

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Minnesota conference on
struggle against imperialism
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 62 NO. 18 MAY 11, 1998

'We want contract,' say unionists at Northwest

U.S. gov't 'mediation' drags into 20th month

BY JEFF JONES
 AND MARY MARTIN

MINNEAPOLIS — Faced with stalled contract negotiations, as well as recent firings and victimizations of workers by the company, 40,000 unionists at Northwest Airlines (NWA) organized in six unions have stepped up efforts to win public support and carry out defensive actions on the job in their bid for a better contract. Among these workers are 26,000 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM).

Machinists have begun informational picketing at Washington National Airport. "Work safe" efforts are under way in Atlanta, Detroit, Minneapolis, and Washington, D.C. In stations that are already understaffed, this has led to delays and cancellations of many flights, as workers decline to take potentially unsafe short cuts and refuse voluntary overtime for safety reasons. In Minneapolis, where workers are sporting union support buttons, there have been protest picnics on the aircraft ramp and whistle and hammer noise-making sessions referred to as "hammer parties" on the company's public address system. In Atlanta, workers are holding informal parking lot gatherings during break times, which they sometimes refer to as "prayer meetings." In New York, 200 Northwest employees picketed the company's April 24 shareholders meeting to demand a contract.



Militant/Rose Ana Berbeo
Members of International Association of Machinists picket Northwest stockholders meeting in New York April 24. In other cities unionists have organized noisy "hammer parties" on the job to underline their demand for a contract and are carefully following safety rules. The number of canceled and delayed flights has skyrocketed.

Northwest management has stepped up its attacks on unionized workers as contract negotiations enter the 20th month. Six mechanics at NWA's Minneapolis hub have

been fired or suspended for alleged rules violations, and 18 others received layoff notices. NWA has also announced plans to

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Warfare spreads in Kosova; U.S. gov't pushes intervention

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The conflict in Kosova between Belgrade's occupying army and police and Albanians fighting for self-determination is slowly developing into open warfare. During the last week of April more than two dozen Albanians have been killed by Serbian army units in the areas bordering Albania. The death toll now has reached nearly 150 since the end of February.

The Yugoslav Army said it waged battles with Albanian rebels on April 23 and April 27, killing 26 people who were allegedly trying to smuggle arms into Kosova. The army used artillery and helicopter gunships in the assaults. The Kosova Information Center and other Kosovar Albanians said the attacks took place six miles away from the border and many of those killed had nothing to do with the Kosova Liberation Army or weapons trafficking. Reporters in the area said occasional gunfire and explosions could be heard from a hill near the village of

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Solidarity keeps Australian wharves shut, in battle against union busting

BY RON POULSEN
 AND MARNIE KENNEDY

MELBOURNE, Australia — Approaching the picket lines on the East Swanson Dock April 24, we were struck by the sight of barricades — an upturned shipping container and massive steel "sculptures" of crisscrossed railway tracks welded together. They had been constructed by picketing

workers on the night of April 17, standing as a reminder of the confrontation when hundreds of police tried to intimidate and disperse thousands of peaceful protesters blocking the dock.

The picket camp here includes first aid, information, a kitchen, other tents and shacks, as well as a sound stage.

Defying cops and court orders, mass

picket lines continue to block access to and from Patrick Stevedores' wharves across the country in support of sacked Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) members. The company dismissed its unionized workforce of 1,400 permanent and 700 casual workers April 7 — with the open backing of the Liberal-National coalition government of Prime

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• Last week supporters of the *Militant* in Philadelphia were invited by Korean workers onto a ship docked at the Port of Wilmington, Delaware. The Koreans, who had come from New Zealand, were interested in the lockout of dock workers in Australia. In several trips to the port, socialist workers sold 10 copies of the *Militant* to warehouse workers and longshoremen who

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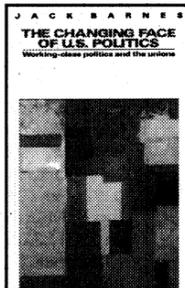


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EDITORIAL

are members of the International Longshoremen Union.

• Unionists at Northwest Airlines bought two *Militant* subscriptions during a rally outside a company shareholders meeting in New York to prepare for a contract fight and a possible strike. Another worker at Northwest bought a *Militant* subscription at an informational picket line in Washington, D.C.

• Socialist workers in Cleveland, Ohio, went to visit some of the workers who waged a five-day strike against McDonald's in Macedonia, Ohio. The workers bought five copies of the *Militant* and expressed interest in participating in an upcoming *Militant* Fund rally to tell their story.

• In Australia, supporters of the socialist

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Irish prisoners fight extradition in San Francisco — page 6

Bolivian peasants, workers strike

Cops teargassed 700 peasants in La Paz, the Bolivian capital, April 21 as they demonstrated against the Bolivian government's "ecological police" who are sent to rural areas to destroy coca crops. As the peasants continue their fight to force the government to provide compensation for the destroyed crops, the regime of President Hugo Bánzer is considering calling a "state of emergency." Trade unionists launched a general strike April 1 supporting the peasant demands as well as calling for wage increases. Peasants, striking teachers, and others have blocked major highways across Bolivia.

The Bánzer regime is destroying the crops under a "Dignity Plan," which calls for supposedly eliminating all coca trafficking in five years. Bánzer also claims peasant demonstrators are part of an anti-government guerrilla movement. "The only army existing in Chapare is the army of poverty," responded peasant leader Evo Morales. At least eight people have been killed by police during the protests and 40 farmers have disappeared in the last two weeks of confrontations. Members of the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB) engaged in the national strike in the urban areas have also come up against daily cop attacks.

Unemployment rises in Brazil

Unemployment in São Paulo, Brazil, hit a record high of 18.1 percent according to figures compiled by the labor research institute Dieese. Thirty-two thousand workers lost their jobs this March, bringing the total number of workers laid off or fired this year to 142,000.

Killing of union defender in Colombia sets off strike

Some 10,000 oil workers and other public sector workers organized a 24-hour national strike in Colombia April 20 to protest the assassination of Eduardo Umaña. Umaña was a lawyer who defended a number of oil workers at the state-run Ecopetrol company, including the former president of the public sector workers union, César Carrillo. The Bolivian government accused Carrillo of terrorist acts against the oil industry. The strike seriously impacted petroleum and gas dis-



Thousands of workers march in La Paz, Bolivia, April 1, at start of national strike demanding higher wages and supporting peasants' struggles.

tribution, Ecopetrol general manager Joachim Gómez said.

5,000 doctors strike in Nicaragua

Doctors blocked roads across Nicaragua April 23, passing out information and building support for their two-month-long strike. Close to 5,000 government-employed doctors have been on strike since February 25, demanding a raise in wages. Cops broke up the road block injuring six of the strikers on a highway 80 miles west of the capital city Managua. The eight state-owned hospitals and dozens of clinics have been virtually shut down since the strike began.

Panama banana workers strike

Workers at Chiriqui Land Co., a Chiquita Brands subsidiary, went on strike February 19 to protest the company's consideration of closing down the Puerto Armuelles operation and laying off the workers there. The strike has been a "serious interruption" to production, costing the company more than \$13 million in exports. Workers from the Armuelles division produce half of Chiquita's annual production in Panama.

Hondurans: No to U.S. execution

Some 500 people assembled at the U.S. embassy in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, April 22 to protest the execution that day of Honduran national José Roberto Villafuerte in the state of Arizona, and to demand that the U.S. government get its troops out of Honduras. Villafuerte was arrested and convicted for a murder he denied committing, without notification to the Honduran government. Villafuerte was not informed of his right to contact the Honduran consulate. About 100 protesters were Lenca (indigenous Honduran) peasants who had a sign that read "We condemn the U.S. army invasion in the indigenous territories of the Lenca people." A force of 2,000 U.S. soldiers have set up military operations in the Lenca region.

Tensions bubble in Israel over occupation of Palestinian lands

Hundreds of Israelis demonstrated April 12 to counter a government-organized event in Hebron celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel and the 1967-68 seizure and occupation of the West Bank city. Protesters heading to Hebron by bus were stopped by army personnel. When the protesters got off the busses and laid in the street to try to prevent pro-settlement forces from getting to the event, 29 were arrested. Some activists were eventually allowed to enter Hebron, where they protested peacefully. Peace Now spokesman Hagit Yaari called the celebration "a political move by the government" aimed at "provocation." About 400 Zionist settlers live in Hebron, a city of 120,000 Palestinians, guarded by Israeli troops. Some 20,000 pro-settlement rightists, many of whom were wearing T-shirts and hats proclaiming 'Hebron is Ours,' filed through the Palestinian areas. At least once, the rightists provoked skirmishes with Palestinian shopkeepers on

their way to the Hebron meeting.

In other news, on April 15 Tel Aviv released Ahmed Qatamesh, a leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who was held in Israeli jails for nearly six years without charge or trial. Under Israeli law, prisoners can be held indefinitely in "administrative detention" — a tactic used to jail thousands during the 1987-93 Palestinian uprising. At least 200 Palestinian and Lebanese people are now detained without charge. "I think they realized that prison can not change and will not change my ideas and thoughts," Qatamesh said.

Turkey gov't attacks 'Islamists'

Turkish prime minister Mesut Yilmaz, in the name of combating "Islamic fundamentalism" is implementing a series of undemocratic laws to close space for public assembly. Ankara has jailed mayors, shut down community centers, and tightened dress codes in recent months. Radio stations and other forms of media are also under scrutiny. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, mayor of the Turkish city Diyarbakir and well-known figure in the main "Islamist" party, was sentenced to 10 months in jail April 21 for supposedly "inciting hatred" in a public speech. One day earlier 16 businessmen accused of financially supporting "Islamists" were arrested in police raids. Meanwhile, opposition forces that include Deniz Baykal's Republican People's Party, are pressuring Yilmaz to call early general elections, which he agreed to hold next March.

Romanian workers protest

"What does the government think we eat?" chanted Dumitru Costin, one of 5,000 workers at Revolution Square in Bucharest, Romania, April 7 protesting the sharp decline in the standard of living there over the last two years. "Just potatoes," the crowd responded. A similar action of 5,000 took place the same day in Craiova demanding raises in wages and pensions.

Turkmen president visits D.C.

The Clinton administration hosted Turkmenistan president Saparmurat Nyazov at the White House April 23, gave him special accommodations, and a \$750,000 "grant" in an effort to win his support in a struggle over what nation will control oil-rich Central Asia. Four months earlier Nyazov made a deal with Iranian president Mohammad Khatami to set up a natural-gas pipeline between Iran and the former Soviet republic. Washington is trying to economically isolate Tehran through a trade embargo. After meeting with U.S. president William Clinton and vice-president Albert Gore, Nyazov agreed for a U.S. company to do a "feasibility study" of building another pipeline that goes around Iran, cutting through Turkey. U.S. officials reportedly made less progress in changing Nyazov's stance of refusing to sell off state-owned industries.

—BRIAN TAYLOR

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Youth in N.Y. say: 'Freedom for Kosova'

BY MEGAN ARNEY

NEW YORK — "We are here for a free Kosova and that means an independent Kosova, nothing less. We will never give up until we are free," stated Arta Haxhaj, a student at Hunter College and an organizer of a 450-strong rally and march April 24 in New York.

The protest was called by the Albanian American Student Organization, which has members at Hunter, Columbia University, Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn, and other campuses. It is at least the fifth such protest held in New York, in addition to two in Washington, D.C.

The action began with a rally at the United Nations. Participants then marched to the UN mission of the Yugoslav government.

The crowd spanned several generations of Albanians — from grade school students to veterans of the Yugoslav revolution of the 1940s. Adnan Krasniqi, a 15-year-old from the Bronx, was part of a group of high school and grade school students there. "Our country is at war for liberation," he said. "We have to do our part here." It was his fifth demonstration.

Arta Krasniqi, who came with her brother, is 13 and an veteran of about five demonstrations to "free Kosova." Arta explained that she came to the United States four years ago. In Kosova, she attended a private school in a house, where she could learn in her own language, Albanian. "If the Serbian police found out, they would've burned it down."

Rally participant Hanife Abdulai said her father, who has an ulcer, went to the hospital in Pristina, which she said has only Serbian doctors. He was supposed to go in for an operation. "Instead, he came out paralyzed." When asked why she came to the



Militant/Rose Ana Berbeo
Students demanding Kosovan independence led a 450-strong demonstration April 24 to the Yugoslav mission to the United Nations.

demonstration, she said, "I have all my family there and I can't stay home when they don't have health care, food, or a job." Abdulai added that she was part of demonstrations in Pristina in 1981.

'Everyone here is for independence'

After *Militant* reporters asked at least a dozen teenagers at the rally if they were for Kosovan independence, Arta pointed out, "Everyone here is for Kosovan independence." That became quite apparent after the speeches began, which were in both English and Albanian. "Free Kosova" and "Serbia,

your time is up" placards were among those held up at the rally. Other signs reflected solidarity with the dozens of Albanians killed by Serbian police since the beginning of this year.

Several T-shirts and hats sporting UCK, the Albanian initials for the Kosovan Liberation Army (KLA) could be seen in the crowd. Many chanted "KLA, UCK," throughout the rally.

A number of people at the rally expressed displeasure with the big-business press in the United States. "The *New York Times* writes stuff about us that is untrue. Most

Fight for self-determination in Kosova

Continued from front page

Baballog April 28, which has been under sustained attacks by Belgrade's military over the last week. About 60 army tanks could reportedly be seen moving toward border settlements near the village of Vokshi.

Washington and other imperialist powers are pushing to deepen their military intervention in the Balkans under the guise of opposing discrimination against Albanians. Their aim is to take further steps toward re-establishing the domination of capitalist social relations in Yugoslavia and other workers states in the region and tighten the encirclement of Russia.

At a meeting of the so-called Contact Group in Rome April 29, Washington got agreement from the other five governments represented there to impose a freeze on Yugoslav and Serbian assets abroad. This was a largely symbolic step, since the regime of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic has had time over the last couple of months to withdraw funds from accounts in other countries after being threatened with such sanctions earlier.

Moscow, Paris, and Rome objected to another U.S. proposal for an end to foreign investment in Yugoslavia, killing it for now. The new sanctions are to be applied by five of the Contact Group governments — those of the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Italy — that is all except Russia.

Albania's prime minister Fatos Nano had asked the Contact Group to deploy NATO troops in Albania. "The Serbian police and army are undertaking an intensive military operation in the border area with the republic of Albania at a time when the Albanian population is getting convinced its only possibility is to organize self-defense," Nano said in a letter to Italy's foreign minister Lamberto Dini. The government in Tirana, Albania's capital, placed the country's military and police on highest alert April 24 after claiming that two Yugoslav army helicopters violated Albania's airspace. Belgrade denied the charge. NATO has declined the requests to send in troops thus far, but has dispatched military advisers to Albania.

Many working people and youth in Albania do not share the consistently pro-imperialist stance of Nano's Socialist Party regime and of most opposition parties in Albania. They draw on their experiences with the occupation of the country by thousands of foreign troops from Italy, Greece,

France, and other countries last year during a working-class rebellion that brought down the pro-capitalist regime of Sali Berisha. As Artiano Dodi, a student at the University of Vlore, told *Militant* reporters in Vlore, southern Albania, March 20, "I don't know when NATO helped people fighting for their national rights. Last year foreign soldiers let the criminal gangs that they were supposed to stop roam freely and terrorize the population. If NATO troops will do the same we don't want them here or in Kosova."

Meanwhile, daily protests demanding an end to the terror by the Belgrade authorities and independence for Kosova have continued in Pristina. The Kosova Information Center said tens of thousands marched for a 19th day April 28. The Associated Press put the size of the march at 7,000. Unlike previous protests that were silent — on the request of the Democratic League of Kosova, the main political party among Kosovar Albanians that is sponsoring the actions — demonstrators chanted demands for independence and carried banners with signs like "Serb police out of Kosova."

