100 books, including a lot of titles on Cuba and a set of the Marxist magazine *New International*. The Young Socialists in Sweden are now launching a class series based on some of these books. "This Sunday we're starting classes on the speeches of Fidel Castro, starting with *In Defense of Socialism*,"



Militant/Barbara Graham
Conference participants packed up box after box of books for their own libraries and to sell to others.

said Camilo Bossi in a phone interview.

"I'm really excited about the books I got; I don't know which one to read next," said Jennifer, who met the Young Socialists and SWP at the Young Feminist Summit in April. She worked with others from Morgantown, West Virginia, to take advantage of the specials to expand her library. She purchased several titles on women's liberation, including *Women and the Cuban Revolution: Speeches and Documents* by Fidel Castro, Vilma Espín, and others. In addition she got *New International* no. 10, *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End* by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Guevara, *The History of American Trotskyism: Report of a Participant* by James P. Cannon, and *The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?* by Leon Trotsky.

Many conference participants who have sizable libraries took advantage of the sale to replace titles they have worn out through use over the years. Several commented that they were especially glad to get the more durable hard back books at such prices.

Leslie Dork from Albuquerque, New Mexico, took back three boxes of titles. Dork is active in defense of the Cuban revolution and was especially interested in titles that

would be useful for others involved in this activity. The coalition she is a part of has



helped get 12 youth organized to attend the World Festival of Youth and Students to be held in Cuba this summer. She plans on making special offers on several titles for the Festival participants. In addition, she plans to set up a literature table at the university with special offers to introduce other young people to Pathfinder books.

On the final day of the conference, representatives of Pathfinder Bookstores from around the world met to pack up orders for their local bookstore. In addition, other activists who distribute Pathfinder, but live where there is no Pathfinder bookstore were invited to join in packing up boxes of super saver books for future sales. Patrick Jay, a member of the Young Socialists from Spokane filled a box. His selection included a wide variety of books and enough copies of *Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla* for every member of the Spokane chapter.

Dozens of people also took advantage of a special sale of bound volumes of the socialist periodicals the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. More than 200 of the yearly volumes were sold, going back to the 1970s. In many cases, these volumes will be placed in libraries organized by members of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party for collective use in studying struggles of the last few decades.

The exhibit center also featured other displays including a table staffed by the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) of Brazil and an information table staffed by the Young Socialists.

Tobacco bosses offer 'historic' deal

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In what they tout as a "historic settlement," representatives of the U.S. tobacco industry, attorneys general of 40 states, and plaintiffs' lawyers announced June 30 that the cigarette bosses would pay \$368.5 billion over 25 years in an agreement that would limit lawsuits and curb tobacco marketing and advertising.

While the tobacco companies profess to be making a concession, they will save large chunks of the estimated \$600 million a year currently paid out in litigation costs, as well as cut advertising costs. Diana Temple, an analyst of Salomon Brothers, told the *Financial Times* of London she expects tobacco share prices to leap by 20 percent if the accord is approved by Congress.

Most of the money the tobacco companies would have to pay — \$10 billion initially, \$8.5 billion yearly for five years and increased to \$15 billion a year afterwards — would be tax-deductible. Tobacco executives plan to hike cigarette prices by 50 cents to \$1 a pack to offset the cost of the deal.

Meanwhile, if sales of cigarettes drop below 1996 levels, companies would receive a rebate on their annual settlement payments. Other aspects of the pact include

limiting awards against tobacco companies for the health impact of smoking to \$5 billion a year. Current and future class action lawsuits against them would be barred. Suits filed by 40 states seeking repayment for Medicaid costs incurred by smokers would halt. The tobacco barons are mandated to pay \$50 billion up front in exchange for a prohibition on future punitive damages. Supposedly some of this money would be used to pay for health coverage for children.

The deal says cigarette companies will have to spend \$500 million on anti-smoking campaigns, with goals of reducing the number of teenage smokers by 30 percent in five years, 50 percent in seven years, and 60 percent in 10 years. The industry would be required to pay up to \$2 billion per year if the targets are not met.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will be given the power to regulate nicotine as a drug, and to ban the substance after 2009, under the agreement. The FDA recently won a court decision strengthening its jurisdiction over nicotine. The accord also bans cigarette sales from vending machines. Human and cartoon figures, including Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man, would be eliminated from advertisements.

Young people protest U.S. gov't denial of licenses for travel to world youth festival

BY JACK WILLEY

NEW YORK — At its June 22 national meeting, the U.S. Organizing Committee for the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students launched a protest campaign against the U.S. Department of Treasury's denial of licenses for young people planning to participate in the gathering.

The international conference will take place in Cuba July 28 – August 5. More than 5,000 delegates from 112 countries are expected to participate. Topics of discussion include anti-imperialist and antiracist struggles, women's liberation, protection of the environment, and how to stand up to rising fascist movements.

As of June 19, more than 900 people had applied to go from the United States. They include 435 with the U.S. Organizing Committee and 135 with the Venceremos Brigade. The brigade will travel to Cuba a week before the festival for other activities and then join the youth gathering. In addition, the National Preparatory Committee, which was initiated by the Young Communist League and the Communist Party, has signed up 311 people.

About 60 people are planning to go to Havana with the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange to attend the International Workers Conference Confronting Neoliberalism and the Global Economy. The trade union meeting, sponsored by the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, will take place August 6-8, immediately after the festival. A good number of those traveling with the Labor Exchange plan to participate in the festival

as well.

The U.S. Organizing Committee, the National Preparatory Committee, and Venceremos Brigade have agreed to mount a unified protest campaign. So far, several congresspeople have called the Treasury Department or issued protest letters. They include Reps. Ron Dellums, Jesse Jackson Jr., and Nydia Velázquez.

Activists plan to reach out to other elected officials, academics, civil libertarians, trade unionists, religious figures, and student and other groups and ask them to join in demanding the government grant the licenses.

In early April, Bob Guild of Marazul Tours submitted the first applications for licenses to travel to the conference in Cuba on behalf of young people who requested it. Nearly two months later, Washington denied the request. In a letter dated May 30, Stephen Pinter, the Chief of Licensing at the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of the Treasury, turned down granting licenses to the first 50 applicants, stating "the statements submitted by the individual applicants reflect optional self-directed activities which do not fall within the scope of clearly defined educational activities."

Guild subsequently appealed the decision, pointing out that government regulations on travel to Cuba state U.S. residents will be licensed if they show an established interest in participating in an international conference in Cuba "organized by an international institution or association that regularly sponsors meetings or conferences in other countries." The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), one of the initiators of the festival, has sponsored 13 previous such festivals in other countries.

As part of its 37-year-old economic war against the Cuban people, Washington has imposed severe restrictions on travel to Cuba. The Trading with the Enemy Act does not allow U.S. residents to spend money in Cuba except under a few restricted categories such as full-time journalists, in effect, imposing a travel ban. According to the law, the government can seek prison sentences of up to 10 years and fines up to \$50,000 against people it accuses of violating its restrictions. According to Guild, not a single

case is known where someone has been fined that amount or sent to jail so far. In the last two years, the Clinton administration has tightened the restrictions, banned direct flights from Miami to Havana, and has made it easier to impose administrative fines on people the government claims violated its regulations.

Over the past 18 months, Washington has levied fines of \$1,500 – \$4,000 on several dozen people for such alleged infractions, Guild told the June 22 meeting participants. In addition, hundreds of people have received threatening letters from the Department of the Treasury upon their return from Cuba, Guild said, among the estimated 70,000 who have traveled to the island without a license since early 1996.

Meeting participants from Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and other cities are setting up local festival committee meetings and encouraging groups in other cities to do the same to discuss the denial of licenses and organize the protest campaign. Ray Harris, from the Chicano rights group MEChA at the Dominguez

Hills College near Los Angeles, said the Treasury Department denial was unconstitutional. "They are trying to intimidate young people from going to Cuba to talk about Chicano liberation and other freedom struggles with young people from around the world. But they will not succeed."

In addition to launching a protest campaign, representatives from local organizing committees in Boston and Los Angeles reported that several people in their areas plan to go as journalists. A number of youth going to the festival are regular contributors to campus newspapers or other media and will go on the trip on editorial assignment, which does not require a license.

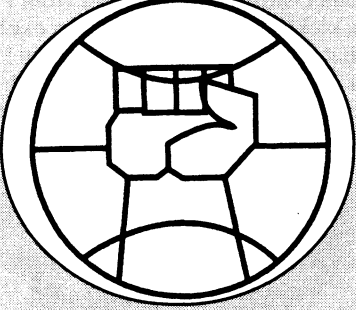
Meeting participants concluded the best way to minimize possible government harassment is to carry out the largest and broadest protest campaign possible.

There was also quite a bit of discussion on fund-raising over the next several weeks to maximize the number of people who can go to the festival. The U.S. Organizing Committee extended the deadline for the full \$600 payment to July 3. Local committees are also fund-raising to augment the costs of plane tickets from their cities to Cancún, Mexico or Nassau, Bahamas, the two meeting points for U.S. participants.

Where to write to protest denial of travel licenses

Protest letters can be sent to:
Steven Pinter, Chief of Licensing,
Office of Foreign Assets Control,
U.S. Department of the Treasury,
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
2nd ANX, Washington, DC 20220.
Tel: (202) 622-2480.

International Workers Meeting
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Farm workers win a victory in California

BY OMARI MUSA

WATSONVILLE, California—The United Farm Workers (UFW) union scored a victory in its year-long effort to organize the state's 20,000 strawberry field workers when Gargiulo Inc.'s new owners agreed June 17 to stay neutral in the drive. Strawberry production is a \$600 million industry in California.

Gargiulo, (now renamed Coastal Berry Company), is one of the nations largest strawberry employers in the Pajaro Valley and had vehemently opposed the UFW's efforts to unionize the workers there. Gargiulo's former owner was chemical giant Monsanto. At peak season about 1,500 workers were employed in its fields.

UFW president Arturo Rodriguez told the media the agreement means that "Strawberry workers at Gargiulo are now free to organize for a union of their choice, without fear of intimidation."

Gargiulo's offices here has been the site of protests organized by UFW supporters against the company's refusal to rehire experienced workers who supported the unionization drive. The largest action in support of the farmworkers fight was an April 13 rally of 20,000 in Watsonville that drew unionists and others from all over the west coast and beyond.

Intimidation, firings and refusal to rehire union supporters has been the stock in trade of the growers for many years. Between 1989 and 1995 the UFW won three representation elections. The response of the growers was to plow under the berries and lay off the workers. The UFW has filed many charges with the state's Agricultural Labor Relations board against the growers' refusal to recognize the union or allow free access to the work force in the fields.

Supporters of the growers have made it clear that the agreement between the UFW and Coastal doesn't mean everybody will join in. Naturipe Berry Growers vice president Nick Pasculli noted, "The entire agricultural industry is paying close attention to developments at Coastal. But anyone who speculates as to whether what happens is the start of an industry trend is acting imprudently." Workers at the Naturipe facility are organized by the Teamsters union.

Several workers said that while they think the agreement is a step forward, the union's work is just really beginning. One worker said, "I told my friends and coworkers we need to sign up workers and win them to the union. That's still ahead of us. We will win, but it will be a battle."

The UFW filed a Notice to Organize with the National Labor Relations Board June 2 to begin signing up workers at Gargiulo. According to Rodriguez, elections for union representation could be held in September or October.

YS fund drive needs a final push

BY VERÓNICA POSES

"The money raised through this fund drive will help sustain activities of the YS, it will enable us to reach out to political events happening in the United States and around the world, and maintain a national office," said David Berg, organizer of the Newark chapter of the Young Socialist at an event organized to raise money towards the YS national fund drive.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS NATIONAL FUND DRIVE May 15 - June 30			
CITY	GOAL	SENT IN	%
LOS ANGELES	\$100	\$162	162%
NEW YORK	\$400	\$232	58%
DES MOINES	\$400	\$166	42%
CHICAGO	\$500	\$199	40%
HOUSTON	\$600	\$115	19%
NEWARK	\$600	\$110	18%
ATLANTA	\$200	\$0	0%
BIRMINGHAM	\$75	\$0	0%
MIAMI	\$100	\$0	0%
MORGANTOWN	\$300	\$0	0%
SAN FRANCISCO	\$100	\$0	0%
TWIN CITIES	\$400	\$0	0%
WASHINGTON DC	\$400	\$0	0%
Other	\$20		

Berg reports that the event, held at the Pathfinder bookstore in Newark, was a success, raising about \$150 toward the chapter's goal of \$600 for the fund drive. The YS "Benefit Slam" included poetry, music and politics, with Brock Satter, a member of the Newark chapter as master of ceremonies. Money was collected from a \$3 door donation and the sale of refreshments. In addition, several individuals also made contributions.

Young people involved in the fight to build support for strawberry farm workers in California who are trying to organize a union sent greetings to the event and expressed interest in attending other events organized by the Young Socialists. This fundraiser, combined with the pledges by chapter members, puts the Newark chapter within striking distance of making their goal.

In Los Angeles, YS members went over their projected goal of \$100 by organizing a dinner and the showing of a movie on the Spanish revolution. Walter López from the Los Angeles chapter reports that an international dinner was organized beforehand, with a brief discussion on the theme of the movie. Participants continued their discussion after the showing of the video.

With a week to go on the drive, YS chapters around the country have planned several fundraising activities in order to meet the goals set locally toward the national fund drive. In Miami, YS members organized a dinner and party June 21 and took advantage of the tour by Movement of the Landless Rural Workers leader José Brito to build the event among those who participated in the meetings held to spread the truth about the fight of the landless peasants in Brazil.

In Atlanta, YS members are part of organizing a reportback from the Socialist Workers Party convention held in Oberlin, Ohio, June 11 – 14. The event will include a dinner and raffle and YS members there are

working with the local branch of the SWP to make this event a success. In Chicago, the YS chapter is wrapping up the fund drive with a dinner held prior to a forum celebrating the reunification of Hong Kong with China.

As part of broader fundraising efforts, the Young Socialists held a raffle at the educational conference that took place alongside the SWP convention in Oberlin, Ohio. After selling tickets for four days, the YS had raised \$1,870 out of the goal of \$2,000. When this figure was announced, prior to the drawing, the approximately 200 participants began to chant "Buy more tickets! Buy more tickets!" and people surrounded the table set up by the YS with the raffle prizes to purchase tickets. After about 10 minutes, the Young Socialists had raised more than amount needed for a total of \$2,060.