Similar rallies are being held in other towns of Kosova. About 10,000 people attended the funeral of nine Albanians killed by the Serb army in Sllup, a village in Drecan near the border with Albania, April 26.

Kosova is a province formally part of the Republic of Serbia, which along with Montenegro now makes up Yugoslavia. The Milosevic regime revoked Kosova's autonomous status in 1989 and has ruled the province with brute military force ever since. Ninety percent of its population of 2.1 million are Albanians, and eight percent are Serbs.

The conflict flared up this year after Serb police killed 85 Albanians, a third of them children, in two assaults in the Drenica region near Pristina February 28 and March 5, claiming it attacked strongholds of UCK "terrorists." The Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) is a guerrilla group that is waging an armed struggle for independence. It has grown out of the frustration of the LDK's strategy of "passive resistance" and reliance on the "international community" for "help." Reports indicate its ranks are swelling lately, including from Albanian immigrants returning from Germany or Switzerland, and often its fighters are seen by reporters mixing it up with the local population in the rural areas of Kosova.

State media in Belgrade, trying to defend

the regime's brutality, have displayed crates of what they claim are captured weapons. Serbian television showed a man named Fadij Dabicaj who said he had been captured by the army and that he and supposedly 1,000 other volunteers had been trained in a camp in Tropoje, northern Albania. Serb media is also claiming atrocities against the Serb minority in Kosova. Tirana denies aiding the rebels.

In another propaganda ploy, the regime in Belgrade conducted a referendum April 23 on whether foreign mediators should take part in talks between authorities and Kosova Albanians. Official results said nearly 95 percent voted against the proposition on a 73 percent turnout. The Milosevic regime is doing its utmost to inflame nationalism against Albanians and exploit anti-imperialist sentiments and opposition to UN sanctions among the population of Serbia and Montenegro. A recent 45 percent devaluation of the dinar, the Yugoslav currency, that followed the imposition of an arms embargo by the United Nations Security Council has sent prices soaring, while unemployment is rising again towards 50 percent.

The demand for foreign mediation in negotiations between Belgrade and Albanians in Kosova is supported by the Contact Group and the Democratic League of Kosova. The Contact Group is made up of representatives of the six governments that are supposed to oversee the implementation of the Dayton accord. That was the treaty Washington forced the warring regimes in Yugoslavia to sign in 1995 — at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio — paving the way for the partition of Bosnia and its occupation by NATO troops.

At the April 29 meeting in Rome, the collision course between Washington and Moscow was highlighted again. Interimperialist conflicts and tactical differences within NATO were also apparent. The Russian regime of Boris Yeltsin — opposed to NATO expansion into Eastern and Central Europe — has balked at the tougher economic sanctions against Belgrade the U.S. government is seeking.

The governments of France and Italy, which have pushed for opening up Yugoslavia to their business interests, also opposed a ban on foreign investment. Paris strongly objected to another White House proposal: banning Belgrade from the World Cup soccer finals hosted by France in June. U.S. representatives did not even bring that idea up for discussion in Rome.

papers don't tell the truth," explained Adnan. Glenda, who came with her brother Luan, said that the media "calls the Albanians in Kosova terrorists." She pointed to the crowd and said, "Each person here knows someone back [in Kosova] who is in danger, or who has been killed. We are not terrorists."

High school students also initiated chants at the rally: "Albanians united will never be defeated," "Serbia, go away, Kosova is here to stay," and "We'll give up our lives, but not Kosova."

"We can no longer sit around and let this happen to our people and our lands. The European Union and the U.S. owe us now... They should allow the Albanians of Kosova to arm ourselves to fight for self-determination," Haxhaj told the crowd. She interrupted her speech to lead chants like, "What do we want? Free Kosova. When do we want it? Now."

"Albanians in Kosova will stay and resist, at any price," stated Bleron Baraliu, a student at Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn and the president of the Albanian American Students Organization. We should "denounce Milosevic's chauvinist policies to the world," he added.

A number of the speakers, however, and many in the crowd supported calls initiated by procapitalist forces among Kosovar Albanians for U.S. military intervention. "No Serbian hegemony will go unanswered," Baraliu said, later calling for an immediate U.S. attack on Serbia, "like they did in Iraq."

Representatives from Human Rights Watch and others who spoke at the rally echoed the call for U.S. and UN intervention. A couple of speakers, as well as a printed leaflet that was widely distributed at the rally, were anti-communist. The leaflet, produced by the Albanian-American Student Organization, asked participants to "call the U.S. secretary of state to say 'I called to urge for imperative tough actions on Belgrade, to say No to a new BOSNIA!; No more serbo-slav communist hegemony in the Balkans!'"

Nearly all of the speakers called on the United Nations and the U.S. government to recognize Kosova as an independent nation. A popular chant was "USA — recognize Kosova."

The last speaker was Nazmi Sejdiu, 14, wearing a red T-shirt with the Albanian double-headed eagle emblem. Sejdiu told the crowd that he and his family had just arrived from Kosova, where their house had been burned down. He explained that many of his classmates in Prekaz had been killed. He named them one by one.

Arta Haxhaj, who was also co-chairing the rally, ended the protest by calling on everyone to become more active in fighting for Kosovan independence. "Actions, not words," she said as she and other students led the rally into the streets of Manhattan.

Rose Ana Berbeo, a member of the International Association of Machinists in Newark, contributed to this article.

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George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis, and Jonathan Silberman



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Militant Fund will help upgrade subscription system

BY MARTIN KOPPEL

Two weeks remain to achieve the goal in the \$110,000 international Militant Fund campaign. In every city the slogan must be "In full and on time." Let me mention one important reason why.

Readers will be happy to know that the *Militant* is purchasing a new subscription fulfillment program to replace its existing one. The program and equipment will cost about \$9,500.

The new subscription processing program is a reliable, labor-saving, and versatile system. It is a big advance over the previous setup, which the *Militant* has used for over a decade. The old equipment was a testament to the ingenuity and hard work of volunteers who over the years patched together available computer programs to serve the *Militant's* needs. But it had its limitations, and today could be considered, well, a klunker. The new program is simple to use, produces accurate results, and will save hours of voluntary labor that can be redirected to other revolutionary political work.

This new system will be purchased in May, and volunteers will be needed through the month of June to re-enter and check all the subscription data. The project will be financed by the Militant Fund. But that means the fund goal must be reached by the May 10 deadline. This means collecting the goals in each city, which add up to \$118,750.

Making this goal is both necessary and realizable. Last week was the best to date — \$20,279 was sent in to the *Militant*. But it will take special steps in every city to collect and send in the remaining \$50,980.

"We will go over our goal of \$4,200," reports Jean Luc Duval, the Militant Fund director in the Detroit area, where *Militant* supporters are now on schedule in the campaign (see chart on this page). "And remem-

ber that our initial goal was \$3,500, which we raised midway through the drive."

Detroit's approach is simple but it's what is needed in every city to make the goal in time: careful attention to solicit contributions from everyone they know who appreciates the socialist newspaper, organizing to get enough money pledged to reach the local goal, and systematic reminders to all of them to make payments on their pledges.

Militant supporters in Detroit have been consistent in their fund-raising efforts over the past six weeks. They recently received a \$20 contribution from a co-worker of a socialist worker who was attracted to the paper's coverage on Albania. He said he "liked the paper better than the big-business papers that lie all the time." Three other co-workers have made donations as well. In addition, a letter was sent to all *Militant* subscribers, netting \$265. This includes a former subscriber who likes the *Militant's* coverage on revolutionary Cuba, and who donated \$200 and renewed his subscription after supporters met with him to ask for a contribution.

In New York, *Militant* supporters are building on the momentum of their April 25 fund-raising event, which was entitled "Company and Government Attacks Meet Growing Working-Class Resistance." Tom Alter, a meatpacker and a national leader of the Socialist Workers Party and of the Young Socialists, gave the keynote address. He described some of the unfolding experiences today of workers standing up to fight the employers, from the McDonald's strike to the militant contract fight by workers at Case Corp., as well as the percolating resistance among meatpacking workers.

Jeff Payne, a railroad conductor, spoke on the importance of the *Militant* for fighting workers. A reader for three years, he was

introduced to the newsweekly by a socialist co-worker on the job. Many workers, he said, have not yet been exposed to socialist ideas but when they get a chance to read the *Militant*, it expands their horizons. "We need to try and reach them," Payne emphasized. Paraphrasing the humorist and social commentator Will Rogers, he concluded, "I don't know much except what I read in the newspapers, and I'm glad that one of them is the *Militant*." The collection netted \$2,100 in cash and checks, and an additional \$700 in pledges.

In Washington D.C., supporters continue to reach out to co-workers, an important component of their \$3,800 goal. Janice Lynn reports that two fellow airport workers donated \$23. Both are regular readers of the *Militant* and have been discussing the current contract fight by the unionists at Northwest Airlines.

Militant readers in Washington, D.C., recently organized a successful fund-raising meeting featuring speaker Rosa Garmendía, a meatpacker from Detroit who spoke on "Cuba in 1998: workers and farmers in power confront the world capitalist crisis." An airline worker who closely followed the long fight by unionists at Caterpillar sent a message stating, "All of you at the *Militant* fought very hard for the belief of having a strong union by fighting. This was the only way the battle with Caterpillar could have been won." Following the talk, they collected \$1,340, propelling them upward in the chart.

This is the kind of work that can ensure that the international Militant Fund goal is met and exceeded. Let's step up the momentum as we drive toward the finish line!

Martin Koppel is the director of the 1998 Militant Fund.

Militant Fund Drive March 14 - May 10

CITY/COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
New Zealand			
Auckland	930	829	89%
Christchurch	700	508	73%
Wellington	115	67	58%
N.Z. Total	1,630	1,404	86%
France			
	220	150	68%
United States			
Houston	6,000	4,743	79%
Des Moines	2,500	1,940	78%
Miami	2,850	2,209	78%
Detroit	4,200	3,190	76%
Washington, D.C.	3,800	2,693	71%
Chicago	11,000	7,730	70%
Los Angeles	9,000	5,490	61%
Birmingham	2,500	1,509	60%
Seattle	7,000	4,216	60%
Philadelphia	4,000	2,394	60%
Pittsburgh	5,000	2,960	59%
San Francisco	10,000	5,505	55%
Atlanta	3,200	1,600	50%
New York	14,000	6,681	48%
Boston	6,000	2,752	46%
Newark	8,500	3,847	45%
Twin Cities, MN	7,000	2,515	36%
Cleveland	3,000	992	33%
Other	0	463	
U.S. Total	109,550	63,428	58%
Canada			
Vancouver	1,000	680	68%
Montreal	1,517	665	44%
Toronto	2,414	845	35%
Canada Total	5,000	2,190	44%
Australia			
	650	240	37%
United Kingdom			
London	600	213	36%
Manchester	400	0	0%
UK Total	1,000	213	21%
Sweden			
	700	145	21%
INT'L TOTAL:	118,750	67,770	62%
SHOULD BE:	110,000	82,500	75%

Socialists defend right to campaign in D.C.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign of Sam Manuel for mayor of Washington, D.C., successfully beat back an attempt by campus and city cops to prevent the distribution and sale of campaign material and literature on a public sidewalk in front of dorms at Howard University, an historically Black institution.

In mid-April, Howard University police-woman C.L. Price had ordered socialist campaigners to not distribute their campaign flyers to students. Standing in front of the socialists' literature table, she told students passing by not to take the material from the socialists or talk to them.

Despite this harassment, several students were attracted to the socialist campaign newspaper, the *Militant*, as well as political literature on display that included speeches and writings by Malcolm X, Fidel Castro, and Che Guevara.

The Howard University cops then called in the D.C. city police. They proceeded to order the socialists to take down their campaign literature table.

Police officer R. Foye insisted that the sale of political literature on the public sidewalk was soliciting and requires a vending license, and that that location was a "nonvending" area in any case.

In response to this incident, socialist mayoral candidate Manuel immediately sent a letter on April 16 to Mayor Marion Barry condemning this infringement on the right of his supporters to distribute campaign material in public areas in Washington, D.C. Manuel also requested a meeting with Barry to discuss taking steps to end this harassment of SWP campaigners. Copies of this letter were sent to city council members and the media.

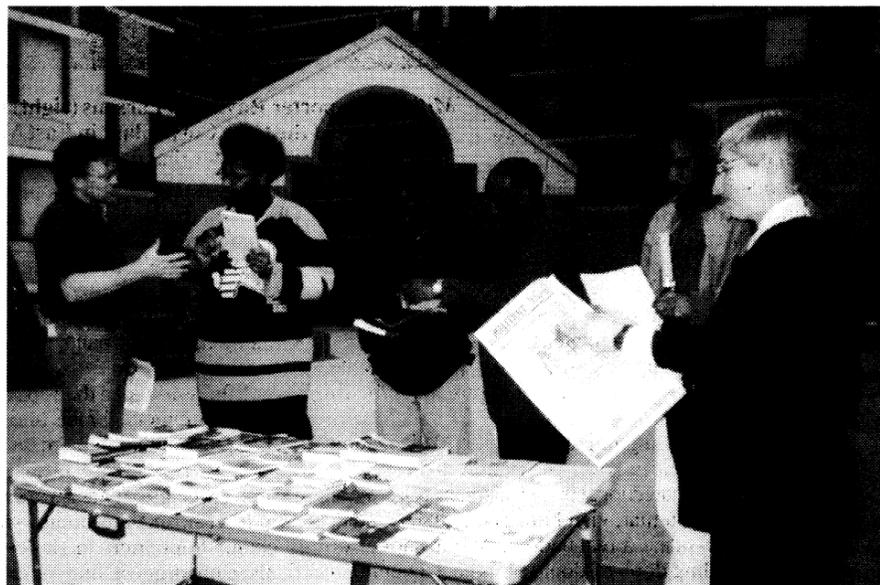
"I am writing this letter to bring to your attention a serious violation of constitutional rights and interference with the election process," stated Manuel.

"The presence [at the campaign literature table] and interference of three uniformed

guards could only have a chilling effect upon this legal activity and free exchange of political views. Among the materials distributed by our campaign," the letter continues, "are books and pamphlets explaining our political views including *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx, *Socialism and Man* by Ernesto Che Guevara, and other speeches and writings by Fidel Castro, Maurice Bishop, V.I. Lenin, Thomas Sankara and other revolutionary leaders. Rights to free expression protect the distribution of these materials."

Upon returning to this location on April 23, the Howard University police opted not to interfere with the socialists' campaign literature table. A number of students stopped by to learn more about the socialists' political ideas. A reporter from the *Community News* was on hand to cover this story.

In addition to Manuel, the Socialist Workers campaign is running Mary Martin for D.C. delegate to the House of Representa-



Militant/Brian Williams

Socialist Workers candidate for mayor Sam Manuel (center in suit) and House of Representatives candidate Mary Martin (right) discuss politics, and show campaign literature to students at Howard University dorms April 23 in Washington, D.C.

tives, Brian Williams for City Council Chairman, and Olympia Newton for City Council At-Large.

Brian Williams is a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 2609 in Sparrows Point, Maryland.

Antichoice thugs convicted of 'racketeering'

BY HELEN MEYERS

CHICAGO — On April 20 a federal grand jury in Chicago found that leading opponents of the right to choose abortion conspired to use violence or threats of violence to prevent women from using abortion clinics. Joseph Scheidler, a leader of the right-wing Pro-Life Action League, and the other defendants were convicted under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, known as RICO. Randall Terry, the president of Operation Rescue, had been a defendant but earlier agreed to pay damages in a settlement.