Some of the prizes included T-shirts, buttons, a set of the collected works of Russian revolution leader V.I. Lenin, and bound volumes of the socialist magazine *Intercontinental Press*. Grand prizes included 8-foot book covers used to display new titles from Pathfinder Press such as "*Pombo: A Man of Che's guerrilla*" and banners representing different struggles around the world: from fighting peasants in Brazil to the *fogoneros* in Argentina, to a banner celebrating Geronimo Pratt's release from prison after 25 years. The last item to be raffled off was a banner that read "Hong Kong is China, 15 days left — Enter the Dragon, Exit the Bulldog," referring to the July 1 transfer of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong from British imperialism.

Chapters of the Young Socialists have one week to organize fundraising events and collect pledges by members and supporters before the end of the fund drive, scheduled to end June 30. Contributions towards the national fund drive can be sent to the Young Socialists at the above address.

EU meeting shows interimperialist conflicts, tensions

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The June 16-17 European Union (EU) summit in Amsterdam highlighted the competing interests and divisions among the imperialist governments in Europe over plans for a European Monetary Union (EMU) and the structuring of the EU.

The heads of state gathered at the summit failed to reach an agreement on EU voting procedures that was supposed to pave the way for the enlargement of the EU into Eastern and Central Europe. Paris, Bonn, and other large powers want greater voting power in the EU, especially as more states join. German chancellor Helmut Kohl blocked an expected change in the treaty to have more majority votes, arguing that the state governments in Germany could not accept it. The summit put off any restructuring of the EU voting until after a decision is made to admit several new members.

At least ten governments have applied for membership in the Union, ranging from Estonia in the north to Cyprus in the south. For London, Stockholm, Helsinki, and Washington, this enlargement of the Union is a high-priority question that intersects with the expansion of NATO toward the borders of the Russian workers state. As it became obvious that none of the Baltic states will become members of NATO in the first round, the governments of Sweden and Finland began pushing the EU to take in at least Estonia, the Baltic state they say has come the furthest on the road to meet European Union standards.

Both Stockholm and Helsinki advocate taking a further step by having the European Union guarantee the military defense of Baltic states that are members of the EU if threatened by Moscow. They propose that the military decisions be made by the EU and carried out by the Western European Union (WEU), the military organization composed of the NATO members in Europe. Swedish and Finnish troops could participate under the WEU's command, they say, although Stockholm and Helsinki remain outside NATO. This course has been backed by Washington and by the new British prime minister, Anthony Blair.

A different proposal by Paris to merge the WEU with the EU was blocked by London, Stockholm, Helsinki, and Vienna at the Amsterdam summit. The Swedish paper *Svenska Dagbladet* reported that the final pact referred to the "possible integration of the WEU, if the European Council so decides." The European Council makes its decisions by unanimous vote.

Debate over EMU criteria

Another point of debate was the "stability pact" negotiated last year in Dublin, which sets limits on inflation and budget deficits that EU members are supposed to meet in order to enter the monetary union. When the newly elected French government asked on June 10 for a "time-out" to think over the pact, which was to be signed in Amsterdam, the focus of the summit changed from the reform of the treaty to how to negotiate the monetary union back on track.

French prime minister Lionel Jospin said he needed promises of jobs from the European Union before signing the stability pact. During his election campaign, the Socialist Party leader had pledged to renegotiate the stability pact.

This didn't go over well with Bonn. In Dublin, the German government already had to back off some of its conditions for the shaping of a strong euro — as the EMU currency is called — such as demanding heavy fines on the governments that do not meet the EMU fiscal criteria. The French proposal would lead to a further weakening of the euro, relative to the dollar and yen.

In the end, Jospin accepted what the *Financial Times* of London described as a "fig leaf" — a toothless pledge to promote employment and economic growth — in exchange for the stability pact.

But French government officials have made it plain they don't consider themselves bound by its criteria, which include having

a budget deficit of no more than 3 percent this year. Speaking in a radio interview France's European affairs minister Pierre Moscovici declared, "We need to see what the situation of our public finances is and it's in regards to that public-finances situation that we will decide, or not, to participate in the euro."

French officials quickly disavowed Moscovici, saying his statement reflects "neither a political will nor a strategy" by the French government. At a press conference with President Jacques Chirac, Jospin reaffirmed Paris's "profound attachment to achieving the common currency on the agreed date" — though he didn't mention meeting the required criteria. Returning to Paris, Jospin decided to delay any major budgetary decisions until autumn.

Bonn is not in a strong position to insist that the EMU criteria be strictly met, especially after Kohl and Finance Minister Theodor Waigel recently attempted to juggle their books by revaluing Germany's gold reserves to meet the 3 percent deficit target. A recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development stated that Bonn, Paris, and Rome may all fail to meet the criteria for 1997.

While press coverage in Britain, Scandinavia, and the United States centered largely on the failure to reform the EU treaty on power-sharing, the German media mostly worried over a soft euro. With elections coming up next year in Germany, the question of the strength of the currency has already become a central issue. Gerhard Schröder, the most likely social democratic candidate for chancellor, said the EMU has

Jujuy workers fight for jobs, battle cops

Continued from Page 16

disappeared. He was taken away from our home in a company truck."

The popular rebellion that exploded in April in the depressed oil town of Cutral-Có, in Neuquén province, was the detonator of the revolts in Jujuy and other cities throughout Argentina.

"When we saw the methods the *fogoneros* [bonfire starters] used in Cutral-Có, that's when we decided to block Highway 34," said Ramón Sarmiento, 29, a piquetero in Libertador who does odd jobs. "The decision was made at a meeting of unemployed workers and the first roadblock went up here May 19. Our main demands were 5,000 jobs in this area and unemployment benefits."

Juan Segovia, 37, a self-employed welder and one of the piqueteros' three elected delegates, was one of the first to join the barricades. "When I heard the *gendarmaria* [national border police] had been sent in to repress the sugar workers, I went straight home, changed clothes, and came here." Why? "Because as individuals we can never get jobs. Once we came together, the government had to sit down and talk to us — they had never done that before."

On May 20, "at 12:30 p.m., the police came," Sarmiento recounted. "A group of 20 women placed themselves at the front of the piqueteros. We carried a big Argentine flag and sang the national anthem, thinking the police would stop out of respect for the anthem. But instead, they threw tear gas grenades and sprayed us with water cannon. The police even stepped on the flag, which was left stained with the blood of the demonstrators they clubbed."

Running battle with cops

At that point, Sarmiento reported, "the whole town joined in." A running battle ensued for three days. Union officials in the city of Jujuy condemned the police brutality but advised the workers to clear the road. Large groups of youth, however, ignored that advice and fiercely battled the cops.

"The worst repression came down on Thursday, May 22," Sarmiento continued. "Some 1,200 cops in riot gear occupied the highway and confronted a crowd of 3,000. The police chased people through the nearby neighborhoods, throwing tear gas

Hundreds protest cop killing in New Jersey



A protester condemns Newark, New Jersey, cops for the June 7 fatal shooting of young Black woman, Danette Daniels. Hundreds of angry protesters marched on City Hall June 9 chanting, "No Justice, No Peace!" and "Arrest Leaks!" Protests were organized every Monday for three weeks. Robert Leaks, the police officer who shot Daniels, was suspended without pay and is under investigation.

to wait until the convergence criteria is fulfilled, according to *Svenska Dagbladet*.

The social democratic government in Sweden decided June 3 that Stockholm will not participate in EMU in the first round, set for Jan. 1, 1999, although Stockholm will meet the main criteria in 1997. Copenhagen also meets the criteria but has negotiated an exemption from EMU. London will not join EMU in the first round either, and Blair has stated that the convergence criteria should be strictly met by those who join EMU. He is trying to take the lead in Europe to demand "labor flexibility" as a road toward capitalist prosperity.

London and Stockholm are trying to make a strong showing in relation to their

rivals who are not able to meet the criteria for the monetary union. A June 4 article in *Svenska Dagbladet* described Britain, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland as a dollar-pound area. These countries earlier constituted the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), a trade bloc that in the 1960s was led by London with a special relationship to Washington. EFTA has since disintegrated and regrouped in and around the European Union.

The article in *Svenska Dagbladet* stressed that the pound, the Swiss franc, and the Norwegian krona all have surged on a higher dollar, and raised the hope that the Swedish krona will follow suit. Much of the trade from these countries is in dollars or pounds.

and firing rubber bullets.

"The people in the San Lorenzo and San Francisco neighborhoods fought back. Some 200 youth stood at the front and threw rocks with their slingshots. The *honderos* [slingshot shooters] and the rest of us pushed back the cops."

Several piqueteros proudly showed *Militant* reporters a police water tank they had captured and burned.

Dozens of demonstrators were arrested, and 120 people were injured. One man lost an eye during the cop assault. Márquez de Arédez noted that the police carted off demonstrators using Ledesma company trucks.

"That evening the government gave the order to withdraw the border police. We won the battle, although we haven't yet won the war," commented Segovia.

On May 25, a national holiday commemorating Argentina's independence, the townspeople boycotted the official ceremony, which was attended only by the despised mayor and his entourage. Instead, 20,000 people joined a holiday celebration called by the protesting workers right on the blocked highway. "It was a real popular festival," Segovia remarked. A group of young piqueteros led off the parade carrying their bloodstained "war flag."

The government entered negotiations with a committee of unemployed workers that included three elected delegates from each of 17 picket sites. Within days the roadblocks had spread to other towns: San Pedro, Palpalá, La Mendieta, Abra Pampa, Alto Comedero, Carmen, Tilcara, Río Blanco, Humahuaca, and La Quiaca on the Bolivian border.

The protesters ranged from laid-off steelworkers from the Zapla blast furnaces to youth who have never had a job. They pressed an array of demands, such as higher unemployment benefits, housing, health care for poor families, cafeterias in the elementary and high schools, and payment in pesos instead of the hated "coupons" that are used to pay state employees. The coupons are worth less than pesos and cannot be used outside the province.

Meanwhile, the state employees unions in the province called a one-day solidarity strike and several marches in solidarity with the piqueteros. High school students in Jujuy

walked out of classes and held sit-ins.

The committee of piqueteros rejected the government's initial offer of several hundred temporary jobs and miserly unemployment benefits. The government finally pledged to create 12,000 jobs.

The roadblocks went down and thousands of workers in Jujuy province began to line up to register for the promised jobs. The piqueteros demand concrete proposals to build factories, schools, clinics, and other projects that will create jobs. "Many of the 12,000 jobs will be temporary. The solution must be permanent jobs," said Sarmiento.

[At a June 22 rally the piqueteros in Libertador decided to put up roadblocks again as long as the government did not fulfill the agreement, particularly the elimination of the coupons and rapid implementation of the jobs program.]

Many of the young piqueteros commented on the changes in attitudes reflected in the recent revolt. "For me it began with the *Santiagazo*," said Antonio, 23, who like many did not want to give his last name to avoid victimization by the police.

The *Santiagazo* was the December 1993 uprising in Santiago del Estero, where thousands of unpaid state employees and unemployed workers occupied and burned down several government buildings.

Mariano, 28, a teacher and piquetero on Highway 9, explained that for years since the military regime, there had been an atmosphere of fear among workers. "In Jujuy the most combative unions — the sugar workers, miners, teachers — were hit hard by repression. The most combative leaders were disappeared and now these unions are weak and bureaucratic. After all this, the *Santiagazo* showed it was possible to fight."

Some of the youth have drawn inspiration from struggles abroad. Cuñado said he and two friends had spent a month in Brazil last January visiting camps organized by the Movement of Rural Landless Workers (MST), which has taken over idle lands in a fight for agrarian reform and social rights.

"The MST movement — they know how to fight. We need something like that here," Cuñado said. "None of the political parties here have any solutions to the deep problems in our society. And we need far-reaching solutions."

SWP discusses openings for revolutionists

Working people say 'no' to capitalist rulers' demands for sacrifice

Continued from front page

failed either to restore the domination of capitalism anywhere in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union or to break the working class and its unions in the capitalist world.

In response, delegates reaffirmed the course of building a revolutionary workers party more deeply rooted in the industrial unions, one capable of convincing greater numbers of young workers and other rebels to join the communist movement and become more effective fighters as a result.

The convention is the party's highest decision-making body, held at least every two years. Fifty-five voting delegates were elected by party branches across the United States, following three months of written and oral discussion on proposed resolutions and platforms. Participating in the convention deliberations as fraternal delegates were members of the outgoing National Committee, a representative chosen by the Young Socialists, and representatives of sister communist leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, and supporters in Iceland.

One sign of the weakening of imperialism that delegates and guests celebrated throughout the convention was the July 1 return of Hong Kong — a British colony for more than 150 years — to Chinese sovereignty. Participants from the United Kingdom painted a banner that was hung in the convention hall the second day of the gathering, declaring, "Hong Kong is China." It pictured a Chinese dragon chasing away a cowering bulldog, a symbol of British imperialism, and counted down the days to the end of colonial rule.

Workers say 'no' to more sacrifice

SWP national secretary Jack Barnes opened the convention with a welcome and world political report to the delegates and guests. He also presented a summary the final night of the convention. The results of the recent elections in France and the United Kingdom, Barnes said, show the rulers have been unable to convince working people to accept the bosses' demands for greater sacrifice today, supposedly for the common good tomorrow. In both countries, the conservative parties were voted out of office, ushering in social democratic-led regimes.

When the government says, "If you don't tighten your belt the national currency will go down the drain," workers in growing numbers respond, "So what — that's your problem not ours."

Workers in France, where the conservative president miscalculated and called snap elections, have made clear they will continue to press their demands under the new Socialist Party-Communist Party government. The day before the convention opened, 70,000 people marched in Paris demanding jobs and a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, and protesting the clos-

ing of a Renault auto plant in Belgium. The last few years, workers in France have repeatedly rallied in the streets, including a wave of strikes and protests against government austerity plans at the end of 1995.

Unemployment in France today exceeds 12 percent. In his first policy speech to the

alist countries, the election results are an important indication of the working-class resistance that is welling up across Europe and North America. The June parliamentary vote in Canada, where the union-based New Democratic Party more than doubled its seats and the right-wing Reform Party also

within the ruling classes in Britain, France, Germany, and other imperialist powers are never between nationalists and "Europeanists," as is generally portrayed, Barnes noted. None of them want a common currency that would replace the French franc or the German mark or the British pound in a unified, border-free Europe. Each bourgeoisie has as its starting point the desire to gain the best position for its own national capital, denominated in its own national currency, and defended by its own national army against its competitors. To advance these aims, they form various shifting blocs against their rivals in Washington and Tokyo, and against each other. They fetishize economic institutions like the EU to draw the working class into defending "national interests," in reality, the interests of the home bourgeoisie. And each ruling class is using the criteria for the monetary union as a pretext to demand much deeper sacrifices from working people.

No to imperialist blocs!

Both Barnes and Argiris Malapanis, who presented a report on "Europe, NATO, and U.S. imperialism," stressed that communists have an obligation to oppose entry into and demand withdrawal not only from all imperialist military alliances, such as NATO, but also economic and trade blocs such as the European Union. A delegate from Britain argued that communists should not campaign for withdrawal from the EU by the governments in their countries, since most capitalist politicians and petty-bourgeois socialists who campaign around this today do so from a nationalist "Britain first" or "France first" perspective.

This question had been posed in a May 8 statement issued by the Communist League in Sweden that took a position of abstaining on a proposed referendum for Swedish withdrawal from the European Union. The statement, which the *Militant* ran as an editorial in its May 26 issue, pointed out that those campaigning both for and against Swedish participation in the EU and European Monetary Union (EMU) did so from the standpoint of advancing the "national interest."

Socialist workers do need to explain there is nothing progressive in campaigns against the EMU centered on how best to protect "British," "Swedish," or "French" jobs, convention delegates concluded. At the same time, revolutionaries must take a clear position rejecting all imperialist trade and economic pacts. In fact, doing so is among the most important political preparations revolutionary-minded workers can organize today to counter the rulers' attempts to soften up the working class for war by getting workers to think in terms of "we" the nation — "our currency," "our industry," and "our exports," — instead of "we" the workers versus "they" the employers, two classes with diametrically opposed interests.

Malapanis said that class-conscious workers in the United States take a similar stance of opposing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which is aimed at consolidating U.S. dominance over its weaker imperialist rival in Canada and intensifying the exploitation of Mexican labor and resources by U.S. capital. At the same time, socialists explain why the chauvinist campaigns against NAFTA waged in the United States and Canada by the trade union officialdom, a minority of business interests, and capitalist politicians of both liberal and ultrarightist stripes damage international working-class solidarity and the labor movement.

Increasing trade wars and currency wars among rival capitalist powers lay the basis for full-scale shooting wars, Barnes said. Workers at home and abroad are the victims every step along the way, and have a stake in joining together across borders to organize unions to defend their interests and to



Delegates discussed how imperialist war drive against workers states in Eastern Europe and Russia comes out of weakness of imperialism, which has failed to get workers there or in the capitalist countries to accept sacrifice. At right, Albanian rebels with army tank they seized in March. Above, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes gives summary remarks at end of convention. On stage are members of newly elected National Committee. Banner on top left reads *Mariciweu!* (we will win a thousand-fold) — a cry by rebellious workers in Argentina in language of Mapuche Indians.



French parliament, the new prime minister Lionel Jospin said the 700,000 jobs he pledged in his election campaign could not be created soon, the promised lowering of the workweek from 39 to 35 hours would not take place for five years, and announced a mere 4 percent raise in the minimum wage.

Two political forces recognize the significance of these events, Barnes said, communists and the ultrarightists such as Jean-Marie Le Pen in France and Patrick Buchanan in the United States. The SWP leader noted Buchanan's commentary on the French elections, which the rightist politician celebrated as "part of the baptismal ritual of a more coherent French party of the right," instead of the weak leadership of French president Jacques Chirac.

While there are not yet large-scale battles in the labor movement in any of the imperi-

made gains, was part of this phenomena, as were the recent elections in Iran to a degree.

The fissures and competition among the various capitalist powers are also clearly visible in the conflict within the European Union over the "euro," the proposed common currency. As the SWP convention was meeting, top officials of the capitalist powers in Western Europe were headed to Amsterdam for a conference where they were supposed to negotiate the next steps toward European monetary union and greater coordination of immigration and foreign policies (see article on page 7). They could reach no substantial agreement, however, and the prospect of a strong, stable European currency that can challenge the U.S. dollar seems further away than ever.

The debates over the European Union

'There's nothing better to do with your life'

BY JONATHAN CORAL AND ANGEL LARISCY

OBERLIN, Ohio — Forty-four of the people who came here for the Socialist Workers Party convention were attending their first socialist convention or conference. Here's what just a few of them told *Militant* reporters about why they came and what they got out of the event.

Jaime Lupercio, 19, of Detroit is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. He first met socialist workers at the meatpacking plant where he works. He explained that one day at work a supervisor was attempting to punish a worker who was unable to do a job properly since the instructions were only in English and the worker only read Spanish.

Lupercio recalls that a woman co-worker was standing up for this worker's rights. He says he wanted to get to know her right away, since he admired what she had done. The worker, Rosa Garmendia, began talking to him about the fight for solidarity on the job and socialist politics. "I went to the Pathfinder bookstore to look at the books and began attending Militant Labor Fo-

runs," Lupercio said. "I think this is a party that doesn't have borders or languages."

Lupercio decided to join the Young Socialists at the conference. "I am going to return to work to explain what I have learned here and show other workers Pathfinder books," he remarked.

Heather Wood, 24, met members of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, through work they had been doing together on building a delegation to the 14th World Festival of Students and Youth, which will be taking place in Havana, Cuba this summer. She especially liked the opening report by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes. She explained, "These are all things I had been thinking about. I had been looking for someone to say them." When asked if she had thought about joining the Young Socialists, she responded, "That's what I came here for. I'm not a member yet, but I want to join."

Emily Jewson, a 23 year-old student at West Virginia University, said she had just attended the class on the origins of women's oppression. "I've been encouraged to read

more. I went to the Young Feminist Summit in Washington D.C.; it was my first activity like that. Now I'm going to read the *Communist Manifesto*. I bought that and *Cuba for Beginners*. I'm interested in learning more about Che, Fidel, and Marx. I think that's a good start."

As a member of the Young Socialists in Spokane, Washington, Alaric Dirmeyer has regularly set up tables to sell the *Militant* newspaper and Pathfinder books, as well as helped organize regular Militant Labor Forums. Attending the convention and conference helped him to get a better understanding of the fact that U.S. imperialism's efforts to expand NATO are in fact war moves against the Russian workers state. Dirmeyer said "I liked listening to the discussion on the political resolution. It was a real honest appraisal of some successes, as well as big challenges ahead. But there was no falsification or blaming each other." Dirmeyer, 19, recently decided to move to Seattle to join the Socialist Workers Party. "I want to be involved in decision making and the every day life of the SWP," he said, "I think there is nothing better to do with your life."

forge revolutionary organizations to combat capitalist rule.

Malapanis, who led a *Militant* reporting trip to Albania and Yugoslavia earlier this year, took up the problems imperialism faces in attempting to restore capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe, Russia, and the other workers states. He described the daily protests in Serbia from late 1996 to early 1997 that forced the Stalinist regime there to restore election results it had overturned, and won other demands.

Resistance to 'market reforms'

As the demonstrations in Serbia were still unfolding, working people in Albania took up arms against the openly procapitalist regime of Sali Berisha. "They were, and still are, resisting the disastrous results of the 'shock therapy' prescribed by the wizards from Harvard, not only in Albania but throughout Eastern Europe at the opening of this decade," Malapanis said.

The working class and their conquests in overturning capitalist rule in these countries is the target of the occupation of Yugoslavia and Albania, and the expansion of NATO being pressed by Washington. Malapanis pointed to a June 5 speech by U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright at Harvard's commencement. "Albright said that Washington is today trying to bring the entire world under 'an international system based on democracy and open markets' — in other words world capitalism." He quoted Albright's remark, "We know not every nation is yet willing or able to play its full part in this system. One group is still in transition from centralized planning and totalitarian rule. Another has only begun to dip its toes into economic and political reform." Albright's message is clear, Malapanis said, "Washington will use force to try to make that happen, through its military might."

Washington's projected enlargement of NATO, he said, was prepared on the blood and bones of the toilers of Yugoslavia. In the early 1990s, as rival European governments fanned the flames of war between competing layers of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Yugoslavia, the U.S. rulers put on a show of pious concern for the Bosnian Muslims. All the while, Washington actually worked behind the scenes to make sure enough weapons got in to keep the slaughter going, without resolution. The U.S. rulers urged their French and British counterparts to intervene under the United Nations flag, while sabotaging every accord proposed by powers in the European Union between 1992 and 1995.

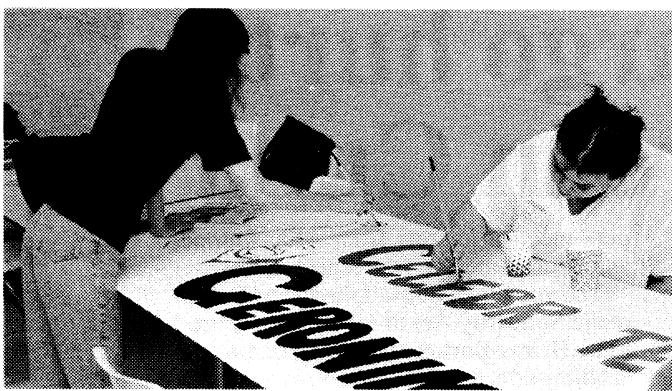
Meanwhile, Washington built a military ring in and around Yugoslavia — with hundreds of soldiers on the ground in Macedonia, agreements to deploy U.S. forces from Albania and Hungary, covert links with the regime in Croatia, and the U.S. Sixth Fleet off the Yugoslav coast in the Adriatic. Finally, after letting the people of Yugoslavia bleed for three years, organiz-

ing the first sustained bombing raids over Europe since World War II, and repeatedly humbling its imperialist rivals, the White House dictated a set of accords at the Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. These accords spelled out the partition of Bosnia and its occupation by 60,000 NATO troops, a third of them U.S. soldiers.

The Dayton accord was a "symbol of the new level of U.S. hegemony in Europe," Malapanis said. It coincided with the Clinton administration's announcement in 1994 of the plan to expand NATO, bringing imperialist forces closer to the border of Russia. "Since its founding in 1949, NATO's purpose was to defeat the Soviet Union," Malapanis noted. "Today that is still NATO's purpose."

But NATO, at the same time, has been weakened by the deepening conflicts among its members and between them and Moscow. That is why Washington is repositioning its military forces on a stronger footing vis-à-vis Russia, and is strengthening its place as the dominant "European power."

The problem for Washington is that with thousands of troops on the ground it has remained unable to overturn noncapitalist property relations in Yugoslavia, or even stomp out the desire among layers of working people and youth of various nationalities to restore the Yugoslav federation.



Militant/Walter López
At right, Geronimo Pratt walks out of jail June 10 after more than 25 years in prison, as cop frame-up against him crumbles. Above, convention participants paint a banner celebrating this victory.



and social turbulence that increasingly marks capitalist society today. They are saying 'no' to imperialist prerogatives. They are standing up to the employer class and its government. They are not afraid of the cops with their billy clubs, tear gas, and rubber bullets."

The working class in Latin America, including the industrial working class, "has shown its revolutionary potential before and will again," said Koppel, "especially in economically more advanced countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico."

For communist workers in North America, he continued, "these developments are not a matter of solidarity — they are portents of things to come here, too, and are integrally tied to building a proletarian party

David Corona, a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, talked about workers' resistance to speedup and union busting in Córdoba, the main auto and aerospace manufacturing center in Argentina. Ford, Chrysler, Fiat, Volkswagen, and Renault all have factories there.

Corona described marches and a recent highway blockade in front of the Fiat plant by unionists resisting company attempts to impose wage cuts and firings of union militants. Workers at this Fiat plant were at the heart of the *Cordobazo*, a 1969 uprising centered among industrial workers that coincided with a similar revolt in the Argentine city of Rosario. "This uprising is now a permanent part of the living history of the working-class movement in Argentina — many workers in Córdoba told us about it with pride," Corona said.

Fiat owners have recently hired about 1,800 workers — many in their late teens and early twenties — as part of a work force of 3,500, Corona said. The employers hope these younger workers will not only hold up better under brutally intensified production lines but will be less combative and union conscious. "From what we saw, that is not what the bosses are going to get."

Many Fiat workers wanted to know the conditions industrial workers face in the United States, Corona noted. He described how a number of them grabbed copies of *El rostro cambiante*.

"Most of the unionists did not know our party," Corona said. "But one of them asked, 'Are you members of the SWP?' When we said yes, he explained how he had met SWP leaders like Joseph Hansen during the working-class upsurge in Argentina 25 years ago. I realized then that our party has a real history and continuity in the struggles in Argentina and other parts of the world."

The new developments in Argentina are as important for revolutionists in Cuba as they are for us in the United States, Mary-Alice Waters said in her remarks. They are a concrete example of how the conditions capitalism generates can propel millions toward emulating the Cuban road — the road of socialist revolution.

Waters spoke about the publication by Pathfinder of *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'guerrilla'* by Cuban brigadier general Harry Villegas (see ad on page 10). The book tells the story of the 1966-68 guerrilla campaign

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Militant/Carole Lesnick
An increase in struggles by Latino and Chicano youth over immigration and other questions intersects with fights by farm workers and other labor battles. Above, youth join April 13 rally to support strawberry pickers in Watsonville, California.

That's why NATO forces are less and less likely to be withdrawn from Bosnia as planned next year.

When Washington sent its troops into Yugoslavia, Malapanis said, socialist workers in the United States "deepened work in the trade unions," campaigning among fellow workers and others to explain the imperialist war drive and why working people should oppose it.

This was in sharp contrast to the big majority of organizations on the "left," he noted, who either bowed to imperialism and backed the NATO intervention or apologetized for the Stalinist regime of Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade. Since 1993, sales of the Pathfinder book *The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention* total some 6,700 copies, he reported.