The law was enacted by Congress in 1970, ostensibly aimed at organized crime. RICO allows convictions of individuals and organizations found guilty of a "pattern of racketeering." Even if a defendant did not commit a crime, he is liable if it can be proved he was a member of an enterprise and some-

one in the enterprise committed a crime.

This class action suit was filed by two clinics in Delaware and Wisconsin on behalf of 900 facilities that provide abortion services. The jury awarded \$85,000 to the two abortion clinics that initiated the suit, based on the money they spent on security to combat the antichoice protests. U.S. district judge David Coar will hear arguments at a later hearing on whether he should issue a nationwide order banning antiabortion rights groups from activities such as blockading clinic entrances. He also can increase the damages awarded.

The case was originally filed in 1986. It was thrown out by a number of judges who agreed with the antichoice side and said the federal racketeering law required defendants to have a motive of economic gain. But the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously in 1994 that the statute did not explicitly re-

quire economic gain as a motive, and the suit was sent back to Coar's court to proceed.

While some hailed the decision as a victory for abortion rights, many argue that it is a violation of First Amendment rights. In a April 21 article, the *New York Times* reports that G. Robert Blakely, the Notre Dame professor who drafted the RICO act, said that it was never intended to apply to political groups. He expressed concern that the statute could be used to chill dissent by a wide range of organizations, such as labor unions and gay rights advocates.

Fay Clayton, lead counsel for the National Organization for Women (NOW), which filed the class-action suit, commented after the verdict, "Women now will be able to use the clinics without facing the ugly thugs that try to block their way." Lowell Sachnoff,

Continued on Page 14

All out for the 'Militant' sub drive

Below are a few of the recent reports on sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

"In three days we sold four subscriptions and 25 copies of the *Militant*," reports Maggie Trowe, who is part of a regional sales team visiting packinghouses and college campuses in the Midwest. Trowe said the team also sold seven subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and 26 copies of the Spanish monthly, one copy of the Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional* and three pamphlets — two on women's right to choose abortion and one on the 1984-85 Hormel meatpackers strike.

"We've been to five packinghouses, including Farm-land in Albert Lea, Minnesota; Swift in Worthington, Minnesota; John Morrell in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; the IBP plant in Dakota City, Nebraska, and the Hormel plant in Fremont, Nebraska." Trowe, herself a meatpacker, said the sales team also went door to door in Worthington and Sioux City selling the socialist press.

Socialist workers from Chicago, Des Moines, Detroit, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh are participating in the team over the course of the week. They are hitting campuses as well, and plan to wind up in Des Moines and Burlington, Iowa, and East Moline, Illinois, for the contract vote at Case Corp.

Candace Wagner, a member of the United Auto Workers in Philadelphia, said, "Last week we went to the Port of Wilmington in Delaware, where we met a member of the executive board of the International Longshoremen Union who bought a copy of the *Militant*. She got excited about the dock workers' struggle in Australia, and declared, 'We are internationalists.'"

Wagner said the *Militant* team went back to the port over the weekend and met two Koreans "who invited us on board a ship and took us into the mess room. We had a discussion about the union movement in New Zealand." The team went back a third and fourth time and sold nine copies of the *Militant* to warehouse workers and longshoremen.

Kevin Dwire in Cleveland and Margrethe Siem in Boston sent in their battle plans for making their goals in the campaign to win new readers. Here's what Dwire wrote:

"We discussed our goals at a meeting last night and approved the following battle plan:

"Supporters of the *Militant* who are members of the United Steelworkers union and the United Auto Workers may need to stay later at work to meet with people on other shifts, drawing up lists of co-workers to approach. One UAW member is taking a day off to go on a regional team. We want to get a team out to the area around Buckeye farms, a giant egg production facility where there has been a union organizing drive, and a fight against the pollution and pestilence created by the presence of several million chickens.

"The plan has us hitting several campuses — Kent State, Cleveland State, Akron, Ohio State, and possibly Oberlin College.

"We also have a team going down to the MSI strike in Marietta. A striker told us over the phone that a second plant in their amalgamated local is now also on strike. We'll get the information on that, visit both picket lines, and do some door-to-door sales. A real bedrock of our sales effort is going to be fielding door-to-door teams each evening in different working-class neighborhoods."

Siem in Boston laid out their plan to make the goal:

"The main highlights are a conference on 100 years of struggle against U.S. imperialism at Roxbury Community College; the plant gate sale to longshoremen at the shipyard; the May Day rally; the Harvard book fair; and Harvard Square street fair on May 3.

"The last weekend we will do a regional team. One supporter is laid off and can join any team here or nationally. In addition to the highlights, we will also organize daily door-to-door teams in working-class communities, and sales at campuses and plant gates. We will also continue renewal calling to subscribers with the aim of getting more contributions to the *Militant* Fund drive and to sell *New Internationals*."

Siem said socialist workers in Boston sold two subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* to members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees at plant gates, and eight copies of the *Militant* to workers at the Bath shipyard in Maine last week. "We also sold two *Militant* subs at Bowdoin College during a two-day trip to Maine," she added.

In New York, *Militant* supporters Rose Ana Berbeo and Megan Arney said they sold several copies of the paper at a protest and march for Kosovo independence April 24. "After the protesters chanted 'We'll give up our lives, but not Kosovo,' which is a popular chant with thousands of Albanian students protesting in Pristina, Kosovo, we showed them the issue of the *Militant* that carried an article on Kosovo with that chant as the headline," said



Militant supporter Raymond Parsons (right) talks with William Baker at a sale in front of the Case Corp. plant in East Moline, Illinois, April 9. Baker bought a subscription later that day.

Berbeo. One student from Columbia University, who had come from Pristina six years ago, bought a copy of the paper and pointed to the article that quoted Miljat Cakaj, a member of the Independent Students Union at the University of Pristina. "I went to school with his sister. We are using the same chants here as in Pristina."

"We sold more than \$1,200 worth of Pathfinder books and pamphlets, 17 subscriptions to the *Militant*, seven PM subs, and eight copies of *New International* at the Los Angeles Times Festival of books," said Carole Lesnick from Los Angeles. "There was an increased interest in politics this year and the booth was quite a beehive of discussion." Supporters in Los Angeles have built up steam in the campaign, selling more than 50 *Militant* subscriptions and nearly 30 subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* over the past two weeks. They have already exceeded their goal for sales of *New International* by 44 percent.

"I got an opportunity to discuss with my co-workers the challenges we face and how our [contract] struggle is linked to other fights waged by workers around the world," wrote Mary Martin, a member of the International Association of Machinists at Northwest Airlines in Washington, D.C. "We spent time on the informational picket line. One ramp worker from East Africa and a mechanic from the Caribbean decided to subscribe to the *Militant*." Martin said she also sold five Pathfinder titles to co-workers, including the new book *Black Music, White Business*.

SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE MARCH 14 - MAY 10

Week 6 should be 75%

	Militant Goal	Sold	%	PM Goal	Sold	NI Goal	Sold
Sweden*	18	12	67%	6	4	12	7
New Zealand							
Christchurch	25	23	92%	1	1	8	7
Wellington	4	2	50%	1	0	1	0
Auckland	35	17	49%	2	0	8	2
N.Z. Total	64	42	66%	4	1	17	9
Canada							
Vancouver	50	34	68%	6	3	20	12
Toronto	45	24	53%	8	4	20	19
Montreal*	25	11	44%	10	10	25	26
Canada Total	120	69	58%	24	17	65	57
Australia	16	9	56%	5	3	10	9
United States							
Atlanta*	35	28	80%	13	4	18	6
Los Angeles	100	76	76%	50	38	50	72
Miami	45	33	73%	22	16	20	25
Houston*	40	29	73%	10	9	18	14
Boston	50	35	70%	20	18	40	18
Philadelphia	35	23	66%	8	4	10	7
Seattle	70	43	61%	15	13	25	6
Washington, DC	45	26	58%	15	13	20	23
Birmingham, AL	50	28	56%	10	6	15	5
Des Moines	45	25	56%	25	14	25	7
Detroit	40	20	50%	8	3	15	7
Twin Cities, MN	70	34	49%	12	5	20	8
New York	150	70	47%	75	42	75	33
Cleveland	35	15	43%	8	6	10	3
San Francisco	80	34	43%	30	19	35	13
Newark, NJ	125	52	42%	50	16	60	35
Chicago	90	36	40%	40	15	30	16
Pittsburgh	50	17	34%	3	0	15	7
U.S. Total	1155	624	54%	414	241	501	305
United Kingdom							
London	45	23	51%	8	5	35	17
Manchester	26	5	19%	2	0	18	5
UK Total	71	28	39%	10	5	53	22
Iceland	9	3	33%	1	0	3	0
France	3	0	0%	5	0	30	10
International totals	1447	787	56%	468	271	688	419
Goal/Should be at	1400	1050	75%	450	338	600	450
IN THE UNIONS							
United States							
UFCW	15	9	60%	16	13	10	7
IAM	60	32	53%	14	8	35	16
UTU	50	22	44%	5	2	20	6
UAW	45	18	40%	10	1	22	7
USWA	55	18	33%	7	5	30	7
OCAW	27	7	26%	5	0	20	0
UNITE	10	2	20%	12	9	10	3
U.S. total	262	108	41%	69	38	147	46
Canada							
IAM	9	4	44%	1	0	5	1
CAW*	4	2	50%			3	2
USWA	6	2	33%	1	2	6	1
UNITE	2	0	0%	1	0	2	0
Canada total	21	8	38%	3	2	16	4
New Zealand							
MWU	3	1	33%			1	0
EU	5	0	0%			1	0
SFWU	2	0	0%			1	0
N.Z. total	10	1	10%			3	0
Australia							
AMWU	3	0	0%			0	0
TCFU	1	0	0%	1	1	1	0
Australia total	4	0	0%	1	1	3	0
United Kingdom							
AEEU	5	0	0%			6	0
RMT	3	0	0%			3	4
TGWU	5	0	0%			3	0
UK total	13	0	0%			12	4
*raised goal							

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

Tire workers prepare for possible strike

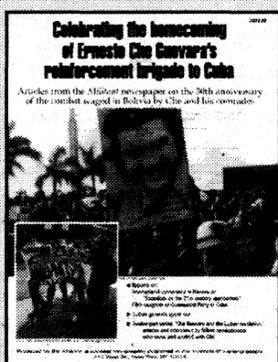
BY TIM MAILHOT

DES MOINES, Iowa — As the contract expiration date of midnight April 30 approaches, members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 at Titan Tire here are preparing for a fight.

"Every day people are wearing union buttons to work, and every Friday is T-shirt day," said Chris Boagard, a tire builder at Titan. "Flyers have been circulated through the plant, too," he explained. "Some just say 'six days left' or 'five days left,' counting down the days. Another says '164 we'll take no more.' And then a couple of times a week, everyone gathers in one of the break areas after punching out and marches out together, shouting, 'We want a pension, we want a pension.'" The current owner, Maurice Taylor, Jr. refused to include a pension plan in the contract forced on the local three years ago.

Across town, members of USWA Local 310 at Bridgestone/Firestone stand ready to help out on the picket line. On April 28 members of the local produced a flyer to be distributed throughout the plant calling on all members to show their support by joining Local 164's picket line. Titan Tire produces tires for agricultural, construction and mining industries.

Special offer: \$5 with any subscription to the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial*



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YS leader tours Seattle area for fund drive

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY LEA KNOWLS

SEATTLE — Young Socialists National Executive Committee organizer Jack Willey spent two days in Olympia and Seattle, Washington, April 23-24 talking to students and workers about his participation in a *Militant* reporting trip to Egypt and the Balkans in March. The Seattle chapter of the Young Socialists set up speaking events for Willey on two campuses.

On April 23 at Seattle Central Community College (SCCC), Willey spoke about resistance by working people and students throughout the world, focusing on Kosovo. He pointed to the growing opportunities of revolutionary organizations like the Young Socialists to build the communist movement and link up with anti-imperialist fighters all over the world, from Cuba to Ireland to Namibia.

On April 24 Willey met with students at The Evergreen State College in Olympia. Youth discussed the struggles taking place in Yugoslavia today in the context of other developments in world politics. Tim Wetmiller asked if the leadership of the Yugoslav revolution in the 1940s was Stalinist, and if so, why there was a break between Joseph Stalin in the Soviet and Josip Tito, who headed the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. He also asked "Isn't the U.S. neutral?" referring to the U.S. and other imperialist troops that occupy parts of Yugoslavia today. Willey explained that the U.S. government has troops in Yugoslavia as part of preparing for the day they will have to militarily confront and try to smash the working class there. The ultimate

target of U.S. imperialism in this intervention is overturning the Russian workers state.

A young woman came by the meeting to learn about what's happening in Yugoslavia after hearing about it the day before at a socialist literature table. She bought a copy of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* no. 10, which includes the article "Defending Cuba, defending Cuba's socialist revolution" and a three-month subscription to the *Militant*. She is especially interested in the Cuban revolution, and had questions for the speaker about the relationship between the government and working people of Cuba, the effects of increased tourism on the revolution, and whether there are people in Cuba who want the return of capitalism.

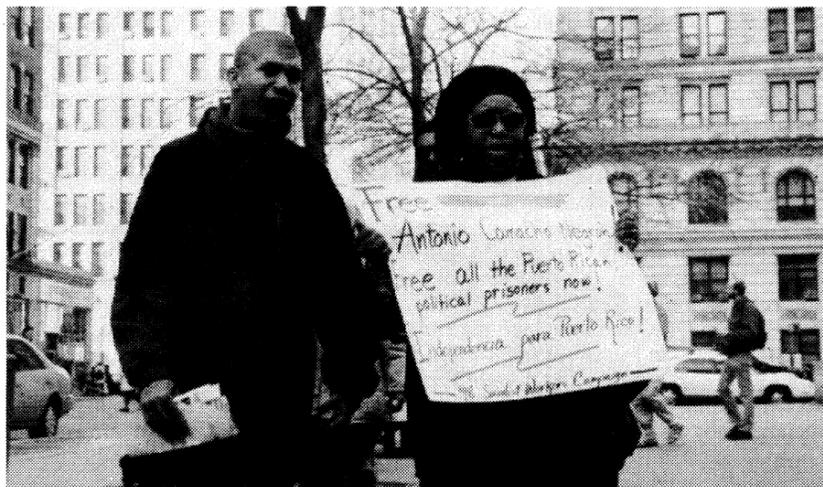
That evening Willey spoke at an event, entitled "Eyewitness report — Resistance in Yugoslavia and Albania," to raise money for the international Militant Fund Drive. The event was attended by 34 people. The discussion focused on the resistance by workers and farmers in Yugoslavia since the collapse of Stalinist regimes throughout Eastern Europe in the early 1990s and the openings to rebuild a revolutionary movement.

Members of the chapter have been participating weekly in plant gate sales with members of the Socialist Workers Party at a local rail yard and at The Boeing Company plant in Renton, Washington. Seven workers bought the paper at an April 22 Boeing plant-gate sale. The issue featured an article on the crisis facing the Boeing Company as it tries to compete in a world marked by sharpening competition. One worker from Ireland saw the lead article entitled "UK Troops out of Ireland!" and immediately stopped to talk about the recent agreement.

In building for Willey's tour, the YS organized a class April 22 entitled "Black Nationalism and Self-Determination," based on the book by communist leader Leon Trotsky. The class participants included four young people from SCCC.

A participant in the class asked what we can do to fight for Black rights today. One

Demand release of Antonio Camacho!