Argentina and the Cuban revolution

The second evening of the convention was turned over to a special program, "The Growing Explosion in Argentina, the Cuban Revolution, and the Changing Face of U.S. Politics." The speakers included Martín Koppel and David Corona, just returned from a *Militant* reporting trip to Argentina (see articles on page 16), and longtime SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

"The working-class revolts that have swept through several cities in Argentina indicate something new that's happening in that country," said Koppel, who is the editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*. "It's a sign of what is coming in the rest of Latin America."

"A new generation in Argentina is beginning to react to the brutality, to the economic

and an international communist movement."

That's why when communists went to Argentina to provide firsthand coverage of the social explosion they took with them a suitcase full of copies of the newly released *El rostro cambiante de la política en Estados Unidos*, the Spanish-language edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes, and other revolutionary literature. This book, Koppel said, "is an irreplaceable political weapon for building a revolutionary party in the United States. But it is also what working-class fighters need in Argentina and other countries to chart a course that can lead workers and farmers to power."

A sampling of Marxist classes

Below is a listing of some of the 17 classes held as part of conference activities surrounding SWP convention:

- Ebonics, the 'culture war,' and vanguard role of the Black nationality in the socialist revolution in the United States
- The Communist Manifesto: founding declaration of scientific socialism
- The orientation to basic industry and transformation of the unions
- The place of Chicano liberation in the coming socialist revolution in the United States
- The fight against fascism and the struggle for workers power in France in the 1930s; lessons for today
- Socialism and the fight of women's equality: lessons from the Russian, Nicaraguan, and Cuban revolutions
- Europe and America in the 20th century: The conflict between imperialist rivals
- Anarchism: A counterrevolutionary current in the workers movement from Bakunin to the Spanish revolution

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE Elected June 14, 1997

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U.S. embargo hurts health care in Cuba

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"After a year-long investigation, the American Association for World Health [AAWH] has determined that the U.S. embargo of Cuba has dramatically harmed the health and nutrition of large numbers of ordinary Cuban citizens.... It is our expert medical opinion that the U.S. embargo has caused a significant rise in suffering — and even deaths — in Cuba." That's how the summary of findings of a 300-page-long AAWH report, which was released in March, begins.

The report continues, "A humanitarian catastrophe has been averted only because the Cuban government has maintained a high level of budgetary support for a health care system designed to deliver primary and preventive health care to all its citizens."

The American Association for World Health is the U.S. Committee for the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization. It includes a number of well-known doctors and other medical professionals on its staff. Former U.S. president James Carter is honorary chairman of its board. AAWH conducted its study over a 12-month period between 1995 and 1996.

Cuban Democracy Act of 1992

Washington's embargo has been in place since October 1960. But its recent tightening since the early 1990s, after Cuba lost aid and trade in favorable terms with the former Soviet bloc countries, has exacerbated the effect. The study, titled "The Impact of the U.S. Embargo on Health and Nutrition in Cuba," points to several factors adversely affecting the availability of food and medicines in Cuba, stemming from "little-understood provisions of the U.S. Congress' 1992 Cuban Democracy Act."

The Cuban Democracy Act (CDA) banned trade with Cuba of U.S. subsidiaries in third countries. The ban applies to all foodstuffs and medicines. Prior to the cutoff, more than 90 percent of U.S. subsidiary trade with Cuba was in foods and medicines.

Under the CDA, the U.S. Treasury and Commerce Departments are allowed in principle to license individual sales of medicines and medical supplies, ostensibly for humanitarian reasons. The licensing provisions are so restrictive, however, that the number of licenses granted — or even applied for since 1992 — are minuscule.

The CDA also prohibited ships docking in Cuba from entering U.S. ports for six months, severely curtailing the ability of the Cuban government to secure shipping of medical equipment and increasing import costs. "From 1993 to 1996, Cuban companies spent an additional \$8.7 million on ship-

ping medical imports from Asia, Europe, and South America," the report states.

The misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, also referred to as Helms-Burton law, has added to the "chilling effect, further discouraging American suppliers in the health care industry from even contemplating trade with Cuba."

Disastrous results on health

As a result of these draconian sanctions, the study found that physicians now have regular access to only 889 of the 1,297 medicines that were available in Cuba in 1991. "U.S. dominance of the international pharmaceutical industry as a result of a wave of mergers in the early 1990s has severely exacerbated the problem," said Robert White, Professor of Neurosurgery at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, who was part of the AAWH delegation to Cuba.

"In 1995, for instance," the AAWH report says, "Upjohn, a major U.S. pharmaceutical company, merged with a Swedish concern, Pharmacia, which since 1970 has logged multimillion dollar sales to Cuba for protein purifying equipment, reagents for clinical laboratories and production plants, chemotherapy drugs, and growth hormones." Upjohn ended Pharmacia's sales and closed down its Havana office within three months of the merger. "Cuba suddenly lost another supplier of plates for HIV tests and other diagnosis kits to screen for hepatitis B and C, when Sybron International of Wisconsin bought out Nunc of Germany."

Today it is difficult to find any state-of-the-art machinery that does not have some U.S.-built component, said Dr. Peter Bourne, chairman of the AAWH board. "Cuba cannot get spare parts for the U.S. equipment it has. We witnessed kidney dialysis, x-ray, respirators, incubators and other life-saving equipment standing idle for want of U.S.-produced spare parts."

Surgeries have dropped from nearly 886,000 in 1990 to about 536,500 in 1995, the AAWH study found — "a glaring indicator of the decline in hospital resources."

AAWH surveyed 12 U.S. pharmaceutical and medical supply companies. Ten stated that licensing red tape kept them from fulfilling requests from Cuba to purchase goods. When the Canadian subsidiary of Cleveland-based Picker International applied for permission to sell x-ray parts for 20-year-old machines earmarked for use in maternity and pediatric hospitals in Cuba, the U.S. Department of Commerce denied a license, writing that exports would be "detrimental to U.S. foreign policy."

In one instance Cuban cardiologists diagnosed a heart attack patient with a ven-



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Pharmacy in Havana, 1996. U.S. embargo has cut available medicines by 31 percent.

tricular arrhythmia. He required an implantable defibrillator to survive. Though the U.S. firm CPI, which held a virtual monopoly on the device, expressed a willingness to make the sale, the U.S. government denied a license for it. Two months later the patient died. The AAWH study found that heart disease is the number one cause of death in Cuba. Mortality rates for men and women increased from 189 deaths per 100,000 in 1989 to nearly 200 per 100,000 in 1995.

Washington has also actively tried to prevent Cuba from manufacturing its own drugs. In 1993, for example, the U.S. Treasury Department denied a license to the German subsidiary of Pfizer to sell Cuba one pound of the active ingredient methotrexate for trials of an anti-cancer drug.

Breast cancer, a primary cause of death for women worldwide, is often preventable with early detection and treatment. Until 1990 all women over 35 in Cuba received mammograms on a regular basis at no cost. Today mammograms are no longer employed as a routine preventive procedure and are used only for women considered to be at high risk. "The embargo prevents the Eastman Kodak company or any subsidiary from selling the U.S.-produced Kodak Mini-R film — a product specifically recommended by the World Health Organization because it exposes women to less radiation," the study says.

Cuba's water supply system is built with U.S. manufactured parts. Since 1992, Cuba can no longer purchase parts for the chlorination systems that treat 72 percent of Cuba's drinking water because parts are only available from the U.S. firm Wallace and Tiernan. This single embargo-related prohibition jeopardizes safe drinking water for over 4 million people. Morbidity rates from water-borne diseases have doubled since 1989, particularly affecting elderly Cubans.

The outright ban on the sale of U.S. food-

stuffs has also contributed to serious nutritional deficits, particularly among pregnant women, leading to an increase in low birth-weight babies, the AAWH report notes.

Response by Cuban government

"Such a stringent embargo, if applied to most other countries in the developing world, would have had catastrophic effects on the public health system," the study says.

Such results have been averted in Cuba because of the attention and resources the revolutionary government in Havana has invested in limiting erosion of health care.

"The Cuban constitution makes health care a right of every citizen and the responsibility of the government," the report says. "The system is based on universal coverage and comprehensive care, essentially free of charge to the population. Over the years, the central government has placed a top priority on public health expenditures in the national budget.... Consequently in the 1990s Cuba's health statistics more closely approximated those of the nations of Europe and North America than of developing countries, with 195 inhabitants per physician, and 95 percent of the population attended by family doctors living in the communities they serve."

Life expectancy in Cuba in 1994 was 75 years, compared to an average of 68 in Latin America, and infant mortality was 9.4 per 1,000 live births, compared to 38 in Latin America. To counter the impact of Washington's intensified economic war, the Cuban government has increased health-care spending by more than 30 percent between 1989 and 1996, the study says. The problem is that imports of medical supplies and food have to be purchased in hard currency now, which is scarce.

The report can be obtained from AAWH at 1825 K St., NW, Suite 1208, Washington, DC 20006. Tel: (202) 466-5883.

Betty Shabazz dies

Betty Shabazz, widow of Black revolutionary leader Malcolm X, died June 23 of complications caused by burn-related injuries. At the time of her death Shabazz was director of public affairs and cultural attaché at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn. For 32 years she collaborated with Pathfinder Press in making sure that the speeches and interviews of Malcolm X — what he said before he was assassinated in 1965 — were accurately published and stayed in print.

An interfaith service in memory of Betty Shabazz will be held June 29 at 3 p.m. at the Riverside Church in New York. The Apollo Theater in Harlem is also planning a tribute to Shabazz, but no date has been set.



Bill would ease embargo on food, medicine

BY GREG ROSENBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "We are introducing the Cuban Humanitarian Trade Act of 1997 because we believe that the current U.S. embargo against Cuba is not politically effective.... We need to change the pressure which we have placed upon the Cuban people," said U.S. Representative Esteban Torres at a Capitol Hill press conference June 18.

Torres — a California Democrat — was joined by 11 other members of Congress in introducing the "Cuban Humanitarian Trade Act of 1997." Four Republicans are co-sponsors of the proposed legislation. Several other Congressmen have signed on since.

The bill would leave the U.S. economic and trade embargo against the Cuban revolution intact, including provisions of the Helms-Burton law. If approved by Congress and signed by President William Clinton, the new legislation would exempt the sale of food, medicines, and medical equipment from the embargo.

Citing a recent report by the American Association for World Health, Torres said "the outright ban on the sale of American foodstuffs has contributed to serious nutritional deficits, particularly among pregnant women.... Thirty-seven years of such policies are ample time to demonstrate that U.S. actions are not politically effective."

The other Congressmen present echoed the tone of these remarks. "The existing prohibition [on food and medicines] undercuts

the moral authority of the humanitarian message many Americans wish to communicate," stated New York Democratic Rep. Jerrold Nadler.

"In the end, there is little doubt the Cuban people will have a better standard of living under a more humane embargo that this measure will facilitate," remarked Congressman James Leach, an Iowa Republican.

Under the bill, the White House could not

restrict exports of food, medicines, or medical supplies to Cuba. Exceptions would be made if the president decided these goods would be used for "human rights abuses," re-exported, or were "used in the production of any biotechnological product."

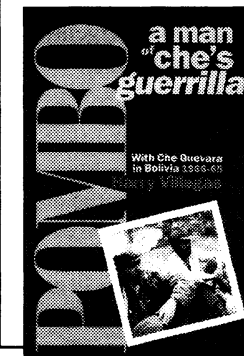
The proposed legislation would also allow exporting businesses to receive foreign tax credits for their sales to Cuba, which is prohibited under current law.

Pombo:

A Man of Che's guerrilla

by Harry Villegas Tamayo (Pombo)

A never-before-published story of the 1966-68 revolutionary campaign in Bolivia led by Ernesto Che Guevara. It is the diary and account of Pombo — a member of Guevara's general staff, a young fighter still in his 20s. Harry Villegas is today a brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. His day-by-day account of this epic chapter in the history of the Americas illuminates the times we are living through and foreshadows the titanic battles that will mark the Americas of the 21st century. \$21.95. **\$16 with discount!**



El rostro cambiante de la política en Estados Unidos

(The Changing Face of U.S. Politics)

JACK BARNES

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism in the closing years of the twentieth century. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. Now in Spanish! \$21.95. **\$16.95 with discount!**

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Brazilian activist meets others in struggle

Continued from front page

these gains, and brutal attacks carried out in response by the police and Brazilian military.

Brito appealed for support for José Rainha, Jr., an MST leader convicted on false murder charges in the deaths of a military policeman and a landowner during a confrontation in a 1989 land occupation. The MST is seeking letters of support for Rainha in preparation for a September 16 retrial.

From the floor of the Des Moines meeting, Hazel Zimmerman spoke to urge support for Rainha. She reminded the audience that MST activists had sent 5,000 letters to the Iowa Parole Board in 1995, demanding the release of Mark Curtis, a union packinghouse worker and political activist framed up by the Des Moines police in 1988. The letters made a big impact, Zimmerman said, noting that "the parole board just couldn't understand why these letters came all the way from Brazil." Curtis won release in 1996. Zimmerman was a central leader of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in Des Moines.

At the Des Moines meeting, Brito was joined by Reverend Gil Dawes, the pastor of the Trinity United Methodist Church and a leader of Prairiefire Rural Action. Dawes explained that many in his congregation are immigrants from Latin America who have lost their farms. He and several other Des Moines area ministers have provided sanctuary in their churches to people who have been ordered to be deported by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

The speaking engagement for Brito in Marshalltown was sponsored by the Hispanic Ministry of St. Mary's Church and its minister, Father Paul Ouderkirk; family farmers Larry Ginter and Gary Hoskey; and by Dan Schmitt, president of the American Agricultural Movement.

Speaking at the meeting, Schmitt explained the deteriorating conditions farmers in Iowa face. "Farming is a losing proposition today," he said. "The banking system that dictates economic policies dictates our problems."

Hoskey described struggles going on against the effects of the growing large-scale hog confinement business. Ginter, who has helped organize several protests this year defending small producers and the communities they live in against the pro-agribusiness policies of the government, added that the big pork producers are not interested in producing food, just profits and capturing the world market. "U.S. farmers are locked into competition with Brazilian farmers who are in debt slavery," he said. "We want to farm, we're not lusting after other farmers' land."