Militant/Brian Taylor

Young Socialists have joined in the fight to demand freedom for Puerto Rican independence fighter Antonio Camacho, who was arrested by U.S. agents for alleged parole violations two months after being released from a U.S. prison. He is now being held in a Miami jail. Camacho served 11 years behind bars as part of the frame-up of 15 *independentistas* in the 1980s. Above, pickets chant "Free Antonio Camacho!" at federal building in New York April 20.

response was to defend the rights of all oppressed, including Blacks, women, immigrants, and others, as well as participating in actions to defend democratic rights.

Members of the chapter have been working with other activists to defend affirmative action — a central gain won in the civil rights movement in the 1960s and the women's liberation movement in the 1970s. This right is currently threatened in this state by a measure that will be on the ballot in November. One Black youth who attended the class was part of the recent fight by students at Roosevelt High School against racism. Another student, Michael, went to Willey's talk at SCCC the following day to learn more about Yugoslavia, the subject of a YS-organized class earlier in the month.

Jack Willey's tour was part of the efforts of the Seattle chapter to raise money towards its \$400 goal as a part

of the YS national fund drive. Willey received an honoraria from one university for a speaking event.

Young Socialists Fund Drive April 17 - May 31

CITY	GOAL	PAID	%
Chicago	800	185	23%
New York	800	41	5%
Birmingham	200		0%
Des Moines	200		0%
Houston	300		0%
Los Angeles	350		0%
Miami	200		0%
Newark	350		0%
Philadelphia	200		0%
Pittsburgh	550		0%
San Francisco/			
Santa Cruz	150		0%
Seattle	400		0%
Twin Cities, MN	250		0%
Washington, D.C.	250		0%
U.S. total	5,000	226	5%
Goal/Should be	5,200	867	17%

Irish activists fight U.S. extradition

BY CATHLEEN GUTKANST

SAN FRANCISCO — The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals heard the arguments of lawyers for Kevin Barry Artt, Pol Brennan, and Terence Kirby April 14. The three men are appealing the U.S. court's decision to extradite them to Northern Ireland.

Along with Jimmy Smyth, who has already been extradited and is currently imprisoned in Belfast, these activists are known as the "H-Block Four." They were among a group of Irish political prisoners who broke out of Long Kesh prison in 1983. They were arrested by the FBI in the early 1990s after living in California for many years, with the British government demanding their return to Northern Ireland.

On April 7, the week before the Appeals Court hearing, Judge Charles Legge again denied bail to Kirby, Artt, and Brennan, who have been held in custody since August 1997. Supporters of the H-Block Four were able to present letters from seventeen members of the U.S. Congress, as well as letters from representatives of the Republic of Ireland, asking that the three be allowed bail as they await their appeal.

Held on a Tuesday morning, the appeals courtroom was packed with around 85 supporters, many of whom had to stand. Andrew Sommers, the national president of the Irish American Unity Conference (IAUC), was in attendance, as well as a representative of the Irish Consulate. The government of the Republic of Ireland has stated that they do not support the extradition.

Attorneys for the three men argued that the terms of the U.S. extradition treaty clearly allow for political asylum and for non-extradition if the individuals had been subject to persecution because of their religion or political beliefs, or if would face probable retaliation by authorities if they were returned. Gil Eisenberg, attorney for Terry Kirby, argued that the facts of Kirby's case indicated this would apply to the three. "Mr. Kirby was subject to continued secu-

arity harassment and brutalization from the age of 13 up until his final arrest. He was interned without trial several times. Doesn't this constitute harassment? Even Judge Legge, in his ruling, found that Terry Kirby's confession was coerced."

Supporters of the Irish activists point out that Smyth was badly beaten by prison guards at Long Kesh last year, after his extradition. Attorneys for Brennan also argued that the particular offense that Brennan was convicted of in Northern Ireland was not an extraditable offense under U.S. law.

Sara Cristeitelli, assistant director of the office of international affairs in the U.S. Justice Department, argued the government's case for extradition, citing the "fundamental fairness of Northern Ireland proceedings." All of the H-Block Four defendants were convicted by non-jury Diplock courts, set up by the British government in Northern Ireland to hear political trials. Confessions obtained by torture and coercion are legally admissible under British law.

Sommers, of the IAUC, commented after the hearing, "Today I wouldn't send a dog back to the UK. The prisoners have been used as pawns. Paddy Kelly was 35 years old when he was allowed to die of skin cancer, an easily curable cancer, because he was refused medical care in a British jail. I was at Drumcree last July, and I watched people get their heads clubbed, and civilians get shot with plastic bullets. The plastic bullets and the corrupt police and the occupying army are all still there."

A letter by 13 members of the Belfast city council was presented. Many are representatives of Sinn Fein, the party leading the struggle for Irish freedom. In the letter, they explain that the "hopelessly corrupt legal and judicial system which secured the incarcerations of Terry Kirby, Pol Brennan and Kevin Artt remains unchanged." The letter states, "It is our contention that as political refugees these men should not be returned to political opponents from whom they cannot ex-

pect justice, but in the interests of fundamental human rights should be granted political asylum in the United States."

Communist-minded youth attend Toronto conference

BY JASON PHELPS AND JOHN STEELE

TORONTO — A number of young people attending the socialist conference and Communist League convention that took place here April 10-12 spoke to the *Militant*.

"The Young Socialists invited me to come," said Edward Joaquín, a 19-year-old student and member of the 400-member Union of Young Dominicans in New York. "I have been interested in the socialist movement for about four years and am interested in the Young Socialists." Joaquín said that he was impressed with how Cuban volunteers helped Angola in face of invasions by the racist South African regime between 1975 and 1988, and by how the revolution has combated racism in Cuba.

Kolya Ramirez-Hughes, an avid reader of Pathfinder books, is 20 and a student at Sheridan College in Oakville near Toronto. He joined the Young Socialists several months ago. "I read the Communist Manifesto," he said. "There comes a point where you do something or you don't. I did some research into a lot of groups. The YS looked interesting, and was the only group that called me back to show an interest in me. They took me to the Maple Leaf picket line," during the meatpackers strike that recently ended. The Young Socialists "practiced what they preached," Ramirez-Hughes continued. "At this conference I found out what young people are doing in other countries and that

we are hooking up with others like the Irish fighters in Sein Fein."

"I met the Young Socialists at a literature table in 1996 at a demonstration against education cutbacks," said Alexandre Geoffroy, a Social Sciences CEGEP (community college) student in Drummondville, Quebec. "I support the struggle for Quebec independence," he said. "But, I joined the YS this year after I began to see things in terms of class. I like the collective thinking that has gone on here and at the first session of the convention where mistakes were corrected."

Yanick Gamelin is 20 and also a Social Sciences CEGEP student from Drummondville. He is considering joining the YS. "I have been interested in communism for two years," he explained. "Before, I saw the contradictions in capitalism, but didn't see it all in class terms. I'm doing a lot of reading and starting to discuss *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*."

Junior Portero, who is originally from Panama, is 20 years old and works as a shipper, joined the YS in Montreal in October 1997. He met the YS at a literature table set up at a Montreal subway station. "We got to talking about the U.S. invasion of Panama. I was invited to a Militant Labor Forum. I went to some other political activities. Then I was asked to join the YS. Originally I was a kind of pacifist and I actually thought that the Cuban revolution was dangerous and that Fidel Castro was a terrorist. I don't think that now."

'The Communist Manifesto' remains essential at 150

BY JULIETTE MONTAUK

Why do workers organize into unions, and how does capitalism itself constantly compel them to unite? Is it possible to end the status of women as an oppressed sex and establish their complete political, social, and economic equality? How can workers and farmers unite across national boundaries to fight for the common interests of the exploited and oppressed, and struggle for a socialist world? Anyone looking for answers to these questions should pick up a copy of *The Communist Manifesto*.

Drafted in 1847 by two young German revolutionaries, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, as the program of the first modern communist workers organization, and published as the revolution of 1848 broke out in Europe, the *Manifesto* takes up these and other questions that are as pressing today as ever. This pamphlet is essential reading for youth and workers involved in political protest actions and labor struggles — from those fighting for self-determination in Kosovo to dock workers on strike in Australia; from young workers fighting for dignity and decent working conditions at McDonald's in Ohio to those struggling for a united Ireland.

The 150th anniversary of the publication of the *Manifesto* has been the subject of many news articles in the big-business press around the world. In describing the pamphlet's popularity in its article "A Red-Letter May Day," the *Washington Post* noted, "The fact is, Marx is getting another look lately, not as an early work prescribing social policy...but as an astute critic of capitalism."

Pathfinder Press, based in New York with distributors around the world, publishes an

attractive edition of the *Manifesto*, of which some 3,600 copies were sold last year to university and commercial bookstores, as well as off tables set up by volunteers on campuses, at factory gates, and in working-class neighborhoods.

A weapon for today's working-class fighters, not an intellectual's treadmill, Pathfinder's *Manifesto* opens with an introduction by Leon Trotsky. One of the central leaders of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917, Trotsky writes, "This pamphlet, displaying greater genius than any other in world literature, astounds us even today by its freshness. Its most important sections appear to have been written yesterday."

The introduction gives a guide to the central points raised in the *Manifesto*, helping the reader get the most out of studying this essential pamphlet, one of the reasons why the edition is popular among college professors who use it in their classes. The quality and care put into the pamphlet also helps in making this Pathfinder's best seller.

In addition to the introduction by Trotsky, the pamphlet has helpful notes describing events and people Marx and Engels refer to.

A growing number of professors value the care put in the annotation, and internal design of this edition. In 1997, for instance, it was used in classrooms in some 70 campuses across the United States, for a total of more than 2,000 copies. In addition, its cover features a section of the Pathfinder Mural — an image of fighters from around the world and throughout history who bring to life every word printed in the *Manifesto*.

Seeking to take advantage of the increased opportunities on the occasion of the century and a half since first published, Pathfinder



Workers on the barricades during the Paris Commune, March 18, 1871.

is making a special push to extend the distribution of its edition of the *Manifesto*. An attractive four-color poster will be issued the first week in May to help promote sales.

Also, in the coming weeks the *Militant* will feature coverage on the political and social background of the *Manifesto* and who Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were.

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LOS ANGELES	95	107	113%	353%	113%	156%
BOSTON	50	43	86%	132%	358%	462%
WASHINGTON, D.C.	42	20	48%	145%	176%	114%
PITTSBURGH	49	16	33%	6%	131%	49%
PHILADELPHIA	55	15	27%	2%	164%	287%
CHICAGO	60	16	27%	183%	207%	115%
ATLANTA	32	5	16%	0%	475%	638%
MIAMI	42	6	14%	0%	157%	40%
TWIN CITIES	67	7	10%	0%	6%	34%
NEW YORK	190	14	7%	50%	155%	186%
DES MOINES	35	2	6%	49%	57%	1640%
NEWARK	133	2	2%	7%	29%	117%
BIRMINGHAM	50	0	0%	68%	68%	80%
DETROIT	60	0	0%	2%	2%	0%
HOUSTON	32	0	0%	3%	56%	25%
U.S. TOTAL	1166	1052	90%	69%	123%	179%
CANADA						
TORONTO	60	22	37%	73%	240%	22%
VANCOUVER	35	3	9%	20%	6%	71%
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Top: the Paris Commune, 1871, first time workers took power. Above: Fighting dock workers in Australia, 1998.

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A Bay of Pigs episode the CIA concealed

Below we print major excerpts of an article that appeared in the April 5, 1998, issue of the Cuban weekly *Granma Internacional*, titled "A Bay of Pigs episode the CIA concealed." On April 17, 1961, some 1,500 U.S.-based Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at Playa Girón, known in the United States as the Bay of Pigs, on the southern coast. The action, organized by Washington, aimed to establish a "provisional government" to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. However, the invaders were defeated within 72 hours by Cuba's militia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19 the last invaders surrendered. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY NICANOR LEON COTAYO

After having kept it under wraps for 37 years, the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has admitted that a U.S. pilot who died during the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, and whose body was preserved by freezing for 18 years in Cuba, was a member of that organization.

The CIA hid that reality in order not to admit direct participation by U.S. troops in that military attack on Cuba. In an attempt to keep that information secret, the Agency publicly erased all ties with the person it sent to die, along with others with the same military specialization.

The pilot involved was U.S. citizen Thomas Willard Ray, born in Tarrant, Alabama, on March 14, 1930. His relatives were forced to travel a bitter path, given the fact that formally neither the CIA nor the rest of the authorities in Washington admitted any knowledge about this young man.

As a result, for years no U.S. government entity requested the return of the pilot's body from Cuba, which had been located at the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Havana, with public knowledge, since 1961.

On April 19 of that year, as part of the invasion at the Bay of Pigs, Ray bombarded Cuban territory from a B-26 in the area around the Australia sugar mill in Matanzas province, and his plane was shot down by anti-aircraft batteries.

The two crew members managed to make an emergency landing, and were able to escape before the aircraft exploded and caught fire. The heads of the search operation ordered that they make the greatest effort possible to capture them alive, as was the case with the vast majority of the invaders.

That was not possible. One of them, when he realized he had been found, fired his revolver at the Cuban soldiers, who killed him when they shot back. His name was Frank Leo Baker. The second of these U.S. soldiers, upon being discovered, tried to throw

a hand grenade but was killed by several gunshots. He was Thomas Willard Ray.

It later became clear that 24 hours before these events, Richard Bissel, the CIA's chief of operations, had authorized the participation of U.S. pilots like Baker and Ray in combat actions against Cuba. But that was not sufficient to prevent the invasion by those members of the espionage agency from being defeated in less than 72 hours.

Sixteen years later, a Democratic senator from Alabama, John Sparkman, began to take steps to have Thomas Willard Ray's body returned, and the Republican senator from that same state, John Buchanan, followed that request through to the end.

In May 1978, the U.S. Interests Section in Havana informed the Cuban government that Ray's relatives wanted to have his body returned. In line with the willingness it had always demonstrated in this regard, Cuba agreed to offer immediately all the facilities deemed necessary...

On March 24, 1979, Janet Ray Weinger, the daughter of the U.S. pilot, sent a letter to her country's State Department authorizing a postmortem examination for the purpose of identifying the remains that were assumed to be her father's. The Interests Section informed Cuban authorities of this weeks later. Through the appropriate tests, on August 24, 1979, the Institute of Forensic Medicine identified the body as that of Thomas Willard Ray, and this was verified by a U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation report regarding his fingerprints.

When the Cuban government was informed by the Interests Section that the expenses for preserving the body over the previous 18 years would not be covered by the U.S. government, and therefore would have to be met by the dead man's relatives, the Cuban government decided to clear that debt for humanitarian reasons. On December 5, 1979, the body of Thomas Ray was sent to the United States.

Nevertheless, the authorities in Washington continued to deny that Ray had worked for a government agency such as the CIA.

Now, on March 15 and 18 of this year, more than three and a half decades since the Bay of Pigs invasion, news agencies reported from Washington that the CIA had admitted that this U.S. citizen was one of the pilots employed in the attack.

One of the news agencies, ANSA, based on revelations from the CIA, commented that Ray's instructions had been that if he were captured, he should say that he was a mercenary contracted by Cuban-American organizations.

That Italian news agency adds that Ray's death in combat and the subsequent freezing of his body so that it could be turned



Top: Ernesto Fernández
Above, Cuban soldiers celebrate victory at Playa Girón, or Bay of Pigs, in 1961. Right, captured counterrevolutionaries.



over when it was demanded "was the beginning of a ballet of lies. To the CIA Ray had never existed, for the U.S. government the man had disappeared into thin air, and for the relatives of the pilot, it was the start of a nightmare."

ANSA also said that the relatives' battle to force the U.S. authorities to admit that Ray had died in action has lasted until the present time, since the CIA even "created a false association which for years paid the widow a pension and subsidized the children."