At the meeting a reporter for the Marshalltown *Times-Republican* asked Brito if the MST also fights for the preservation of Brazilian rain forests. Brito said that there are many organizations that defend the forests but do nothing for the people that are hungry. "We support the struggle for the environment, and we do it through the struggle for justice, for food for the people," he said. "We want to change ways the land is worked... to create new consciousness in those who win land to work. In fact, it is the land owners and corporations who are destroying the forests, who bring the morals of the system you have here," Brito added.

Brito explained that the MST supports the struggle of the Brazilian indigenous peoples. "Through the slaughter of the colonizers, their numbers went from some 5 million to 200,000 today," he noted. "We work together with the indigenous organizations that fight for recognition of their lands."

Ouderkirk, who introduced the meeting, said that many of the Mexican- and Central American-born packinghouse workers at the Swift plant in Marshalltown are former farmers who have been forced off the land by the pro-big-business policies of the governments in their countries.

Prior to the Marshalltown meeting, Ginter and his mother Alice hosted a supper for Brito at his hog farm in nearby Rhodes. Hoskey, Schmitt, Earl Symes, and other rural activists attended, and exchanged experiences with Brito through a translator. Brito explained that small farmers in Brazil are told by representatives of the agribusiness giants who buy their products that low prices are the result of competition with U.S. farmers. The Iowa farmers all laughed, responding, "That's what they tell us here!"



Militant photos: Ray Perez (above), Larry Lane (right)
Above: José Brito (left) presents MST pennant to farm leader Dan Schmitt at Iowa meeting. Right: Strawberry picker in Watsonville tells Brito about farm workers' fight to organize a union.

When Schmitt explained how small producers in the Midwest are pushed into debt by banks, suppliers, and those who buy commodities like pork, corn, and beans, Brito responded that the same thing happens to farmers in Brazil.

An article in the June 17 Marshalltown *Times-Republican* announced Brito's talk in that city and quoted the MST leader extensively. Brito also was interviewed on three area radio stations. One community weekly in Des Moines and several radio stations ran announcements of the meeting.

After Iowa, Brito is visiting cities in California, Florida, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C.

Maggie Trowe is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149 in Marshalltown, Iowa.

BY OMARI MUSA

WATSONVILLE, California — Discussions with strawberry workers and leaders of the United Farm Workers and Teamsters were the highlights of the tour of José Brito Ribeiro here June 18.

The UFW is on a drive to organize this state's strawberry workers. At the UFW offices, Brito was introduced to several farm workers who were not hired back this season in the strawberry fields because of their support to the union. Their experience as pickers ranged from six to 16 years.

"The companies have sought to intimidate us," one worker told Brito. "We go from one field to the next seeking work. They tell us there's no work here. But we see them hire workers who have less experience than we, but who are not identified with the union. The bosses' message is clear. If

you're with the union, no jobs."

Brito asked about the general conditions that faced workers in the fields. "Most workers go six days a week and 10 hours a day," another worker told him. "If you complain about the hours, lack of water, inability to go to the toilet, the managers say if you don't like it here, go somewhere else to work. Women workers are expected to perform sexual favors for the bosses and family members who work at the farms," this worker added.

Brito explained the history and development of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers. The group was going all out to fight the frame-up of MST leader José Rainha, Jr. "He was convicted even though his defense showed video tapes taken of him in another state when the incident allegedly occurred. We are planning massive rallies at Rainha's retrial on September 16," Brito said. "You can help by sending messages of protest to the authorities in Brazil. As well, we welcome any of you to come to the rallies and bring your solidarity."

After this meeting Brito was welcomed to the union office complex by UFW president Arturo Rodriguez, who explained that the union had just scored a victory in its drive to organize the 20,000 strawberry workers in the Watsonville area. The new owners of Gargiulo, Inc., one of the largest strawberry companies, had decided not to oppose the UFW's organizing drive at its facilities. Brito congratulated the union, saying, "I will take news of this victory of agri-

cultural workers back to Brazil and you can count on our solidarity in your battle." During his stay at the UFW offices, the Brazilian activist also met with Dolores Huerta, a UFW vice president and one of the founders of the union.

UFW volunteer Rachel Rosner and several of the workers not rehired by the bosses for union activity accompanied Brito on a visit one of the strawberry fields. One of the unionists explained the history of the industry in Watsonville. "Eighty percent of the strawberries are farmed here in California. And 50 percent of those are harvested right here in Watsonville," he said. "This is hard work. Our average pay after everything is said and done is less than \$6 per hour."

Earlier in the day, Teamsters Local 912 in Watsonville hosted Brito. Union organizers Karen Osmundson and Santos Lerma welcomed him. After explaining that the Teamsters represent workers at the companies who receive the strawberries and either pack them for distribution at markets or process them, Osmundson took Brito to the New West

Foods processing plant. About 250 workers, mostly women from Mexico, work there. One of the women on break described their conditions. "We work April through October and are then laid off. The rest of the year we get unemployment or find work somewhere else." Brito explained the fight of the MST for land and the frame-up of Rainha to 10 unionists who came out to speak with him. Two women asked if they should write letters of protest. "We workers have to stick together and help each other," one said.

After leaving New Foods the group went to Dean Foods Vegetable Company. About 1,000 people work there. It is one of the few vegetable processing plants still open in Watsonville. Outside the plant, Brito struck up a conversation with Pablo, who ran the lunch truck concession. Pablo is from Mexico and immediately engaged Brito in tactical discussions on winning land rights in Mexico. Ten workers came out of the plant to speak briefly with Brito.

The next evening, Brito spoke to a group of 50 at a meeting in San Francisco sponsored by several Latino union officials. The meeting was chaired by Richard Trujillo, vice president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 256.

In the San Francisco Bay area, the MST leader was interviewed by the local Pacifica radio affiliate, two Spanish-language weeklies, and two Spanish-language radio stations. He also spoke with a local Brazilian newspaper.

Facts on frame-up of MST leader

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — In a major attack on the fight for land rights in Brazil, José Rainha, Jr., one of the best-known leaders of the struggle to distribute land to those who work it, was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 26 and a half years in jail.

Rainha is a leader of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) of Brazil. Rainha was accused of leading a land takeover in June 1989 and of being responsible for the death of the owner of the farm and one of his gunmen, a military police officer.

On June 3, 1989 approximately 100 families of landless workers peacefully occupied the abandoned farm Ipuera Plantation in the state of Espírito Santo. Two days later the landowner, José Machado Neto, came to the farm with the cop, Sergio Narciso. Both opened fire on the landless workers, injuring several of them. The workers defended themselves and in the shootout both the farmowner and cop were killed.

At the June 11 trial defense witnesses, including a colonel who is chief of security at the Military House and several

elected officials, placed Rainha in another state from the one where the killings occurred. Video tapes and news clippings corroborated the testimony of defense witnesses.

The prosecution called no witnesses and relied on written statements from workers who had been held and tortured by the police. Without any proof against Rainha, the prosecution called on the lawyers for the landowner's family, who cried and dropped to their knees begging the jury to find the activist guilty.

Fourteen of the 21 members of the jury pool for the trial had ties with local landowners, and three were related to the landowner and cop who were killed. Rainha was found guilty by a 4-to-3 vote.

Several thousand people from throughout Brazil demonstrated outside the courthouse during the one-and-a-half-day trial demanding an end to the frame-up.

In a statement immediately after the trial the MST declared, "The decision of the court is a political decision. José Rainha was not condemned because of the charges put forward by the prosecution, since there was ample proof to the contrary. José Rainha was condemned because he participates in the

MST (the Movement of Landless Rural Workers) and organizes workers in the fight for land reform."

Amnesty International and the Catholic Church in Brazil have denounced the guilty verdict.

According to the Catholic Church, 1,000 people have been killed since 1985 in violence related to unequal land distribution.

Twenty percent of Brazilians own 90 percent of the land while the poorest 40 percent own just 1 percent.

Under Brazilian law, anyone sentenced to more than 20 years in prison is automatically eligible for a second trial. Rainha remains free until this second hearing, set for September 16. The MST has called for rallies in Brazil to defend Rainha on that date. In addition, they are asking that messages of support be sent to:

Juiz de Pedro Canário, prédio do Fórum, CEP 29970-000. Pedro Canário, Espírito Santo, Brazil. Fax: (011) 55-27-764-1478. Copies should be sent to: MST, Rua Ministro Godoy 1484, CEP 05015-900, São Paulo, SP, Brazil. Fax: (011) 55-11-871-4612.

Thousands show solidarity in Detroit

Continued from front page

came to show their solidarity and win support for their own fights. About 50 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 594 on strike against General Motors in Pontiac, Michigan, attended.

Cles Saunders said that he and other members of UAW Local 51 who struck Chrysler's Mound Road Engine plant in the spring were there, "to support the newspaper workers and get rid of the scabs."

Dennis Gary, a member of UAW Local 724 carrying a "UAW on Strike" picket sign,

explained that "I'm here with my wife because we need to support others who have been on strike and attacked by the police, like the news strikers have been." He and 61 other unionists in Lansing, Michigan, are on strike against Melling Forge, an auto parts maker, over wage cuts and the elimination of medical benefits. On May 29, about 60 Lansing cops, armed with dogs and automatic weapons, attacked their picket line with tear gas. Four bus loads of retired auto workers from Flint were at the picket line.

Also on the march were striking Team-

sters from New York City, members of the Machinists union who had just ended a strike in St. Louis, and fighters who had waged a long strike against the Staley corn processing plant in Decatur, Illinois.

About 50 members of the UAW came from Caterpillar plants in Pontiac and Peoria, Illinois. Ken Whetson, a UAW Local 974 member from Peoria, said, "We're here because these workers need our solidarity." Referring to the strike battles that have taken place at Caterpillar, he said, "They went after us first, now they [the employers] are

following Cat's example everywhere, like what GM is trying to do." He reported that many of the Cat workers who came to Detroit planned to visit the picket line in Lansing on their way home.

Dozens of members of the United Mine Workers of America came, including about 20 veterans of the fight against the Pittston Coal, many of whom have since retired. Farm workers from both California and Ohio joined with other Latino workers to form a colorful and militant contingent carrying large banners and red flags with "huelga" (strike) emblazoned on them.

Some 350 steelworkers traveled from Toronto. Thirty-seven postal workers, members of the Mailhandlers Union made a 14-hour bus trip from their region — New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut — to join a sizable U.S. postal worker contingent.

At the rally following the march, a long list of international union officials, including AFL-CIO president John Sweeny, hailed the NLRB judge's ruling as justifying the unions course of relying on the courts during the strike.

Other activities included a teach-in of over 700, religious services, fund-raisers, a picket line of 400 to 500 at the Sterling Heights police station protesting cop brutality on the picket lines there during the strike, and small protests at the two printing plants used by the struck newspapers.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 and is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Detroit City Council.

Hong Kong is China, Taiwan next

Continued from front page

in the world's most populous country. The U.S. rulers are divided on how to best go about penetrating the Chinese market and attempting to restore capitalist domination.

House minority leader Richard Gephardt, a Democrat from Missouri, was in the forefront of opposing Clinton's proposal. He said U.S. policy under the Clinton administration has been "far too weak when it comes to China." He and others argue for a harsher stance toward Beijing, on the pretext of human rights concerns.

In a 259-173 vote, the House of Representatives turned down a motion to not grant Beijing the MFN status on June 24. The White House had pushed for this vote to take place before the Hong Kong transition.

At the same time, Washington has stepped up its propaganda depicting China as a military threat. There are 100,000 U.S. troops currently stationed in Asia, and now Washington is pushing Tokyo to join in a project

called the Theater Missile Defense Project (TMD). This would be a joint U.S./Japanese government operation to develop an anti-missile system using spy satellites, advanced land or sea-based anti-missile systems, and an array of other arms upgrades, capable of being deployed to limited areas or "theaters."

Tokyo has been hesitant to sign on, however. The project would be considered a provocation by Beijing, which is a nuclear power, and by Pyongyang.

Meanwhile, French companies recently closed a \$2 billion deal with the Chinese government for 30 Airbus planes. Paris and Beijing signed a joint declaration shortly after stating, "The time has come for France and China to [build] a long-term global partnership aimed at moving French-Chinese relations to a new phase of development."

British capitalists are looking to remain in Hong Kong. Among them is Jardine Matheson Holdings Ltd. This 165-year-old

company has maintained a low profile in recent months, as its roots lie in the British empire's military forcing of illegal opium sales into China. The Opium Wars — two trade wars in the mid-1800s launched in the interests of British capital — forced the legalization of opium in China, through the military defeat of China and seizure of the territory known as Hong Kong from the Chinese regime.

With the end of colonial rule in Hong Kong, and the Portuguese colony of Macao following suit in 1999, the next question posed is when Beijing will set a date for reunification with Taiwan.

A large island province off the coast of mainland China, Taiwan was seized by the forces of Chiang Kai-shek in 1949, as they fled the victorious Chinese revolution.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

The Changing Face of Politics in 1997. Speakers: John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party, candidate for Birmingham City Council, District 8, and member of United Mine Workers; George Williams, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Birmingham City Council, district 3 and member of United Auto Workers Local 1155. Fri., July 11, 7:30 p.m. *111 21st St. South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.*

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Repression and Resistance in Mexico. Eyewitness Report. Speakers: Iginio Torres, Organization of Peasants of Southern Sierra, Guerrero; Mateo Santana, Purépecha Indian activist,

Michoacán; José Arturo Morales, Teachers union activist, Oaxaca; Barry Fatland, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Transportation Union, recently returned from Mexico. Fri., July 11, 7:30 p.m. *2546 W. Pico Blvd. Translation into Spanish. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.*

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Hong Kong: Colony No Longer! Speaker: Nancy Cole, Socialist Workers Party, and member of International Association of Machinists. Fri., July 11, 7:30 p.m.

Video Showing: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Discussion will follow. Fri., July 25, 7:30 p.m.

Both events held at 1906 South Street. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

SWP national convention

Continued from Page 9

in Bolivia led by Ernesto Che Guevara, which Villegas took part in as a member of the general staff. Conference participants bought more than 700 copies of this newly released title, edited by Waters, along with more than 100 copies of *El rostro cambiante*.

Both of these books are fundamentally about the same thing, Waters noted. They are about ordinary working men and women building revolutionary parties and in the process transforming themselves through struggle. Pathfinder Press also published a pamphlet in English and Spanish, titled *At the Side of Che Guevara: Interviews with Harry Villegas*, that was also a big sales hit at the conference (see article on page 5).

An intensified economic war by Washington is taking its daily toll on the lives of the Cuban people, Waters said. In the midst of this, the communist leadership in Cuba is taking political initiatives to bolster the revolutionary consciousness and confidence of working people, especially the youth. She pointed to the recent publication in Cuba of *Secrets of Generals*, a book comprised of interviews with 41 top officers of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces (the *Militant* published a review of this books in its May 26 issue). Many of these generals are sons or daughters of carpenters, sugar workers, or peasants. Some did not learn to read and write until after the triumph of the Cuban revolution. They tell stories about their experiences on internationalist missions, as they battled alongside national liberation fighters in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Waters pointed to what she described as the most important sentence in the publisher's preface to *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'guerrilla'*, which says, "if conditions allow, the revolutionary leadership in Cuba, from Fidel Castro on down, will not hesitate to act again with the same international selflessness."

A special guest at the convention was Rafael Noriega, a third secretary at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C.

Lena-Margarita Sardá Noriega, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and a leader of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers in Havana province, had also been planning to attend, but the U.S. State Department denied her a visa.

In his greetings to the convention, Noriega said that imperialism "suffered a severe heart attack" with the Russian revolution of 1917 and subsequent socialist and democratic revolutions by working people

Continued on Page 14

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—CALENDAR—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Attend a Barbecue. Fri., July 4 at noon. *Dockweiler State Beach. At southwest corner of parking area, look for "Pathfinder Bookstore Picnic" sign for direction to beach site. Contribution: \$6. For more information: (213) 380-9460.*

What's a little soot — Six months ago, the Environmental Protection Agency recommended setting standards for minute particles of soot which the EPA estimates



Harry Ring

causes some 15,000 premature deaths a year, as well as 250,000 asthma attacks and 60,000 cases of chronic bronchitis.

Oh — A news report said the Clinton administration is "feverishly" trying to figure out how to implement the EPA's soot emission proposals, "while softening the impact of their implementation."

'Land reform' — Backed by 50 Mexican cops, Nancy and Dan Johnson reclaimed their luxury Baja California Sur hotel which peasants had occupied since last July. The hotel had been built on land owned communally by the peasants. The Johnsons had bought the land from the federal government and a judge ruled the sale was legal, contending the land belonged to the local

government, not the peasants.

Irrked loser? — Dumped from office by the victory of the British Labour Party, former Tory prime minister John Major inquired plaintively of a reporter: "Why are you interested in me? I'm yesterday's news."

House hunting — Now Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, John Major needs a London home. Fortunately, Tory party treasurer Lord Harris of Peckingham has loaned him his £2.5 million pad till he finds a place.

How about one for politi-

cians? — Bosses should check out Hygiene Guard. When employees enter the bathroom, a special badge they wear starts blinking and doesn't stop until they stand in front of a sink and hit the soap dispenser (which may or may not be empty). Coincidentally, the device provides a record of how often workers use the bathroom.

The American Way of Death — Law officials are checking out some 2,000 boxes of cremated human remains found in a northern California warehouse. The boxes were stored by a flying service hired by undertakers to spread cremated remains over the area's

rivers and mountains.

Vote 'yes' on bond issues? — In 1993, nearly 2,400 people with incomes of \$200,000 plus, paid no income tax. An estimated 75 percent of them received income from tax-exempt interest on municipal bonds.

More Moo, mommy — Moo, is being test marketed in England. It's milk with a strawberry or vanilla flavor and more alcohol than most beers. A spokesperson for the distributor insisted that they're taking care to ensure that it doesn't appeal to children, noting, "The label is fairly bland, with no cartoon characters."

How class struggle unfolded in Bolivia, 1968-71

We reprint here an excerpt from "Argentina and Bolivia — the Balance Sheet," from *The Leninist Strategy of Party Building: The Debate on Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America* by Joseph Hansen (see ad on page 16). The selection below gives a picture of explosive struggles by workers, peasants, and students that broke out in Bolivia in the years following the late 1960s and early 1970s.

BY JOSEPH HANSEN

Even while they were developing their theory of a repression so severe as to admit of no other recourse except guerrilla war in the struggle against General René Barrientos, the leading figure in the military junta that toppled the Paz Estenssoro regime on November 4, 1964, our comrades of the

BOOK OF THE WEEK

Partido Obrero Revolucionario [Revolutionary Workers Party, Bolivia] reported happenings that actually showed other possibilities. Here is an example:

On May 1 [1968], a militant, anti-imperialist, and anti-military mass meeting was held under vigorous radical slogans. It openly condemned the Barrientos dictatorship. In the major cities — Oruro, Cochabamba, Potosí, Santa Cruz — there were similar demonstrations. In Cochabamba, the district prefect, General Reque Terz... appeared at the demonstration backed up by force. He tried to speak to the crowd, but they did not let him. There was a violent reaction from the workers, who shouted: "You murdered Che [Guevara]!" "Imperialist lackey!" "Gorilla!" He had to retreat in the face of the general clamor.

Besides the militant slogans indicated, there were shouts of acclaim for Che and the guerrillas in these urban demonstrations. The government massed all its forces, police, the national guard, the army, the air force (Mustangs buzzed the demonstrations in La Paz to frighten the demonstrators), but it did not dare break them up. The junta was cowed and retreated. It is clear that more than expressing the new ascent and militant spirit of the masses, the May Day demonstrations were a victory against the government....

Of similar significance was the nature of the struggle carried on by the masses. The report continues:

A general movement is in progress for increased wages and salaries. The miners are proposing restoration of the old wages and return of all trade-union property. The immediate conflict is over the teachers' demand for a salary increase from 470 to 900 pesos. The government rejected this request. The teachers met in a national convention and approved various tactics of struggle leading by stages to a general strike. Among these were work stoppages graduated by districts, lighting meetings, blocking streets, etc....

Barrientos, killed in a helicopter crash April 27, 1969, was succeeded by Vice-President Adolfo Siles Salinas. Hardly more than an ornamental piece for the junta, Siles was ousted in a coup d'état that put General Alfredo Ovando in power September 26, 1969.

Ovando permitted the trade unions to function. Traditional trade union activities were resumed and the Central Obrera Boliviana [Bolivian Workers Federation] began to rebuild its structure. Throughout April, May, and June of 1970 the proletariat took advantage of the semilegal opening conceded by Ovando and engaged in continual mass mobilizations. Other sectors became involved — students, teachers, part of

the urban petty bourgeoisie, and even a few sectors of the peasantry. These mass actions were sufficient to enable the COB to resume open activity. In campus demonstrations, the students went so far as to take over universities.

The ruling class faced a growing crisis since they were unable to either suppress the mass movement for the time being or to grant economic concessions on the scale required to soften the class struggle....

During August and September Ovando twisted and turned as the masses pressed for concessions and a sector of the ruling class countered by insisting on a crackdown. In August a battle over control of the University of San Marcos precipitated a national crisis. On October 6 Ovando resigned, turning the reins of government over to [Gen. Rogelio] Miranda.

The consequence was an immediate mass explosion of the classic variety. Students and workers poured into the streets to block the attempted ultrarightist take-over....

The October 8 *Le Monde* reported:

Students began to build barricades in the streets of the capital in order to block any movements by forces favorable to General Rogelio Miranda. In Catavi the powerful tin-miners' unions denounced the "fascist coup d'état of the right-wing officers" and decided to offer "conditional support" to General Juan José Torres.

The miners' federation called for arms "to defend our social gains" and posed as conditions for their support "the establishment of democratic liberties and release of the political prisoners, repeal of the antistrike decrees, nationalization of the foreign banks and all American interests, expulsion of all imperialist bodies, and the establishment of a people's government." The COB has already issued a call for a general strike throughout the country.

The COB also ordered its members to block the streets and prevent troop movements within La Paz.

Armed detachments of peasants joined in the action. Armed civilians freed political prisoners. The homes of ultrarightist military men and civilians were assaulted. The buildings of three leading newspapers were occupied. Jubilant tin miners seized police stations and announced they would demand quick wage increases.

The *New York Times* reported that on October 8:

armed students took over the headquarters of the criminal division of the national police. Apparently unopposed, they were reportedly looting the offices and destroying the files....

Students have also begun attacks on United States property. They entered the Bolivia-American Binational Center yesterday, hauling down an American flag and announcing that they were annexing the building to the university....

On January 10, 1971, the counterrevolutionary forces attempted another coup. Again they were beaten back by mass mobilizations. This time the masses were better organized, reflecting the gains they had made since the mobilizations that had defeated General Miranda three months earlier. Thousands of armed miners paraded through La Paz. The mass movement began to openly proclaim its goal of a socialist transformation in Bolivia.

Under this mounting pressure, the Torres regime granted further concessions. The International Metal Processing Corporation was nationalized. In February, Torres conceded wage increases to the miners.

At the time of the October struggle against General Miranda, the COB and all the political parties of the left had set up a "Political Command" to coordinate their struggle. In mid-February it was decided to convert this body into a "People's Assembly." This was a



Miners, carrying dynamite, demonstrated in La Paz, Bolivia, to protest the 1971 coup d'état. They were the main force in the 1960s and '70s mobilizations for social gains.

most significant step. As a workers' parliament, the People's Assembly had the potentiality of becoming a soviet. The development offered incontrovertible evidence that in the main the Bolivian revolution was following the "classical" pattern of the Russian revolution.

The project testified to the deep urge of the working class to form a common fighting front in which its allies — the students, peasants, and urban petty bourgeoisie — could participate. Nevertheless the absence of representation of the army rank and file and most of the peasantry pointed to grave weaknesses that a revolutionary party would have put high on its agenda for remedial action. Another grave weakness, re-

quiring similar action, was the absence of local supporting bodies. These began to be formed only on the eve of the coup that overthrew Torres.

In the following months, the proletariat marked time. What was lacking was a revolutionary leadership to set goals and tasks and to block out a line of action. The Bolivian workers thus faced a crisis in leadership. To offer the popular masses no alternative but supporting Torres signified a default in political guidance. This led to a weakening of the forces that could have been mobilized behind the working class in a bid for power. As a result, the counterrevolution began, to regain confidence and to spin new plots with increasing boldness.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



July 7, 1972

NEW YORK — An important victory was scored on June 22 in the ongoing effort to defend Puerto Rican nationalist Carlos Feliciano from the complex maze of legal charges that have been brought against him. A Bronx Supreme Court jury of nine men and three women acquitted Feliciano of all charges of attempted arson and bomb possession.

The prosecution had attempted to prove that Feliciano was planning to bomb a U.S. Army recruiting station on May 16, 1970. A pipe bomb, supposedly found in Feliciano's car by the police, was the main evidence offered by the prosecution. The defense contended that the bombed was planted by the prosecution's star witness, Andrew Gutiérrez, a police detective who had been following Feliciano's movements for about a year. In summarizing the case for the defense, [William] Kunstler asked the jury to find Feliciano not-guilty only if they agreed that Feliciano was being framed-up; none of the essential facts of the case were in dispute except for who put the bomb in Feliciano's car.

In pretrial publicity, prosecutor John Fine contended that Feliciano is an agent of "an alien government outside the limits of the United States," which he later indi-

cated was Cuba. Fine also stated that Feliciano is a member of the MIRA (Movimiento Independentista Revolucionario Armado — Armed Revolutionary Independence Movement), an underground Puerto Rican independence group with an urban guerrilla orientation.



July 5, 1947

JULY 1 — "Let the Senators dig the coal!" was the embittered war-cry of 250,000 soft coal miners who angrily quit the pits last week in a spontaneous strike against the venomous Taft-Hartley Slave Labor Act.

By the week-end all mines were down as the strike continued directly into the scheduled 10-day vacation period for 400,000 members of the AFL United Mine Workers.

All the savage blows of the government against the miners — the injunction and fine levied by a Federal District Judge, the Supreme Court decision against the UMW and John L. Lewis, the Taft-Hartley Act directed most immediately against the mine workers — all these have failed to curb the miners' fighting spirits.

Their latest action is an expression of the American workers' wrath against the new union-busting law. This is but the beginning of wholesale defiance.

Justice for José Rainha

José Rainha, Jr., a central leader of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) in Brazil, has been framed up on trumped-up charges of killing a landlord and a military police officer. He was condemned in a split vote by a jury that included relatives of the cop and the landowner. He was framed for political reasons: because he has been leading the struggle for land by millions of landless peasants and rural workers against the landlords and capitalists of Brazil.

Now is the time for class-conscious workers in the United States and around the world to join our brothers and sisters of the MST in waging the broadest possible campaign demanding Rainha's conviction be overturned and the charges against him dropped. Now is the time to organize public meetings, press coverage, and distribution of informational materials to tell the truth about the frame-up and the fight for agrarian reform in Brazil. Now is the time to reach out to trade unionists, working farmers, farm workers, antiracist fighters, defenders of women's rights, supporters of immigrant rights, students and other youth, elected officials, religious figures, and all advocates of democratic rights and ask them to send messages of support to Rainha's struggle for justice.

The tour of MST leader José Brito in the United States has already generated interest and publicity in this fight. Those who took part in the tour can take the initiative to form ad-hoc committees to help spread the word for the defense campaign.

Thousands of workers, youth, and others in the United States know the distinctive stench of a police frame-up from their own experiences — from fighting to free trade unionist and socialist Mark Curtis from prison and now end his parole, to demanding the release of imprisoned Native American leader Leonard Peltier, to the 27-year fight against the frame-up of Geronimo Pratt, to pressing for the freedom of Puerto Rican political prisoners. The MST has a proud record of fighting for others; that's why they can wage an effective fight to defend themselves. The MST's unstinting international solidarity with Curtis's fight for freedom, for example, was important to winning his release from jail last year.

The MST's struggle — for the right of the tillers to the land they work, and to cancel the imperialist imposed foreign debt of more than \$180 million in Brazil alone — is part of the worldwide resistance by working people to the demands of the capitalists and landowners to "sacrifice" for the false promise of a better tomorrow. Any victory in the battles of Brazilian peasants and rural workers is a victory for all working people.