The cable explained that now the relatives have been given two medals of valor and that the documents released by the CIA show that when that pilot received the order to fly out of Nicaragua in his plane, the Bay of Pigs invasion was already a failure.

This same source went on to say that sending Ray was an act of desperation on the part of the CIA, after President John F. Kennedy had denied air coverage to the invaders, in order to conceal the role Washington played in that disastrous operation.

What happened to the other two pilots that the CIA utilized in that military adventure tends to corroborate, and emphasize even more, the lengths to which that spy agency is capable of going.

According to documents that were recently declassified, Crispín Lucio García Fernández and Juan de Mata González, both Cuban-born, having flown for hours over the site of the invasion and being short of fuel, made an emergency landing at the Boca Chica air base, near Key West, on April 17, 1961.

According to what has been revealed, CIA officials only allowed them to rest for a few hours and then ordered them to return to the

secret landing strip in northern Nicaragua, from which they would get into the air war against Cuba. But during the course of that flight, the airplane fell to earth and they died.

According to the *Miami Herald*, the CIA knew of the operation that García Fernández and Mata González were to carry out, but it waited seven months before locating the site of the disaster, and at that time it decided to leave the bodies where they had been buried by the peasants, in order to avoid increasing the size of the scandal resulting from the invasion's resounding failure.

From that time on, the relatives of the two men demanded that the bodies be sent back to the United States, but it wasn't until now, 37 years later, that the CIA recognized the two as part of their troops at that time, and announced that it would try to find their remains.

What does all this mean? This history which has just been revealed by newly released CIA documents coincides with charges that Havana had been making since April 1961. Once more, it has become clear that Cuba does not lie.

Two previous examples, among many others, had already demonstrated this. On November 18 of last year, as the reader may remember, Pentagon documents — written between March and April 1962 and aimed at creating acts of provocation that would justify aggression against the island — were released to the public. These documents corroborate charges formulated by Havana in those and the following years.

Not long ago, on February 22, other declassified CIA documents made it even clearer that the project which culminated in the Bay of Pigs invasion began in 1959, and from that time on Cuban-American groups were utilized as a facade to cover up the activities of the espionage agency. This very contention was made by the Cuban government on many occasions.

Furthermore, Miami was exposed as a great center of subversive operations of all kinds against Cuba, and the radio stations financed by Washington were revealed as CIA instruments to create internal disorientation on the island. All of these things have been said here on numerous opportunities.

And now they have declassified information on the case of CIA pilot Thomas Willard Ray.

In addition to what we have said before, this information makes it possible to see more precisely the face of Cuba's main enemies and to understand how far they are capable of going.

According to the memoirs of the United States' president and vice president at the time, Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon, the decision to strangle the Cuban Revolution was made shortly after it came to power. The revolutionary breaking of Cuba's neocolonial status and the clear intention of carrying out a program of social justice to benefit the majority of Cubans were unacceptable to U.S. authorities at the time, as they still are today....

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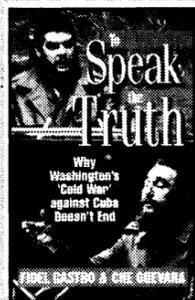
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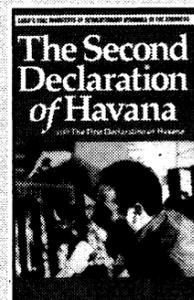
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100-year struggle for national liberation

Minnesota conference draws wide range of fighters against imperialism

BY GAETAN WHISTON

MINNEAPOLIS — A conference featuring speakers from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines and marking 100 years of resistance against U.S. imperialism since the Spanish-American War was held here April 17-18. Félix Wilson, first secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C.; Juan Mari Bras, a longtime leader of the Puerto Rican independence struggle; and Addi Batica, a veteran Filipino activist, were among the featured speakers.

The two-day event included a wide range of workshops, talks, discussion, and music. Araxes Rawi, a 23-year-old University student here whose family is from Iraq, described it as an "eye opener."

Wanderleia Barreto, one of the students who helped to organize the conference, told the *Militant*, "Several friends who took part in it told me they were very impressed. Some of the issues they were already familiar with became clearer because of the great detail and explanations of the speakers."

At the main conference session on Saturday afternoon, a message was read from Orlando Borrego and Camilo Guevara from Cuba. Both had been invited to the conference as featured speakers, but were unable to attend. Both Borrego, who is a professor of economics, and Camilo Guevara, son of the Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, lecture at the Ernesto Che Guevara Studies program at the University of Havana.

Seven academic departments at the University of Minnesota as well as the La Raza, Africana, and Asian-American Student Cultural Centers sponsored the gathering, which was entitled "One Hundred Years since the Spanish-American War: the Struggle for National Sovereignty in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines."

A committee of students, academics, and political activists united in the Minnesota Cuba Committee played an important role in helping to organize the conference. This committee included Cuba solidarity activists, Puerto Rican independence fighters, trade unionists, Native American activists, high school youth, students from nearby universities, and fighters against cop brutality.

Many groups set up displays and tables at the conference, including Pastors for Peace, Philippine Studies Group of Minnesota, National Committee for the Liberation of Puerto Rican Political Prisoners, Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialists, Northern Sun, and Socialist Action.

What can lead to national sovereignty?

The opening session of the conference Friday afternoon featured a presentation by Juan Mari Bras on the history of Puerto Rico's fight for independence. Some 50 people, most of them Puerto Rican youth, attended. Mari Bras has been a leader of the independence movement in Puerto Rico for four decades, and is currently a professor of law at the Eugenio María de Hostos School of Law in Puerto Rico.

A panel discussion on "The Origins and the Development of Resistance" to imperialism drew 150 people that evening. Three professors — David Roediger, chair of the American Studies Department, University of Minnesota; Denis Valdés, associate professor of Chicano Studies, University of Minnesota; and Gary Prevost, professor of Political Science, St. John's University — initiated a discussion that turned into a lively exchange of views among the panelists and audience on whether or not a socialist revolution is necessary to defeat imperialism.

Valdés expressed the view that there are many historical examples of anti-imperialist struggles that resulted in national sovereignty but had not taken a socialist course. During the discussion the same point was made emphatically by a Native American activist, Rene Sennegless, who stated that there was "no either-or," that is, "either capitalism or socialism," as alternatives for the oppressed countries and oppressed nationalities today. She argued that a return to the "spiritualism" of the original Native American communities that predated the advent of the Europeans was an alternative for them.

Prevost, whose topic was "How and Why the Cubans Made Their Revolution," pre-



Right: Militant/Tony Lane
Many panelists pointed to Cuba's internationalist role. Above, members of Cuban anti-aircraft contingent at ceremony marking their departure from Angola after defeat of South African invasion. Right, conference speakers, left to right, Addi Batica, Félix Wilson, Juan Mari Bras, Kathryn Sikkink (partially shown), and Mary-Alice Waters.

sented a different viewpoint. He described the example of the Cuban revolution: how it started with significant immediate economic reforms like the lowering of rents and distributing land to the peasants and moved through successive measures that made deeper inroads into capitalist property relations and began charting a socialist course.

In the discussion another participant, Javier Aravena, pointed to the overthrow of the government of social democrat Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973 as an example of why only a socialist revolution like Cuba's can stand up to imperialism. Aravena, who had visited Argentina in 1997, related the social devastation there created by the belt-tightening measures aimed at working people demanded by imperialist investors, and explained that Argentina, like other countries in Latin America, still face a struggle for national independence.

A musical event and social sponsored by La Raza Student Cultural Center and featuring the band "Proyecto la Plena" ended the first day of the conference.

Broad range of workshops

Eleven workshops, including on the U.S. embargo against Cuba; Puerto Rican political prisoners in U.S. jails; youth activities in solidarity with Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines; women in colonial society; the Cuban revolution and the international struggle for Black liberation; and the Filipino struggle were held Saturday morning.

Gustavo Machín de Hoed, the Third Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington D.C., presented the workshop on the U.S. embargo. He explained to 45 participants how the Cuban people have been able to resist the economic difficulties they face while holding onto the social gains of their revolution.

A workshop featuring the Philippine Study Group of Minnesota took up the call for a June 12 protest at the state capitol against a plaque honoring Minnesotans who fought in the Philippines. The Philippine activists are protesting the plaque as inaccurate and derogatory for the way it depicts the crushing of the Philippine independence struggle by U.S. troops at the turn of the century. Addi Batica, a full-time organizer for the Nationalist Youth in the Philippines from 1970-72, outlined the history of U.S. oppression of the Philippines. In 1973 Batica was arrested and imprisoned by the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos.

The main session on Saturday afternoon was devoted to "The Struggle for National Sovereignty Today." Félix Wilson, Juan Mari Bras, and Addi Batica appeared with Kathryn Sikkink, professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press. That session also became a discussion among panelists and participants on



whether the example of the Cuban revolution points the way forward in the struggle against imperialist domination.

Waters pointed to the deepening crisis of capitalism "that increasingly destabilizes the world financial structure of imperialism." She referred to the recent statement by Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, that the financial crisis shaking Asia — and shattering the lives and livelihoods of millions — is an "important milestone" in the "seemingly inexorable trend toward market capitalism." This, she told the 110 participants in this session, "is indeed a milestone. But not one that marks progress toward peace and prosperity. It marks the inexorable march of world capitalism toward social devastation. We are already witnessing the rise of new fascist movements," she noted, "and the opening guns of World War III have already been heard in Iraq and Bosnia."

Batica spoke of Washington's seizure of Puerto Rico and the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. He described how freedom fighters in the Philippines had established their own independent government following the 1896 defeat of Spain, only to have Washington wage a war to crush it and make the Philippines a colony of the United States, until independence was finally won in 1946. He said the Filipino war of resistance was Washington's "first Vietnam."

Mari Bras noted that Puerto Rico is the last colony left of the most powerful empire in the world, and argued the case for independence from U.S. rule. The Puerto Rican *independentista* also defended the Cuban revolution, which he hailed as "the seat of the revolution in Latin America." Mari Bras encouraged participants to attend demonstrations in Washington, D.C. and in Puerto Rico July 25 to demand freedom for independence fighters imprisoned in U.S. jails and for self-determination for Puerto Rico. A similar demonstration is also planned at the United Nations in New York that day.

How Cubans ended U.S. domination

Wilson explained that the Cuban people put an end to U.S. domination of their country through the triumph of the revolution in January 1959. He described the internationalist course Cuba has charted ever since. "We have sent thousands of people to Africa and Latin America to help Third World countries face the needs of their people," he said. Wilson described the determination of the Cuban people to resist the economic embargo and other pressures Washington imposes on the island.

Sikkink presented a paper arguing that national sovereignty does not supersede human rights. She pointed to the importance

of networks of human rights activists around the world, and cited how recent dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, and El Salvador abused human rights and, in the name of national sovereignty, protested international efforts to aid victims of this abuse.

In the discussion, Sikkink sharply disagreed with Waters and Mari Bras that the Cuban revolution is an example to be emulated in today's world. She counterposed South Africa as the model for those fighting for human rights and democracy, pointing to its "inclusiveness."

A number of questions were directed to Juan Mari Bras. What are the immediate prospects ahead for the Puerto Rican independence struggle? What is the main division in the U.S. ruling circles between those who favor statehood and those who favor retaining the "commonwealth" status? What stands in the way of the U.S. rulers annexing Puerto Rico as a state?

Several questions were also asked of Addi Batica. Has the Philippine fight for national sovereignty been completed? What have been the effects on the people and the environment in the last two decades?

Félix Wilson and Mary-Alice Waters were asked many questions about the Cuban revolution in the world. Why does the U.S. persist in the economic embargo after 37 years? Is the course of Cuba with respect to tourism and joint capitalist ventures the same or the opposite

from the course of Russia and the Eastern European countries?

The question and answer period was followed by summary remarks of the speakers. Both Mari Bras and Wilson pointed out that Cuba has been able to break out of the orbit of imperialist domination. Wilson stated, in addition, "Every country will have to find its own way. Each struggle will have its own characteristics."

Waters returned to the debate on human rights and Cuba's example. "Human rights is a class question," she stated. Waters pointing to the working-class struggle over the centuries to defend and advance human dignity and freedom, as opposed to the "human rights" pretensions of capitalist regimes the world over. "Cuba is not a model," Waters noted. "We don't need models. But it is an example for all of us." She pointed to Cuba's contribution to the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

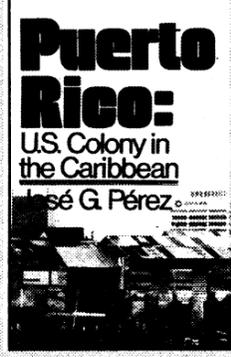
Waters reiterated a challenge she made in her initial presentation: for participants in the conference to act on the fact that serious mass struggles were on the agenda in the coming years in the oppressed countries and the imperialist countries alike.

In their summary remarks, all speakers called for the decolonization of Puerto Rico and an end to the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

To wind up two days of activities, many conference participants stayed afterward to attend a meeting with Daniel Correia, a representative of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) in Brazil. He gave graphic descriptions about the land occupations in Brazil. Film footage about the attempts by the government and landlords to disrupt and destroy the landless movement in Brazil was shown. The meeting for Correia was organized by the university's Spanish-Portuguese Department and La Raza Student Cultural Center.

Gaetan Whiston is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

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After brief strike, a contract vote at Case

BY RAY PARSONS

EAST MOLINE, Illinois — United Auto Workers (UAW) members at Case Corp. went on strike for a short time April 23. In less than two hours, a tentative agreement was announced and the picket lines were brought down at plants in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota.

The 3,300 unionists have been working without a contract since March 29.

Details of the pact were not released. UAW officials reported that negotiations over local issues are continuing in Milwaukee, and ratification votes are to be held later in the week.

Workers were prepared for the strike. In East Moline, the Local 1304 union hall was packed for update meetings April 23, hours before the 10:30 p.m. strike deadline set by the UAW. Candy Hurst, who has worked at

Case for one year, said, "We don't want to strike but we don't want to work without a contract, either. We have to force the company's hand."

Don Summers, another Local 1304 member, said, "I'm ready to strike. I can't see them taking away what they want to take away."

Other workers told the *Militant* that a work slow down since the expiration of the last contract had led to a large backlog of more than 100 combines waiting for parts.

Rodger Davidson, who has worked 27 years at Case, said, "We've got community support — more than we've ever gotten before" all over the city.

Several food service workers employed at the Case plant by the subcontractor Aramark, and also organized by the UAW, stopped by the union hall before the strike

to find out what was going on. One said, "They're trying to bust the union here. The company has said they have people waiting to cross the picket line."

Early on in the negotiations Case hired Milwaukee-based Strom Engineering to recruit strike breakers. Ads appeared in newspapers around the Midwest offering jobs to "help temporarily staff a company during a potential work stoppage, caused by a strike."

Union members have not seen the tentative agreement yet. A Local 807 official told the Burlington, Iowa, *Hawk Eye* that the negotiations had stalled over changes to the piece-work pay system used at Case. The company has sought a six-year contract, cuts in retirement benefits, increased mandatory overtime, and a deeper two-tier wage scale, keeping newly hired workers at lower pay for five years. Currently new workers start

at 70 percent of regular wage rates, and reach wage parity in three years.

Some unionists were disappointed at going back so soon. "We should have stayed out longer and put more pressure on the company," said William Baker, a machine operator at the East Moline plant. "They have an order from Russia for 500 combines here, waiting to get out. Even two or three days on strike would hurt Case bad. They needed to come out with a definite offer before going back."

Case is an international producer of construction and agricultural equipment. In 1997 the company made \$403 million profit on revenues of \$6 billion.

Ray Parsons is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 310 in Des Moines, Iowa.

Meatpackers strike for dignity in Florida

BY SHIRLEY PEÑA AND BILL KALMAN

PLANT CITY, Florida — Some 540 workers at the Smithfield/Lykes meat-processing plant walked out and shut production down at midnight on April 12. The workers are organized by United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 1625, whose contract expired on March 29. Plant City is just outside Tampa.

"They say we get paid too much, but we say let's open their books!" Patsy Addamson told the *Militant*. Addamson is a machine operator with over 11 years at the plant.

Lykes Meat Group, a division of agribusiness giant Smithfield Foods based in Norfolk, Virginia, purchased the plant from Lykes Brothers in 1996. Smithfield, a major hog producer, pork processor, and meat marketer, continues to manufacture and sell Lykes brand processed meats under a trademark agreement. The most recent offer from company negotiators was a 21-month contract with no pay raises. The union is seeking a three-year contract with 25 cents a year in raises over the life of the contract. Workers start at \$5.75/hour, and average around \$8/hour; workers in the maintenance department top out at \$11.55/hour.

Though this was the first strike ever at

the plant, this was not the first strike for all workers on the picket line. Darrin Dimmock said he was on strike months at the Boeing plant in Wichita, Kansas, several years ago. Roy Lowe was part of a work stoppage at Colt Firearms in New Haven, Connecticut.

"They are out to break the union," Lowe declared. "If they succeed, it won't stop here. Just like if we win, it won't stop here."

The number of pickets range from 50 to 150 per shift. Production has ground to a virtual standstill. The company, which has seen only nine workers cross the picket line, has been trying to hire scabs through temp agencies. Union members have organized to reach these workers at the company "hiring sessions," explaining the issues in the strike. The local's strike newsletter reported that many were convinced to not accept employment at Lykes during the strike. Pickets at the gate also reported that some of the temporary workers who crossed the line joined the 24-hour picket line after spending eight hours inside the plant.

Union officials report that many unionists from the Tampa area have come to Plant City to show support for the strike, including members from the Teamsters union, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, postal workers, the Steelworkers



Militant/Shirley Peña

Strikers at Lykes meat-processing plant in Plant City, Florida, on the picket line.

union, Ironworkers, and the Bakers and Confectionery Workers union.

Several of the strikers sitting around a picnic table at the plant-gate told the *Militant* that Smithfield had steadily increased the line speeds inside the plant, which before the strike pushed 10,000 pounds of meat through every 30 minutes. Workers loaded 960 pounds of hot-dogs onto pallets in 12 minutes. Shirley Dixon, with 15 years at Lykes, explained how working in the freezer for six days a week, 10 hours a day, takes its toll on people. In spite of that, "We get no sick pay, no sick days. Get three write-ups for absenteeism and they fire you. The company tries to mess with your dignity."

José Chávez, a Mexican worker with seven years at the plant, said the company began to hire non-English-speaking Latino immigrant workers, presumably to act as a strike-breaking force. "But the company pushes the workers who don't speak English and they push the line speed and the amount of work," Chávez said. Almost all of the Spanish-speaking workers are now enthusiastic supporters of the strike.

Bill Kalman is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1128; Shirley Peña is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 368, both in Miami. Dale Younce of Tampa contributed to this article.

Amtrak workers protest firing in Washington, D.C.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Some 145 engineers, conductors, car cleaners, and other union workers on Amtrak's northeast corridor have signed petitions calling on the company to reinstate Tom Headley. A longtime socialist and union activist, Headley was fired in November 1996. He is a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) and the United Transportation Union (UTU). The BLE has filed an appeal for Headley's reinstatement. Headley is widely known on the job as a socialist and for distributing books and pamphlets by revolutionaries and working-class fighters. Several workers have pointed to this as the real

reason Amtrak wants to get rid of Headley.

Headley was charged with failing to clear a spring switch, which resulted in the derailment of an engine. He was found guilty at a company hearing commonly referred to by workers as a "kangaroo court." The hearing, also called a trial, is completely run by the company. The accused worker is allowed to have a union representative present. A review by Amtrak's labor relations department upheld the company's ruling.

Headley's case is now supposed to go before the public law board, a three-judge panel consisting of a company representative, a union representative, and a third member paid by the government under provisions

of the Railway Labor Act to officiate and cast the deciding vote in these proceedings.

Amtrak workers in Boston, New York and Washington, D.C., where Headley worked, are petitioning in support of the fired unionist. Ten workers also wrote personal letters to Amtrak chairman George Warrington.

In his letter, Thomas R. Jones, a former local chairman of the International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers Local 1050, noted the severity of the discipline meted out to Headley for a minor infraction. "I have observed more than enough to know that his [Headley's] dismissal was unfair and a departure from past and current Amtrak practice in such cases," Jones wrote. The initial

investigation of the incident by Amtrak acknowledged that no personal injuries, equipment damage, track damage, or delays to trains resulted from the derailment.

Amtrak has attempted to justify its dismissal of Headley based upon "a record of prior infractions." This charge rings hollow with most workers. Engineer William Broadus with 14 years at Amtrak wrote, "I don't agree that Mr. Headley is unsafe or unreliable, and I would not hesitate to work with him as an engineer."

Warren Wills, a 22-year car repairman, pointed to the prejudicial conduct of Amtrak's investigation. "The company appears to have decided to assign guilt to Mr. Headley before the formal investigation was even held," he wrote. Wills noted that the conductor and assistant conductor were not even called in as witnesses.

A brief submitted by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers pointed to many violations of its own rules by the company in this case. The spring switch, where the derailment occurred, had no directional targets on it. This is in violation of the Northeast Operating Rules Advisory Committee, which governs Amtrak's train operations in the region. Directional targets on switches indicate to crews which direction of movement tracks are aligned.

Headley was held out of service prior to a full investigation, a violation of the company's agreement with the BLE. In its appeal the BLE points out that Headley was denied due process and given unequal treatment in the company's "premeditated hunting expedition." Co-workers who support Headley's fight are continuing to circulate petitions and get protest messages.

Sam Manuel is a member of the UTU at Conrail in Washington, D.C.

Miami: hundreds protest INS cop raids

BY JANET POST

MIAMI — Twenty-three immigrant workers were arrested and jailed in a brutal Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) raid here April 23 at the First Paragon Floral company. Four vans and 10 cars of armed INS and Border Patrol police swarmed the factory, beating and arresting workers from Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, and elsewhere.

The cops stormed into the plant demanding work documentation. According to the *Miami Herald*, one pregnant woman fainted after being shoved to the floor by the agents. Others were forced to sit on the wet floor of the plant, and some were reportedly held in a 34-degree cooler for 35 minutes.

Outside the factory, workers avoiding arrest received further abuse. On WSVN-TV news the INS agents were shown beating a woman in the back seat of a cop car and others on the ground. The use of force inside

the plant was captured on company in-house cameras. That footage has yet to be released.

Lillian Soza, 37, described the raid to the *Miami Herald*: "Suddenly, out of nowhere, men, dressed in black surrounded us, and locked all the doors.... They were shouting at us, 'Get down, get down on the floor now.' Soza did not obey the order. "The officer raised his hand and said, 'You better obey or I will smack you down.' I said, 'Go ahead try it. I am legal and will sue you if you do.'" In response, Soza continued, "An officer grabbed me by the hair and threw me to the ground and kicked me in the back. Why am I treated like a wild animal?"

A worker was also arrested for pulling agents off Alina López, a 26-year-old company supervisor and legal resident from Cuba. López is charged with resisting arrest and assaulting the police.

Of the 23 workers taken to the Krome Detention Center here in Miami, 13 were

released. Three are permanent U.S. residents, eight are eligible for work permits, and two posted \$5,000 bonds.

Demonstrations immediately followed the raid — at the plant, at the INS Miami headquarters, and at the Krome Detention Center. Recognized political figures, including Alex Penelas, the Cuban-American mayor of Miami-Dade County, and Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, have been forced to object to the brutality of the raids, though not the right of the INS to carry them out.

In a discussion with *Militant* reporters on the Miami raid, Francisco Javier Garza of the Farmworkers Association of Florida in Homestead, said that 64 farm workers had been recently arrested while boarding buses in the fields around Homestead, an agricultural area just south of Miami.

Janet Post is a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 368.

Australia wharfies

Continued from front page
Minister John Howard — and brought in nonunion labor.

On Thursday, April 23, a Federal Court upheld an earlier court order to reinstate all the sacked workers, known as wharfies. This was watched live on TV by millions and received with jubilation on the picket lines. A festive air permeated the picket lines all weekend, with unionists and other supporters and well-wishers "from every walk of life" coming and going, as Peter Blight, a sacked MUA member who has worked on the wharves since 1958, put it. More than 200 of the sacked wharfies at East Swanson staged a symbolic march April 25, flanked by similar numbers of supporters, up to the locked main gates of the Patrick terminal. Victorian Trades Hall Council secretary Leigh Hubbard told the crowd, "This dispute will be won here on the picket lines.... Court decisions do not solve industrial disputes.... Next election, make sure we get rid of this government!"

Immigrant Maori construction workers spent all that day preparing a *hangi*, a feast prepared in an earth oven, for the hundreds of pickets.

The standoff has continued, with the reinstatement order frozen while Patrick Stevedores appeals to the High Court. Peter Reith, federal minister for workplace relations, called reinstatement "unworkable." Prime Minister Howard said, "Court decisions will come and go but nothing will alter the determination of my government to reform Australia's waterfront."

Through these delaying tactics, as Blight

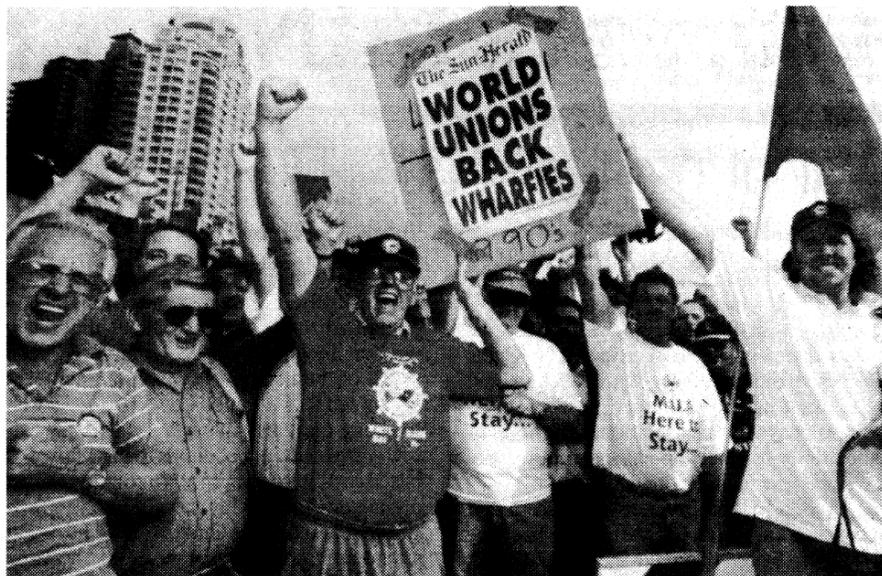
said, "they've been trying to weaken our resolve but it's only got[ten] stronger." On April 23, the Labor shadow minister for transport, Lindsay Tanner, called on Howard to act on "one last chance to pull the nation back from the brink of a massive social confrontation."

National Farmers Federation president Donald McGauchie upped the ante April 20 by threatening to use farmers' trucks to bust through picket lines, saying all that was needed is "guts." Two days later, MUA national secretary John Coombs met with farmers representatives, at a meeting chaired by New South Wales Labor premier Robert Carr, and offered to allow containers with perishable farm products through the picket lines. A similar meeting was held a few days later in Fremantle. The National Party urged farmers to reject this offer in order to bust the MUA on the wharves.

In Brisbane, police waded into picket lines April 21, arresting and charging 184 people.

In a reflection of the pressure for wider action over the last week, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) threatened industrial action in response to attacks on the right to picket. Doug Cameron from the ACTU national executive reported to the Port Botany picket line April 22 that the top union body had decided to "defy bad laws...as the African National Congress did in resisting apartheid in South Africa."

On the night of April 17, police attempted to break up the main picket line on the Melbourne docks, only to be met by swelling numbers of disciplined but determined



MUA members and supporters celebrate April 21 after judge ordered reinstatement of 1,400 dismissed workers.

protesters. Brendan Mooney, a builder's laborer from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, described how he and about 40 other CFMEU members had rushed from their nearby construction site to reinforce the wharfies' picket line. "The cops really tried to block us," he said. "They even had a helicopter, with a searchlight beamed on us. But nothing was going to stop us."

Doug Bailey, a young sacked MUA straddle carrier driver, described the impact on the picketing wharfies and their massed supporters of the arrival of thousands more building workers. With the reinforcements, Bailey said, he "went from hopeful to confident." The workers carried the day.

Reflecting the rulers' growing concern about prospects for the attempt to break the MUA, stocks have taken a dive at Lang Corporation, Patrick's parent company.

Despite court delays, determination on the picket lines remains as strong as ever. In Sydney on April 28, some 3,000 union delegates and activists met to discuss continued support for the MUA. May Day marches around the country are expected to have the biggest turnout in years.

Ron Poulsen is a member of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union. Marnie Kennedy is a member of the Australian Workers Union.

Craft union voted in at Alaska Airlines in Seattle

BY MARK SEVERS

SEATTLE — On March 29 the National Mediation Board announced that the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) had won the election to represent approximately 1,000 aircraft mechanics and cleaners at Alaska Airlines. The vote totals were 496 for AMFA and 225 for the International Association of Machinists (IAM). The IAM had previously represented these workers. Ramp workers and customer service employees are still represented by the Machinists union.

AMFA describes itself as "a craft-oriented independent aviation union... not an industrial catch-all union like the Teamsters, TWU [Transportation Workers Union], [or] the IAM." AMFA, which says 98 percent of its members are mechanics and 2 percent are cleaners, argues that it is impossible to successfully negotiate contracts that include workers who perform different jobs for the same airlines without mechanics sacrificing their wage gains to other workers.

The representation vote took place in the context of ongoing contract negotiations between the IAM and Alaska bosses. The mechanics and cleaners will continue to work under the terms of the IAM contract until a new one is negotiated with AMFA.

AMFA had tried unsuccessfully on two previous occasions to organize workers at Alaska Airlines. The latest attempt to replace the Machinists began about eight months ago when some mechanics approached the Teamsters union shortly after the strike victory at United Parcel Service. Teamsters officials said they would not become involved in an election that would replace the IAM because all AFL-CIO affiliates have an agreement not to "raid" organized workplaces. Many mechanics who backed AMFA pointed to a lack of communication from IAM officials and a backlog of more than 600 grievances — some up to 10 years old — as reasons for dissatisfaction with the IAM. A large number also believed they could secure better contract terms for themselves, separate from the ramp workers.

Willie Kask stated, "I voted for AMFA because I thought confidence in the IAM had eroded so much that we never would be able to get enough people into the union and organized to fight for a better contract." Alaska is an open shop, meaning workers are not required to join the union.

During this period, IAM supporters among mechanics and ramp workers have engaged in a lively debate over the need for solidarity among mechanics, cleaners, and ramp workers. Don Gibson, a mechanic at Alaska stated, "I believe unionism is about unity. The workforce goes as one against

corporate greed and to share in the corporate wealth they refuse to share. Some AMFA supporters explained to me that mechanics deserve all the raises and ramp workers deserve none. I believe this type of thinking is what started union busting in the 1980s."

The Machinists officialdom at first discounted the seriousness of the AMFA challenge and ignored offers from IAM members to campaign among the rank and file to meet this threat. Eleventh-hour visits by a

number of district and international officials had little effect.