Join the fight to end the frame-up of José Rainha!

Tobacco deal hurts workers

The \$368 billion "historic settlement" recently negotiated by the tobacco bosses and government lawyers has nothing to do with advancing the health of working people. The cigarette bosses plan to pocket handsome profits by raising the price of a pack of smokes by 50 cents to \$1 to offset the cost of the deal — a regressive tax that like other so-called sin taxes will be felt most by working people.

While President Clinton and other bourgeois politicians intone concern about the dangers of cigarette smoking on the "nation's public health," the Senate voted June 24 to increase eligibility age for Medicare recipients from 65 to 67 as they ponder a cut of \$115 billion from this entitlement program.

What hypocrisy! They even have the gall to present their current plans for the Medicaid program as a "major expansion" that will cover only 500,000 uninsured children, while acknowledging this will fall far short of the 10.5 million children who have no health insurance. At the same time, this bipartisan Medicaid plan will cut \$14 billion from hospitals in working-class neighborhoods.

A trademark of the Clinton administration is to launch its attacks on the social benefits or democratic rights of working people under the veneer of "protecting" children.

Right-wing politicians like Patrick Buchanan exploit the transparent hypocritical nature of these bourgeois measures to justify their reactionary ideology in the "culture war." "Big Gov't or Godfather?" roared the headline of Buchanan's June 25 column in the *New York Post*, attacking government "extortion" in the tobacco pact.

Buchanan's demagoguery against "Big Government" has nothing in common with the need for the labor movement to reject giving the Food and Drug Administration the power to regulate nicotine as a drug. This jurisdiction will only give cops and other government agencies greater realm to victimize workers who smoke.

That's why working people should reject this "historic public health achievement" as a victory for healthy or "sick smokers." We should demand free universal health care for all with no restrictions and an end to taxes on cigarettes.

Socialist Workers convention

Continued from Page 12

in many countries. Today "imperialism suffers a deep wound, which is Cuba," he said, "and I guarantee that between you and us, we're going to give them another heart attack." In a message sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, the SWP convention delegates stated, "The rejection by Cuban working people — including the men and women of the Revolutionary Armed Forces — of the Yankee empire's latest attempts to divide their ranks and revolutionary leadership through bribes and threats stands as an example to all those around the world who want to stand up against oppression and exploitation."

The convention also heard greetings sent by the Workers Party of Korea. In a reply, the delegates condemned "Washington and Seoul's systematic effort to block much-needed international food assistance" to north Korea as part of the U.S. war drive against the workers states. The message concluded, "Together working people the world over will get the imperialist occupiers out of Korea and every other corner of the world."

Struggle for a proletarian party today

Leading up to the convention, party branches discussed a draft political resolution titled, "The struggle for a proletarian party today." It pointed to the opportunities to take another step in "building a communist party rooted in the industrial unions, one with the proletarian norms, methods of functioning, and habits of discipline capable of winning a new generation to Bolshevism."

The resolution cites the words of founding SWP leader James P. Cannon in 1940, during the buildup toward U.S. entry into World War II. "Preparation for war means, for us, not some esoteric special task," Cannon wrote. "It means turning the face of the party to the workers, penetrating deeper into the trade unions [and proletarianizing] the composition of the party membership."

A convention report by Jack Willey introduced the discussion on the resolution. Willey is a member of the SWP National Committee, the party's National Trade Union Committee, and the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists. He reviewed some of the openings to strengthen the party's trade union fractions and increase the sales of revolutionary literature in a way that advances the construction of a disciplined, proletarian party.

An example of how these elements can come together has been the experience of the strike at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. Socialist steelworkers in several cities have been part of strike solidarity work together with their co-workers. They also regularly visit the picket lines, where they've been able to sell books and the *Militant* to strikers. Willey described how on one occasion socialists helped lead in discussions among strike activists and supporters about why anti-Semitism is damaging to the union.

Protests by Chicanos, Blacks, women

Willey and several delegates pointed to growing protests by Chicanos and Latinos over the last two years around immigrant rights and other issues. This is intersecting with struggles by strawberry pickers fighting for a union in the Watsonville, California, area and apple packers in Washington State. There are growing possibilities to participate in these fights along with fellow unionists.

Jim Gotesky, a delegate from San Francisco who is a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, described several recent strikes by mostly immigrant workers in the Bay Area. Another delegate from Houston described how Mexicans have been in the forefront of protesting the surge in executions by the state of Texas. The celebrations on both sides of the border in response to the freeing of Ricardo Aldape Guerra, a Mexican worker who spent 11 years on death row for a murder he did not commit, showed what a deep nerve this issue touches.

Willey also pointed to examples of resistance by the Black nationality in the United States to racist discrimination and police brutality. Delegates had joined in protest actions around these questions in recent weeks, from New Jersey to Atlanta. Convention participants painted a banner celebrating the release of Geronimo Pratt, a Black Panther leader who spent more than a quarter-century in prison because of an FBI frame-up. And delegates sent a message of congratulations to Pratt, drafted by Mark Curtis, a party leader in Chicago. Curtis, who faces parole restrictions stemming from his own frame-up conviction nearly 10 years ago at the hands of the cops in Des Moines, Iowa, did not attend the convention.

Willey also described opportunities to link up with young people fighting for women's rights. Several of those attending their first socialist convention came in contact with the SWP and Young Socialists around the national Young Feminist Summit that took place in April. A couple of these activists from Morgantown, West Virginia, initiated the painting of a banner advocating women's equality and gay rights, which they plan to use at a protest outside an all-male rally of the right-wing Promise Keepers group in Pittsburgh in July.

Discussion on anarchism

"Other currents in the workers movement also see what's happening, and are actively recruiting," Willey said. This includes Stalinist, social democratic, and anarchist political forces.

He described how members of the party and YS in Minneapolis-St. Paul had to go back to the books to learn and relearn the history and politics of anarchism, after building protests against the anti-abortion group Human Life International (HLI) in which anarchists played a cen-

tral role. In discussing that experience, one of the delegates challenged Willey's reference to the "anticapitalist rhetoric" of these groups, saying the anarchists "aren't really anticapitalist."

In his summary, Willey pointed to this as an example of why it's crucial to be accurate in politics. "Anarchists *are* anticapitalist," he said. "They're also antistate and anticommunist. As the class struggle heats up, their leaders will use their radical demagoguery to divert the working class from fighting to take state power," thus betraying workers, as they did in the Spanish revolution in the 1930s.

Willey responded to a couple of delegates who referred to right-wing organizations such as HLI as "Catholic" or "religious," saying, "The shift to the right comes out of the trajectory of bourgeois politics, not religion. It's important to explain this clearly. We will unnecessarily isolate ourselves from a lot of working-class fighters if we rush together rightist groups with religion."

Willey also answered a delegate who said that in building for the upcoming World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana, members and supporters of the Communist Party had "come out of a slumber, a slumber they would prefer to inactivity."

"Whenever we fall into the self-defeating notion that our political opponents prefer inactivity to activity," Willey said, "you can be sure these currents are influencing and recruiting young fighters who revolutionists could have won had we been on our toes politically."

Following the discussion on Willey's report, the delegates adopted the resolution.

In the final convention session, the delegates elected the National Committee that will be responsible to implement the convention decisions and guide the work of the organization until the next convention (see page 9).

Conference activities

In addition to the convention sessions, all those in attendance had the opportunity to participate in classes on a wide range of Marxist topics, as well as workshops on practical day-to-day political campaigns and activity, and a huge book sale.

Members of the party and YS who are active in the International Association of Machinists; Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; and United Food and Commercial Workers met during the gathering to discuss recent experiences in these unions and elect national steering committees to guide their work over the coming period.

The delegates and guests took note of five veteran communist fighters who had died since the last party convention in 1995 — Robert DesVerney, Lois Remple, Ed Shaw, May Stark, and Sam Stark.

Participants left the convention on a better footing to carry out ongoing political activity, including building successful delegations to the upcoming World Festival of Youth and Students and the International Workers Conference Confronting Neoliberalism and the Global Economy. Delegates voted to join others in fighting to oppose Washington's undemocratic and unconstitutional efforts to prevent young people from the United States from attending the international gathering (see page 6).

The resolution adopted by the delegates pointed to other examples of assaults on democratic rights, including the surge in the use of the death penalty and the tightened policing of airports across the United States on the pretext of fighting terrorism. In order to advance their assault on the wages and social gains of working people, the resolution says, the capitalist rulers are "compelled to make strides in curtailing democratic rights — rights that must be severely restricted if the ruling class is to have any hope of defeating the workers and their allies in the coming decisive battles."

At the same time, as pointed out in the reports by both Jack Barnes and Jack Willey, increased political polarization is leading to a growth in ultrarightist groupings — in the United States and other imperialist countries — that will be used in the future to attack workers' meetings. "We are living in a political period that requires us to view security in a much more serious and disciplined way," the SWP resolution states. In accordance with this judgment, confirmed by experience over the past year, the delegates discussed a report on convention security at their first session and organized the defense of the gathering in a more systematic way than had been the case in recent years.

Frame-up in Brazil

Delegates also pledged to work in defense of José Rainha, a leader of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) in Brazil. MST leader José Brito Ribeiro, who was a guest at the convention, began a two-week U.S. speaking tour the day after the gathering ended. Brito gave greetings on behalf of the MST, and also gave a class to conference participants on the struggle for land in Brazil. Being among hundreds of revolutionaries who are committed to the fight for socialism in the United States and around the world, Brito told the convention, "makes me think that imperialism is not as strong as it seems."

The greetings sent to the MST from the convention delegates noted that the organization's staunch support for Mark Curtis's fight for justice, and pledged that the fight against Rainha's frame-up "will further transcend the borders of Brazil, as we join with others here and around the world in getting out the truth."

The final evening of the convention, participants launched a fund drive, to run September 1 to November 1, to raise \$125,000 for publishing Pathfinder books. More than \$83,000 in initial pledges was raised at the meeting.

Electric workers rally for jobs in Massachusetts

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions. We invite you to contribute

GE, and those who will work here in the future." Many workers echoed this view. Teddy Weyhrauch, a turbine blade polisher at the Schenectady plant, said "job security is the issue, not wages. It's about

ON THE PICKET LINE

short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

LYNN, Massachusetts — More than 2,000 General Electric Co. (GE) workers and their supporters rallied here May 31 to demand that guarantees of job security and full pensions after 30 years be included in the contract now under discussion between GE management and unions representing some 46,000 workers. The current contract expires June 29.

The International Union of Electrical Workers Local 201, the union which represents the majority of workers at GE's jet engine plant here, organized the demonstration that included contingents of workers from GE plants across the eastern United States. More than 150 workers traveled from GE's power generation plant in Schenectady, New York, while others came from Louisville, Cleveland, and Philadelphia. A delegation of union leaders from GE plants in Brazil and Argentina was welcomed with a standing ovation. The Lynn rally is one of a series that concludes in Erie, Pennsylvania on June 21.

Addressing the rally, Local 201 president Jeffrey Crosby stated that the key issue in the contract negotiations is "not economic...it is about whether GE will provide any hope or future for those who have retired, those who will retire from

having a job." Weyhrauch pointed out that the workforce at the Schenectady plant has been slashed from 13,000 to 2,000 over the last 15 years. In the United States, GE's personnel has been nearly halved since 1987.

GE bosses have adopted a belligerent stance leading-up to the contract talks. Rejecting union demands to guarantee a set number of union jobs, Robert Risch, a top GE manager in New England, has stated "job security is not won at the bargaining table. It is won in the marketplace." A video featuring a talk by CEO Jack Welch has been shown in all GE plants. In it Welch claims, "We are the best prepared company in the world to take a strike."

Machinists strike Allied Healthcare in St. Louis

ST. LOUIS — Voting 209 to 35, members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge 1345 rejected the company's contract proposal and went on strike against Allied Healthcare Products here June 1. Allied is a producer of gas equipment for medical purposes.

In the first days following the strike call, most delivery trucks are honoring the pickets and no IAM member has crossed the line.

"It feels good to be fighting back and seeing us all sticking together," said Modess Echeazu, an assembler at Allied for the past eight years. "We're made up of a lot of different nationalities: Russian, Indian, Iraqi, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Chilean, Italian, Vietnamese, Black, and white. None of us have crossed the line. That's what solidarity is all

CSX train crashes in Florida



Rail cars were scattered near Cypress, Florida — about 50 miles west of Tallahassee, after a CSX freight train from New Orleans derailed early June 4. One rider suffered injuries. A hydrogen peroxide leak was also found in one of the cars. CSX has recently been pushing to cut rail crews, and even forcing new hires to pay more than \$3,700 for their own training.

about," Echeazu added.

During negotiations, the company proposed that the union accept an extension of the previous contract, including a one-year wage freeze. Assemblers, who make up most of the workforce, currently make \$7.35 an hour. This proposal was also soundly defeated in a membership vote May 10.

In the latest contract proposal that was rejected prior to the strike, Allied offered wage increases of 25 cents per hour for each of the three years of the contract, plus a "sign-

ing bonus" of \$150. It also called for a raise in co-payments for health coverage for employees with dependents.

"The company ignored all of our proposals such as more money to compensate members who have to wear respirators on the job," said Lynn Brunne, a member of the plant safety committee. "We risk our health on the job and they want us to pay more out of our pockets for health insurance."

In the first days of the walkout, strikers have experienced expres-

sions of community support. The Allied plant is located in an Italian neighborhood of St. Louis known as "The Hill." A nearby bakery brought over fresh bread to the picket line on the first day of the strike. Another passerby brought a pizza to the picketers.

3M workers reject forced overtime in Minnesota

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — The week of May 11-18 was "Work Smart" week at the 3M Tape Plant here. Members of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) local 6-75 organized the campaign in the tape coating and "6-Maker" departments to let the company know they will not accept mandatory overtime as part of contract negotiations. The union broke off negotiations the week before, because the company refused to discuss pensions, wage increases, or subcontracting. Workers in the two departments refused to work the voluntary 12-hour days or weekend overtime. The union scored a victory in forcing the company to cancel weekend production.

The success of the campaign provided a boost in morale for the union and showed the workers their strength in solidarity.