IAM officials informed all workers three days before the ballots were mailed out that they had petitioned the National Mediation Board (NMB) to include the cleaners in the election. The NMB approved this petition over AMFA's objections. The 205 cleaners at Alaska are now represented by AMFA.

There has been a lot of discussion among IAM members assessing this development. Many felt the way ramp worker and IAM

member Dale Bartley did when he stated, "The only one who won in this election was the company. AMFA did great harm not only to themselves but also to the ramp service agents and cleaners. They split and reduced our ranks and lessened our bargaining power in the middle of the contract talks."

Mark Severs is a member of IAM Local Lodge 2202 at Alaska Airlines. Guy Blue, also a mechanic at Alaska, contributed to this article.

Midwest meatpackers face immigration raids

BY HARVEY McARTHUR AND MAGGIE TROWE

SIOUX FALLS, South Dakota — A team of socialists touring Midwest meatpacking plants has learned of several raids by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) cops in recent months.

Workers at the shift change at the large Swift hog plant in Worthington, Minnesota, which is organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), said dozens of Latino workers were arrested by the INS in February.

After an INS visit to the plant and a sweep of a nearby trailer park, more than 50 workers were arrested, most from the third shift cleanup crew. Some workers said they thought the immigration cops had received a list of workers to seek out from Swift management. UFCW members reported that a number of those arrested were Nicaraguan-born workers who have recently lost the temporary residence visas granted in past years. Many of the 1,400 workers at the Swift plant, the largest employer in the town of 10,000, are immigrants from Latin America, Laos, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and other countries.

Sixty miles west of Worthington on Interstate 90 at the John Morrell plant, we learned of another recent raid. On March 16 INS agents arrested 18 workers leaving the plant, where some 3,000 UFCW-organized workers are employed in pork and lamb slaughter and processing. The 18 were accused of using fraudulent immigration documents.

The Sioux Falls *Argus Leader* reported that according to U.S. attorney Karen Schreiber, the arrests "were the result of regular spot checks of employers that typically attract such workers."

The INS established an office in Sioux Falls last year, as well as in Des Moines, Iowa. There was already an INS office in Omaha, Nebraska.

The *Argus Leader* also reported two instances of INS arrests of immigrant workers traveling on Interstate 90, one in March and another in April, resulting in 31 arrests and deportations. These stepped-up INS raids are part of the Clinton administration's attacks on immigrant workers.

The Socialist Workers campaign team, which had a large sign reading "Equal Rights for Immigrants" in English and Spanish, received an enthusiastic response from many workers. In three plant gate sales at Swift, Morrell, and the Farmland pork processing plant in Albert Lea, Minnesota, workers bought one subscription to the *Militant*, two

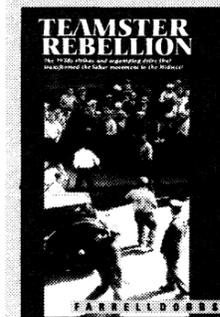
to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and a total of 24 single copies of the publications.

Supporters of the *Militant* went door to door through the large trailer park across the street from the Worthington Swift plant after the plant gate sale. Several people invited them in to sit down and discuss politics. Residents there bought three *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions, a *Militant* sub, and a copy in Spanish of the pamphlet *Abortion is a Woman's Right to Choose*.

Maggie Trowe is a member of UFCW Local 1149 in Marshalltown, Iowa, and the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate.

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Workers at NWA fight for a contract

Continued from front page

move some maintenance work to other stations. The company alleges that some mechanics, with the cooperation of some pilots, are deliberately canceling flights by writing up airplanes for minor repairs or otherwise carrying out a slowdown. Since April 17 Northwest has had to cancel between 70 and 100 flights on each of at least seven days, well above the typical 20 flights canceled daily for mechanical reasons. Northwest has now stopped posting on its computer system the number of flights canceled daily for mechanical reasons.

Vince Bazzachini, president of IAM Local 1833 in Minneapolis, told the press that some workers fear for their jobs because managers have "engaged in an inquisition of their employees in an attempt to scare them into a contract posture more favorable to the company. In that situation the survival instinct kicks into high gear" and employees become more vigilant about company and government regulations to avoid being disciplined, he said.

Bazzachini gave a recent example of five managers watching one mechanic do a bore-scope inspection of an airplane engine. Extra managers have been brought in and assigned one to each overnight maintenance crew, rather than to three or four crews as previously. "I think their plan is to zoom in on Minneapolis to see if they can break us first, then they hope the other [stations] will fall," Bazzachini said. The company has launched an attempt to blame the IAM for the length of the negotiations.

Union members have been protesting the drawn-out negotiations for months now in many ways. Hundreds of IAM members participated in a March 30 "union picnic" protest on the ramp at NWA's Minneapolis-St. Paul hub, and hundreds more rallied on the sidewalk outside the terminal on April 1, marking 18 months without a new contract.

Some mechanics have also started wearing "out of order" adhesive tape on their uniforms, normally used to label parts in need of repair. A few unionists have started wearing "No Lorenzo" buttons or T-shirts, referring to Frank Lorenzo, the former owner of the now defunct Eastern Airlines. Some 8,500 members of the IAM struck Eastern Airlines in March 1989. After 22 months the machinists defeated Lorenzo's drive to create a nonunion airline and drove him out of the airline industry, sticking to their vow to stay out "one day longer." Eastern went out of business, but for a layer of

workers the strike stands as an example of workers fighting back instead of accepting the bosses' dictates.

On April 24, at NWA's maintenance base in Atlanta, hundreds of IAM members came to work not wearing the mandatory company uniform, in protest of the company's stance in the contract negotiations. They explained to the company that their new uniform issue had not been delivered.

All of the nearly 40,000 union members organized in six unions at Northwest Airlines are currently in contract disputes following years of concessions to the Midwest-based airline. Among the flight attendants, organized in the Teamsters union, a green ribbon campaign is under way. The flight attendants explain this stands for "Show me the money," their demand for a wage increase. Negotiations between NWA and the pilots, represented by the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA), are also in mediation. ALPA is currently conducting a mail-in strike authorization vote of the 6,100 flight crew members at Northwest. NWA's latest proposal is a 10 percent cut in wages for as many as 40 percent of the Northwest pilots who fly narrow-body aircraft.

The latest wave of resistance began April 9 when 26,000 members of the International Association of Machinists learned that con-

tract negotiations, which are being held in secret with a federal mediator, had been suspended for two weeks. The April 22 *Star-Tribune* of Minneapolis reported that the "prevailing belief among the rank and file is that Northwest has offered a four-year deal to the IAM that would raise wages 2 percent, but not retroactively, with an additional 2 percent bonus in the third year."

The IAM members, who include aircraft cleaners, clerical workers, gate agents, ground operations or ramp workers, aircraft mechanics, and plant maintenance mechanics, received a bulletin from IAM District 143 president Keith Foster, which stated, "While we do not believe that negotiations are yet at an impasse...the gap between us remains significant and we do not believe that the Company's proposal on increases in wages and pension benefits is at all acceptable to our membership."

Airline workers' labor contracts and actions suffer the constraints of the Federal Railway Labor Act, which allows the government powers to step in on the side of big business to thwart strikes by railroad and airline employees through endless mediation and "cooling off" periods.

The Clinton administration invoked the Railway Labor Act against airline workers most recently against the American Airline

pilots, who after months of failed negotiations declared a strike Feb. 15, 1997. Within four minutes, the U.S. president signed an order for them to return to work, alleging a supposed threat to commerce.

In the last round of contracts, negotiated in 1993 by unions at NWA, large concessions involving cuts in pay, vacation days, and work rule changes gave NWA \$897 million over three years. At the end of the concession period, wages and holidays returned to the 1993 level. Most employees then received a pay increase of between 1.37 and 3 percent, which has been the only increase since October 1991.

About 200 workers, including ramp workers, ticket agents, flight attendants, and pilots, picketed the April 24 shareholders meeting of NWA, in New York City. Most of the participants in the informational picket were Northwest workers from the three area airports. They were joined by two dozen workers from Alitalia Airlines, who have been locked out for nearly five years, and workers from the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union.

"I'm here because I want a contract," said Ed Rhodes, a plant maintenance mechanic at JFK. "The company's making millions and everything's going up except our wages."

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MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ALABAMA Birmingham

Puerto Rico's Fight for Independence. 100 Years of Resistance to U.S. Imperialism. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$4.

The Fight for Jobs and a Clean Environment: What Stand Should Workers and Youth Take on Kyoto Treaty? Speaker: Kristin Meriam, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Alabama. Fri., May 15, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6:30 p.m. Dinner \$5. Program: \$4. Both events will be held at 111 21st St. S. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

CALIFORNIA Los Angeles

Japan's Deepening Economic Crisis. Speaker: Eli Green, Socialist Workers Party candidate for lieutenant governor of California, member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

MASSACHUSETTS Boston

The Socialist Alternative in the 1998 Elections. Speaker: Andrea Morrell, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress, 8th Congressional District. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St.

Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

NEW YORK Brooklyn

Independence for Puerto Rico. Free Antonio Camacho and All Puerto Rican Political Prisoners. Speaker: Wendy Lyons, Socialist Workers candidate for attorney general of New York, recently attended congress of Federation of Pro-Independence University Students in Puerto Rico. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 59 4th Ave. (corner of Bergen). Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

TEXAS Houston

Palestinians Struggle against 50 Years of Israeli Oppression. Panel discussion. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 380. Donation: \$4. Tel: (713) 847-0704.

PENNSYLVANIA Philadelphia

Oppose U.S. Threats Against Iraq: Support the Struggle of the Palestinian People against 50 Years of Zionist Occupation. Speakers: Linda Mamoun, president of Lebanese Student Organization at University of Pennsylvania; Peter Seidman, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Auto Workers. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m.

1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

WASHINGTON Seattle

Israel: A Colonial-Settler State. A 50-Year History of the Fight of the Palestinian People for their Freedom. Speaker: Alaric Dirmeyer, Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Vancouver
Stop Racist Attacks! Defend immigrant rights. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. (Between 23rd and 24th Ave.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
Support the Aboriginal Land Rights Struggle. Featuring the video Jabiluka: The Struggle of the Mirrar People against the Jabiluka Uranium Mine. Fri., May 8, 7:00 p.m.
A New Stage in the Irish Freedom Struggle. Fri., May 15, 7:00 p.m.
Both events to be held at 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

CORRECTIONS

The article "Cuban officials, Puerto Rican independence fighter to speak at Minneapolis conference" in *Militant* issue no. 16 incorrectly identified Félix Wilson as the second secretary of the Cuban Interests Section. He is the first secretary at the diplomatic office.

The article "Boeing to eliminate 20,000 jobs and push for speedup" in the same issue wrongly implied that The Boeing Company announced Dec. 16, 1997 that it would lay off 12,000 workers. Company officials say some of those job cuts will be through "normal attrition" — that is, not replacing workers who retire or quit.

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

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CALENDAR

MICHIGAN

Detroit

From the Ground Up — Saving the Black Farmer. National Black Farmers Conference. Sat., May 9. For more information, contact Dewayne Boyd: (313) 961-5670.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Stop 100 Years of Servitude (1898-1998). A conference marking the centennial of U.S. Colonization of the Philippines, U.S. colonization and its impact world wide, specifically in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. June 12-14, 1998. Hunter College, West Building, 6th floor (southwest corner of Lexington Ave. & 68th St.) Presented by Gabriela Network in cooperation with the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños. For more information, call (212) 592-3507. Fax (718) 740-4750.

Reassuring, no? — Dutch officials ordered an inquiry into claims of radioactive contamination from a 1992 crash of an El Al cargo jet. El Al denied there was anything



Harry Ring

dangerous aboard, declaring that "depleted" uranium is widely used in the industry as wing ballast.

As ugly as it gets — A new Delaware law provides that the letter "Y" be included on the drivers' licenses of people convicted as sex

offenders. The designation will be explained on the back for the benefit of other states where a new license might be sought. The sponsor of the law declared that "it follows you forever. This is another tool in the toolbox for police."

Chew on this one — A Stockholm dental clinic patient got a taste of cutbacks in Swedish health benefits. He agreed to pay about \$5,000 for a set of teeth implants. When the upper jaw was done he paid half the bill. But as final adjustments were being made in the lower jaw implants, he found he couldn't make immediate payment. The lower teeth were extracted.

Murder for alleged profit — A recently disclosed R.J. Reynolds

Tobacco memo confirmed that its scientists had discovered a way to remove carbon monoxide from cigarette smoke, but the findings were suppressed. Scientists later said the company feared disclosure would bring pressure to use a safer but more expensive process. Also, scientists had to use the word "alleged" each time they referred to carcinogens.

Eh? What noise pollution? — In a 1965 University of California survey, 9.2 percent of folks 50 and over said they experienced difficulty hearing. In a similar 1994 survey, 17 percent said they had hearing loss.

Plain talk — Industries that use petroleum in their products are en-

joying the drop in oil prices. A Tupperware spokesperson said it would lower their production costs. Will that mean lower prices for Tupperware products? Response: "We price to what the market will bear."

See, the streets are paved with gold — The House of Representatives voted \$500,000 to help the town of Ardmore, a wealthy little Philadelphia suburb, to redo its downtown sidewalks. The plan is to install sand-colored sidewalks and gray granite curbs. They say it will look like the walks in Florida's Disney World.

X-rated — Although they're few in number, tourists are welcome at the Nevada Test Site, where A-

bombs were exploded above ground, and then underground, from 1951 to 1992.

Visitors are assured they won't be exposed to dangerous radiation, provided they don't disturb soil behind signs warning of contaminated areas. Children under 14 not admitted.

Talk about sick — The Energy Dept. plans to build a Nevada Test Site museum in Las Vegas — 75 miles away. There'll be artifacts and film footage of above-ground blasts.

"And," burred a PR person, "We can sell souvenirs. Coffee mugs, T-shirts and earrings — Fat Man and Little Boy earrings." (Fat Man and Little Boy were the light-hearted handles of the U.S. bombs dropped on Japan in WWII.)

May Day originated in U.S. class struggle

Below we print an excerpt from *American Labor Struggles: 1877-1934* by Samuel Yellen. The chapter is titled "Haymarket," and describes the working-class mobilizations of May 1886, and the subsequent ruling-class reaction. The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions — the forerunner of the American Federation of Labor — had called for strikes and mass actions beginning May 1, 1886, demanding the eight-hour work day.

On May 3, police attacked a Chicago rally supporting the eight-hour day, killing at least four pickets at the McCormick reaper plant, where 1,400 workers had been locked out

at the Lake Shore, the Wabash, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, and other freight yards in protest against the hiring of non-union labor. With such a mass movement on foot, Chief of Police Ebersold apprehended difficulties and called upon the entire detective and police force to be on duty Saturday, May 1; and his force was augmented by Pinkerton detectives previously engaged by the railroads, and by special deputies, many of whom were selected from the Grand Army of the Potomac. In spite of these martial preparations, Saturday passed peacefully. The city, with hundreds of factories idle and thousands of strikers and their families promenading the streets, had a holiday appearance. There were processions and mass meetings, addressed in Bohemian, Polish, German, and English.

Faced with a strike of unexpected power and solidarity, the leading business men and manufacturers united to crush it. On April 27 the Western Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Association, with 60 firms represented in person and 160 by letter, was formed in Chicago for combined action. The chief iron and steel foundries, as also the copper and brass, declared that they would reject the eight-hour demand. A session of the principal planing mills was held on the morning of May 1 at the office of Felix Lang to determine procedure against the strikers. In the evening these were joined at the Sherman Hotel by all the lumber yards and box factories, and the lumber industry in concert decided to grant no concessions to the workmen.