Many people in the tape coating department and "6-Maker" work the voluntary weekend overtime, but have said they will not allow the company to tell them they have to work 12-hour days and the weekends.

Sue Walther, a young woman hired in January of this year said, "I want to have control of whether or not I work overtime. I think the "Work Smart" week is a way to show the company that we do have solidarity here."

Andy Buchanan, member of United Auto Workers Local 1596 in Boston; Jim Garrison, UAW member, and Angy Folkes, member of IAM Lodge 1345 on strike at Allied Healthcare Products, in St. Louis; and Jenny Benton, member of OCAW Local 6-75 in St. Paul contributed to this week's column.

— LETTERS —

From a subscriber

I bought my first *Militant* 26 years ago. I'll take a two-year paid subscription of the *Militant* over a free lifetime subscription to the *Atlanta Constitution*.

The stuff about Cuba and interviews with Fidel are my favorite parts. The *Militant's* support of Cuba since 1959 has been proven to be correct.

Please accept my donations to further the struggle.

David Bouffard
Lithonia, Georgia

Gammage update

I thought readers would like to be updated on the struggle to get justice for Jonny Gammage here in Pittsburgh.

On May 24 over 50 protesters picketed and chanted outside the graduation exercises of the University of Pittsburgh Law School where Janet Reno, the attorney General was the keynote speaker. The protesters demanded that the Justice Department prosecute all five cops who were responsible for the death of Jonny Gammage.

On May 27 close to 200 people marched and rallied in a local church in Brentwood, a suburb of Pittsburgh. This is the borough where two of the cops who killed Gammage are from and which recently promoted one of them to sergeant.

And on May 29, a federal judge ruled that three of the officers can no longer delay their sworn pretrial statements in a wrongful death law-

suit filed by Gammage's parents. Their lawsuit claims that their son's death was caused by lax municipal and police supervision, which fostered a racist environment that led to the traffic stop and the subsequent fatal confrontation.

Finally, a factual error occurred in the June 2 issue of the *Militant* with the story on the May 16 march and demonstration around the case. An officer from Brentwood tailed Gammage through that borough, but didn't pull him over until he had entered the Pittsburgh city limits, where the murder occurred.

Edwin Fruit
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Again on Labour Party

In reply to Ciaran Farrell's letter ("Wrong to vote Labour"—*Militant* June 9, 1997) I would like to make a number of observations.

An organization or a class does not as the liberal concept of history teaches, get a leadership that it deserves. In reality, leaderships are shaped in the course of the class struggle and not at all a product of its own free will or a mere reflection of a class. A class or an organization may tolerate for a long time a leadership that has suffered a complete inner degeneration; great historical shocks are required to reveal the contradiction between the leadership and the class. This is why it is necessary to find a bridge between present demands and the socialist program of revolution. This was the reason for the founding program of the FI [First International].

Workers will not spontaneously come to a clear class consciousness the tasks needed for the proletarian revolution when each time they enter class battles they are blocked by their own conservative bureaucratic machines like the British Labour Party, which depoliticize, dissipate, and demobilize the revolutionary edge of working class struggle and tailors workers' demands to the political line of the bourgeoisie.

Jonathan Silberman was right in his analysis and response to a letter questioning why workers should vote Labour. The general election provided workers and small farmers throughout Britain with the chance to kick out the Conservatives by voting Labour. It was our chance to drive out the Tories who have attacked us for 18 long years.

We know from previous experience that electing a Labour government is not an end of the matter. This is why we need a system of transitional demands and slogans which connect worker-militants in the present period and bridges the minimum program of Blair and the maximum program which promises the substitution of socialism for capitalism.

A vote for Labour in Britain is a class vote. It is a means through which the working class can battle on an electoral level against the capitalist class and their direct representatives, the Conservative Party. The return of a Labour government is the best outcome for the working class to defend itself and in which to fight to reverse the past Conser-

vative government's attacks. It opens up the prospect of a mass movement placing demands upon the new Labour government, putting the treacherous politics of the leadership who have ditched even social-democratic perspectives to the test. This will pose massive conflict that a new generation of revolutionary leaders can be created and opens up the possibility of building a revolutionary socialist party with deep roots within the working class in

Britain.
S. Cholewka
Brecon, Wales

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.

Celebrate 20 Years of the Socialist Workers Party in West Virginia

Working-Class Politics in the 21st Century

Featured speaker: Paul Mailhot
member of SWP National Committee

This special meeting will mark the beginning of a reorganization of the work of the Socialist Workers Party in the coalfields of northern West Virginia/southwestern Pennsylvania, and the closing of the SWP branch and Pathfinder bookstore in Morgantown.

Saturday, June 28

Program: 7 p.m.

Reception & Dinner 5:30 p.m.

Pathfinder Bookstore 242 Walnut St.

Morgantown, West Virginia

for more information call: (304) 296-0055

Revolt in an Argentine farming town

BY DAVID CORONA
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

CRUZ DEL EJE, Córdoba province, Argentina — In late May, this quiet farming town, 100 miles northwest of the city of Córdoba, exploded.

In response to high unemployment and intolerable social conditions, thousands of workers and farmers blocked the national highway, cutting off traffic between Córdoba and La Rioja provinces. Shoving aside local authorities and traditional leaders, they organized daily mass meetings to press their demands for jobs and social rights. The provincial government was forced to meet with them, negotiate, and promise to fulfill their main demands.

Similar conditions have sparked rebellions since April in cities across Argentina — from Cutral-Có in the southern province of Neuquén to Salta in the north. In these and other cities, unemployed workers and youth — known as the *piqueteros* (pickets) — have blocked highways to demand jobs from the government. Fearlessly fighting back police assaults, they have won broad support in the working class.

Revolt of the farm workers

On a June 6 visit, *Militant* reporters interviewed a group of five workers who told the story of the uprising here.

"Cotton, olives, tomatoes, and garlic are the main crops grown in this area," explained Claudio Mauricio Ortega, a 21-year-old piquetero and farm worker, now jobless. "I've been working in the fields since I was 11. I've worked alongside my father, mother, brothers, and sisters." The cotton farms pay 10 cents a kilo, and the owners of the olive groves pay \$1.50 per box.

"You have to work 10 – 12 hours a day to make 10 pesos [1 peso equals 1 dollar] and after the harvest is over, there's usually 2 – 4 months of dead time," he said. The majority of the population of Cruz del Eje are farm workers.

Over the years local factories have shut down, and official promises of new industrial sites never materialized. Meanwhile, social conditions have deteriorated.

"The other day Menem claimed no one is starving in Argentina," said Carolina Tello, 28, who works in a local hospital, referring to President Carlos Menem. "But as a nurse, I see malnutrition and disease every day. There is a growing number of cases of tuberculosis in this area."

"In 1996, when the new provincial government of Ramón Mestre took over they decided to cut back more sharply on education," said María Alejandra Tello, 25, a teacher. "They got rid of the seventh grade and laid off many of the teachers, so my job was eliminated."

Sick of 'welfarism'

Sergio Avila, 34, a public employee and member of the Sanitation Workers Union, explained that "the government has always followed a policy of *asistencialismo* [welfarism], which is degrading and doesn't provide lasting solutions."

Tello pointed out that "they used to try to keep us quiet by giving families a bag of groceries every 45 days, although it would



Left: Militant/Martín Koppel

Youth in Argentine town of Libertador uses slingshot in battle against May 22 cop assault on unemployed workers. Similar revolts have swept Argentina. Left: workers in Cruz del Eje describe uprising there. From left: Sergio Avila, Germán Baigorri, and Claudio Ortega.

barely last a week. The food bags would show up especially around election time. We were sick of all that. People want jobs."

"Both parties have become discredited," said Germán Baigorri, a teacher and accountant, referring to Menem's Justicialist (Peronist) Party and the Radical Party, which rules Córdoba province. Baigorri, like Avila, is one of the elected leaders of the protesters.

The Peronist movement, which has held sway in the working class and the labor movement for five decades, was founded by Juan Perón, a bourgeois nationalist figure who was president in 1946 – 55, and then in 1973 – 74. In the postwar labor upsurge that occurred during his rule, the working class organized powerful industrial unions and won substantial social concessions.

In early May, working people in Cruz del Eje, encouraged by the popular revolts elsewhere, began to raise their voices demanding jobs and threatening to block the highway. A Multisectoral Committee was formed by union officials, local capitalist politicians, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, and other businessmen to negotiate with the provincial authorities.

A local congressman showed up with the government's offer. "It was based on more of the same — welfarism," said Avila, who is also the secretary of the local Coordinating Committee of the Unemployed. "They offered more subsidies and easier credit —

if we did not block the highway."

On the morning of May 27, the Multisectoral Committee held a public meeting to propose accepting the government's offer. About 1,000 people participated and many workplaces closed down. "In my hospital almost nobody went to work," said Carolina Tello.

"The people saw this committee had struck a deal behind our backs. They rejected the offer and voted to block the highway," said Avila. "Everyone marched down to Highway 38, at the entrance to the city, and set up the barricades. There we organized ourselves: we decided which highways to block, the picket schedules, and how to organize food provisions."

"By 1:00 p.m., there were 3,000 of us," said Ortega. "I joined the revolt because we want jobs and because I can't stand to see the malnourishment. There are dozens of kids in my neighborhood who go hungry."

Highway shut down for three days

The piqueteros blocked a total of eight highways and roads. "By 5:00 p.m. that day, not even a dog could get past our roadblock without our approval," said Carolina Tello with a grin.

In addition to voting to block the roads, those at the public meeting decided to replace the discredited leadership body and elected a new one, known as the Group of 15. "The one thing we decided was there would be no politicians and no union offi-

cials on it," said Ortega. He went down the list of the new members: a farm worker, a small farmer, a baker, an accountant, a housewife, a teacher, a bank employee, a hotel owner, and a nurse, among others. Avila, as leader of the unemployed workers organization, was also elected.

Ortega continued, "When we elected a new committee, we drew up a list of demands. Then we organized commissions to come up with concrete proposals on how to create jobs, such as building a pipeline to bring in natural gas from the town of Dean Funes. About 50 farm workers took part in these commissions."

The government claims there is no money to pay for such job-creating projects. "But they keep making payments on Argentina's foreign debt, which is now \$100 billion. That debt is not only immoral, it's unpayable," Avila remarked.

Over the course of three days, there were meetings of up to 10,000 people to discuss how to proceed. The population of Cruz del Eje is 27,000. "These meetings were something totally new. Everyone raised their opinions, then we voted," Avila noted.

In Cruz del Eje the authorities decided not to assault the piqueteros, in light of the fierce resistance and public outrage sparked by such attacks in other cities. Avila said, "The government didn't unleash the police as in Cutral-Có or Jujuy because they could not agree among themselves on what to do. It's hard to repress a whole town!"

Representatives of the provincial government finally met with the protesters on May 30 and promised to come up with a plan to create jobs. At a large meeting the piqueteros decided to take down the roadblocks and give the government a deadline of June 17. The people of Cruz del Eje will hold a meeting that day to decide what to do next.



In a June 23 phone interview, Baigorri reported that on June 17, a mass meeting in Cruz del Eje voted to protest the government's inaction and block Highway 38. A caravan of 300 traveled to Córdoba, where they were met by cheering crowds of unionists and other working people. There, members of the Group of 15 met with the provincial and national cabinets, and signed an accord that was approved at a June 21 meeting of 1,500 Cruz del Eje residents.

The government committed itself to facilitate the construction of a gas pipeline, irrigation canals, and public works; increase funding for the hospital; and provide 400 temporary jobs to be distributed by the Group of 15. The accord recognizes the authority of the Group of 15, bypassing the municipal government. Implementation will be supervised by a joint commission including members of the elected Cruz del Eje representatives. "Now the struggle continues to make the government implement the agreement," Baigorri emphasized.

Jujuy workers fight for jobs, battle cops

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND DAVID CORONA

JUJUY PROVINCE, Argentina — "First the authorities pretended we didn't exist. Then they told people to be grateful to those in power for the few jobs and benefits they offered. After that they sent in the cops, thinking repression would work as in the past. But things have changed. The people have lost their fear and they won't listen to the old leaders."

Gastón Cuñado was talking to two *Militant* reporters on the night of June 4 near a bright bonfire warming a dozen young pickets stationed by Highway 9, at the entrance to San Salvador de Jujuy, the capital of this northern province. Cuñado, 20, who does what temporary work he can find in plumbing and construction, said he "joined the pickets because of the brutal repression against the sugar workers in Ledesma."

On May 31 the *piqueteros* (pickets) in the

town of Libertador General San Martín, also known by the name of the Ledesma sugar mill, had signed an accord with the government to provide 12,579 jobs in the region. The protesters lifted the highway barricades they had erected all over the province and gave the authorities two weeks to come up with a concrete jobs plan. They remained on the roadside, ready to block the roads again if necessary.

Libertador, 80 miles northeast of the city of Jujuy, is a company town. "The Blacquier family owns the Ledesma sugar mill, which is the main employer," said Ignacio Fernández, a piquetero who had worked six years there before being laid off. "Out of 12,000 jobs in the sugar industry, only 3,000 are left because of mechanization." The population of Libertador is 60,000.

Fernández added, "People work here six months during the sugar harvest, but the other six months they have to go elsewhere.

I went to Buenos Aires and worked 10 years in a shoe factory." Unemployment in Jujuy runs at 35 percent — twice the national average.

"The owners of Ledesma also own the surrounding 380,000 hectares of farmland, although they only use 80,000 hectares [1 hectare = 2.47 acres]," said Olga Márquez de Arédez, a member of the human rights group Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. "They also own the local paper mill, bagasse-processing plant, citrus products factory, alcohol plant, and fruit-packing plant."

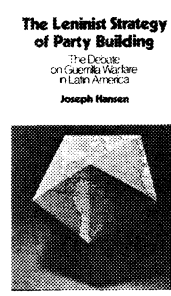
Márquez de Arédez explained that her late husband had been mayor of Libertador in the mid-1970s. "He was the first mayor to dare to ask the owners of the sugar mill to pay taxes. So in 1974 the provincial authorities sent in the police and removed him from office. When the 1976 military coup took place, 'my husband was kidnapped and

Continued on Page 7

from Pathfinder

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