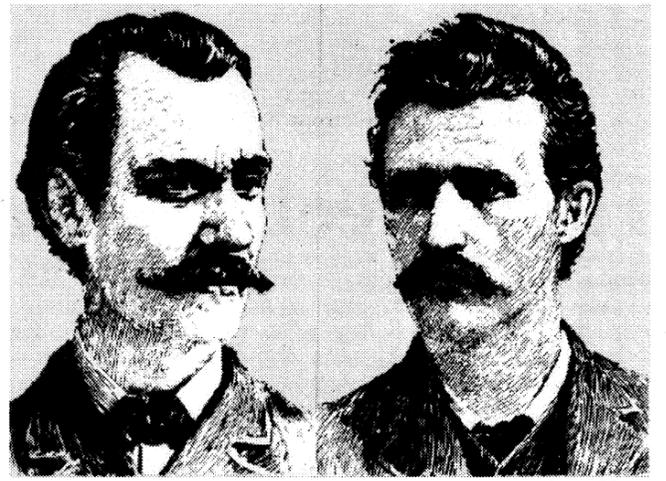
Nevertheless, by Monday, May 3, the spread of the strike was alarming. Lumber-laden craft blocked the river near the Lumber Exchange, and 300 more vessels with cargoes of lumber were expected to join the idle fleet. The building interests, then enjoying a boom, were suddenly paralyzed. The great metal foundries and the vast freight yards were tied up. To break the strike aggressive action was needed. On Monday police clubs began to scatter processions and meetings.

That afternoon serious trouble arose at the McCormick Harvester Works. The soreness here was old. It had begun in the middle of February, when Cyrus McCormick locked out his 1,400 employees in reply to a demand by the men that the company quit its discrimina-

tion against certain of their fellows who had taken part in a former strike at the plant. In the following two months strike-breakers, Pinkertons, and police had attacked the locked-out men with wanton savagery. [Writers E.L.] Bogart and [C.M.] Thompson say of this period:

The police force of Chicago reflected the hostility of the employing class, regarding strikes per se as evidence that the men had placed themselves in opposition to law and order. During these months of unrest it became a pastime for a squad of mounted police, or a detachment in close formation, to disperse with the billy any gathering of workingmen. The billy was an impartial instrument: men, women, children, and shop-keeping bystanders alike composed its harvest. It was the police, aided by the "Pinkertons," who added the great leaven of bitterness to the contest. To the workingmen they furnished concrete and hateful examples of the autocracy against which they protested.

But a greater police provocation was reserved for Monday afternoon, May 3. At this time 6,000 striking lumber-shovers met near Black Road, about a quarter of a mile



Albert Parsons, left, August Spies, right, were two of the Haymarket martyrs who were executed in 1886.

north of the McCormick works, to appoint a committee to be sent to the lumber-yard owners. While August Spies was addressing the meeting, a group of some 200 detached itself spontaneously from the crowd of strikers, marched to McCormick's, and heckled and attacked the scabs, who were just then leaving for their homes. Within 10 or 15 minutes there were more than 200 policemen on the spot.

Meanwhile Spies, who was still speaking, and the strikers at the meeting, seeing patrol wagons and hearing gunfire, started toward McCormick's, but were met by the police. The clubs and guns broke up the crowd; the police fired deliberately into the running strikers, so that at least four were killed and many wounded.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

for many months (described below). A demonstration called for the following evening at Haymarket Square was attacked by cops. A dynamite bomb was thrown into the police ranks by an agent provocateur, killing seven cops, and the police opened fire on the crowd. Four workers were killed, with others injured. Almost immediately every prominent labor leader in Chicago was arrested. Eight men, all anarchists, were framed up for murder and convicted without any proof. Four were hanged and one committed suicide before his scheduled execution; the others were pardoned in 1893. This was the origin of May Day as an international workers holiday. *American Labor Struggles* is copyright © 1936 by Sam Yellen. Reprinted by permission from Pathfinder Press.

BY SAMUEL YELLEN

The strike opened in Chicago with a display of great strength and much promise of success. Nearly 40,000 workers walked out on May 1 as prearranged, and the number jumped to 65,000 within three or four days. Nor was this the full strength of the movement in the city: more than 45,000 were granted a shorter working day without striking, the bulk of them — 35,000 — workers in the packing-houses. In addition, there were already several thousand men on strike

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEK/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 11, 1973
HOUSTON — On Wednesday, April 11, more than 600 Black longshoremens did not report to work at the Port of Houston. They went instead to the Houston city council chambers to protest the beating by Houston police of four members of their union, International Longshoremen's Association, Local 872. The beatings had occurred the previous Friday evening, April 6, outside the union hall. The police maintained that the four men had interfered with a cop who was writing a ticket, and that they had resisted arrest. The four were charged with aggravated assault on police officers, disorderly conduct, and interfering with a police officer. According to Reuben Wheatley, president of ILA Local 872, the police cursed the arrested men and taunted them with racist slurs while taking them to the main police station. When they arrived at the station, the men were beaten again.

I talked to Wheatley later in his office about the sentiment of the union membership. He told me that "Friday night the men didn't feel like working anymore until something was done about it.... If we get a man seriously hurt or killed on a ship, they don't work the ship that day. We have that policy. I had to go out of town, but when I got back, the men still wanted something done. I suggested that the executive board

go down to city hall, but the men said "No! We're all going down there." So we all went.

THE MILITANT

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

May 10, 1948
The witches' brew called the Mundt Bill — a straight dose of poison for American civil liberties — has been reported out and plans are underfoot to steamroller the measure through Congress. This bill concocted by the House Un-American Committee aims at driving the Communist (Stalinist) Party and its "front" organizations out of political life. In addition to that, under its broad language, persecution can be started of all working class, liberal, and trade union organizations.

The bill defines the Communist (Stalinist) movement as an international conspiracy in the service of a foreign (Russian) government to set up a totalitarian dictatorship in this country and lists punishment for all organizations coming under the bill.

"Subversive" citizens, as defined by the bill, are forbidden to hold any federal job or even to apply for a passport. The Communist Party must register the names and addresses of all members with the Attorney General. All so-called communist front organizations must keep a full membership list in their offices for the inspection of the FBI at any time.

FOR MORE READING BY PATHFINDER

American Labor Struggles: 1877-1934
SAMUEL YELLEN
"Brings to life the great labor conflicts of American history, from the railroad strikes of 1877 to the San Francisco general strike of 1934" — Howard Zinn, author, *A People's History of the United States*. \$21.95

The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs
EDITED BY PHILIP S. FONER
The life stories of eight working-class militants railroaded to prison or the gallows for the 1886 Haymarket bombing in Chicago. Written from prison, these accounts present a living portrait of the labor movement of the time, as well as the lives and ideas of these fighters for workers' rights. \$15.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12 or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

RICO suit no help for women

Is the recent Federal court decision, *NOW v. Scheidler*, a "major victory" for women's rights fighters? Will it help to advance the struggle of those on the front lines of defending abortion clinics against rightist attacks?

The answer to both questions is no. The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances law, and court injunctions will not stop attacks on abortion clinics. In fact, the RICO law, which contains sweeping conspiracy provisions, can and will be used against the labor movement, political parties, pro-choice fighters, and others.

RICO is ultimately directed against the labor movement. "Racketeer" is the word the bosses and other enemies of the labor movement use to describe trade unionists. Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian revolution, noted in 1939, "Under conditions of the bourgeois regime, all suppression of political rights and freedom, no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning, in the end inevitably bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced elements."

The working-class and socialist movements have a long and rich history in combating government frame-ups and fascist and semi-fascist groups. Experience has demonstrated that militant mass countermobilizations can isolate, demoralize, and deal real damaging blows to rightist forces. Supporters of women's right to choose proved the point a few years ago. After Operation Rescue (OR) forces

blockaded a clinic in Wichita, Kansas, for seven weeks in 1991 — with the support of the city government and cops — thousands of young women and others mobilized to defend abortion clinics across the United States, preventing OR from repeating their success. In doing so, they dealt a political blow to the rightists' attempt to posture as the defenders of "civil rights," and reinforced the majority support for the right to choose.

Women's rights are under attack not only from rightist thugs but by the government, with new laws every month that attempt to restrict access to abortion. Restricting or denying the right to choose is part of the ruling-class campaign to heighten the burden on women and undermine their self-confidence. The aim is to reinforce the second-class status of women by taking away a woman's most fundamental right — control over her own body. Affirmative action, the right to abortion, and increased access to birth control are not just important for women. They help unify and strengthen the entire working class.

Women's rights fighters do not need new laws to advance their struggle. There are already laws on the books against murder, assault, and bombings. Use of these laws also makes it easier for rightist groups like Operation Rescue and the Pro-Life Action League to pose as victims of undemocratic laws. The best way to counter these groups is to mobilize in the streets in defense of the clinics and against government attacks on the right to choose.

Help meet 'Militant' sales goals

Continued from front page

newsweekly have sold 19 copies and four subscriptions to the *Militant* on the picket lines of the locked out dock workers. *Militant* supporters in New Zealand have sold more than 20 copies at the wharves and naval docks there.

These are a few examples of an increasing number of workers, including those involved in battles, who are buying the *Militant* every week. Bundle orders of the *Militant* have gone up, and distributors are ordering extras.

Each week brings new confirmation that the political retreat of the working class around the world has ended in the United States and in most other imperialist countries — from the 560,000 workers who paralyzed Denmark with a general strike beginning April 27 to the picket lines and "hammer parties" by unionists involved in the contract fight at Northwest Airlines.

To take advantage of these political developments in the class struggle and the wide range of sales opportunities, we urge our readers to join an all-out campaign to meet the goals of winning new readers to the socialist press by May 10. Over the next week and a half supporters of the socialist press face a serious challenge to sell 613 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 179 subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 181 copies of *New International* to accomplish this aim. This goes hand-in-hand with appealing to *Militant* readers and others to go over the top on the \$110,000 Militant Fund by the same date.

Socialists are among a much broader layer of working-class fighters who seek each other out and offer solidarity to each other's struggles. The unique contribution that socialists offer these fighters is the possibility to broaden their scope through reading Pathfinder books and the revolutionary press. This material is the only place that workers, and young people attracted to the working class, can learn from the true history of the struggle of working people and the kind of revolutionary perspective and organization that are necessary to fight effectively and win.

New International, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial* are indispensable for gaining an internationalist perspective — defending immigrant rights and explaining the common struggle and class interests of workers in every country. The reports on pages 5 and 11 from the sales team to the packinghouses in the Midwest region of the United States brings this home, as worker-correspondents not only sold the paper, but reported on several raids by immigration cops there in recent months.

That's why it's important for supporters of the socialist press to achieve the sales goals. Success will mean having effectively reached out to working people, winning a new layer of readers, and broadening the influence of the communist movement. Participating in political events like conferences celebrating 100 years of struggle against Yankee imperialism, and the upcoming national Black farmers conference in Detroit (see page 12) are part of organizing a successful sales campaign.

This effort requires mapping out battle plans — unionists drawing up lists of co-workers to approach on the job, paying careful attention to organizing daily sales teams, taking time off work to join regional sales teams, hitting the college campuses, and going door to door in working class neighborhoods. Organizing active supporters of the communist movement to staff bookstores, make phone calls, and help free up members of the Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialists, and communist leagues to go out on sales teams can play an important role in achieving success in this subscription drive. We also encourage our supporters to call *Militant* subscribers to renew their subscriptions, read *New International*, and make a contribution to the Militant Fund. Some subscribers may decide to join the sales campaign, if asked.

Organizing along these lines can ensure that supporters of the socialist press meet all the goals of the sales campaign and fund drive by May 10. This is part of helping give shape to a political vanguard in the working class.

Contract fight at Northwest

Continued from Page 12

They gave us worthless stock and now it's worth a couple of bucks and that's supposed to be our raise? I don't think so." This refers to the public position of NWA that raises aren't necessary in the new contract because the stock received by workers in exchange for 12-15 percent pay cuts during the last contract has gone up in price.

Billy Dymond, an aircraft mechanic for 18 years, commented, "We collectively gave back more than \$800 million and saved them from going bankrupt. They made a net \$600 million last year. There's no gratitude to the employees for what they've done. There's a lot of hostility toward the mechanics [by the company]. There's been a lot of firings."

Also present at the action were a handful of counter pickets, who silently faced the protesters holding pro-company signs. Northwest Airlines declined to comment on the relationship of these protesters to the company, but one protester acknowledged to a reporter from the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* that only one of them was a shareholder and the rest had been paid to show up.

Workers at Northwest's Los Angeles International station are also discussing the possible need for a strike. Ramp worker Sylvester Eddings said, "Having experienced two strikes during my airline career, I would say a

strike is never easy, especially when it's a lengthy one. But as union members the adage still stands: 'Where's there's unity there's strength.'"

Michelle DiBenedetto, another ramp worker, added, "As union sisters and brothers we need to stand together. We have already given concessions and are without a contract for nearly two years. Northwest is not showing us any respect as union workers and as laborers. A strike means we are putting our foot down and want equal rights. Nationwide we are becoming stronger."

Rugambwa Smart, an aircraft mechanic at Washington-National, put it like this: "At NWA this past week, we have witnessed the true essence of the human spirit, where all of the contract employees have decided to pool their energy and effort.... After all, it is us the workers and our families who made the sacrifices for the past few years, so why can't we truly enjoy some of the results of our sweat?"

Jeff Jones is a member of the IAM at Northwest in Minneapolis. Mary Martin is a member of the IAM at Northwest in Washington, D.C. Northwest workers Rose Ana Berbeo and Olga Rodriguez in New York, Mark Friedman in Los Angeles, and Tony Lane in Minneapolis contributed to this article.

U.S. Senate readies approval of NATO expansion

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The U.S. Senate discussed at the end of April the Clinton administration's proposal to expand NATO into Eastern and Central Europe. The debate points to a rapid approval of the plan, which was built on Washington's success in humbling its imperialist allies in Europe, who are also competitors, over Bosnia and assuming the dominant role in the imperialist intervention into the Yugoslav workers state three years ago.

Comments from some of the critics of the White House plan point to nervousness among ruling circles that NATO expansion into Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic will accelerate the U.S. rulers' collision course with Moscow. "What worries me most is that NATO expansion needlessly risks poisoning Russia's relationship with the United States, and increases the odds that Russian ultranationalists will gain power in the post-Yeltsin era," said Sen. Paul Wellstone, a Minnesota liberal Democrat.

There are also rightists among the bourgeois opponents of NATO expansion. "In what may prove the most demented and reckless act of our era, the Senate is about to give war guarantees to Poland," said ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan in a column in March. "By bringing into a U.S. alliance lands once part of the czars' empire, we are rubbing Moscow's nose in its Cold War defeat.... Facing NATO to the west and Islam to the south, an encircled Russia, like Weimar Germany, is seeking friends where it can find them, in Tehran and Baghdad."

"Stop worrying about Russia," was the headline of a column by U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright in the April 29 *New York Times*. "Russian leaders don't like NATO enlargement," Albright acknowledged. "We have disagreements on matters like Iraq and Iran — but these have everything to do with the way Russia has traditionally pursued its interests in that part of the world." Dismissing critics, however, she stated, "We finally have a chance to build a Europe whole and free. But we will not do that by making NATO the last institution in Europe to keep the Iron Curtain as its eastern frontier."

Washington is also pressing hard to build a zone of influence and domination along Russia's southern flank. Reporting on the summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) — made up of 12 of the former 15 Soviet republics — an April 29 report by CBS Market Watch noted, "Conference attendees were not in a hurry to demonstrate their adherence to the process of integration, and still less their loyalty to Moscow, meeting observers said.... On the eve of the meeting [Kazakhstan president Nursultan] Nazarbayev abruptly refused to sign the prepared northern Caspian Sea agreement. The rebuff serves as a further reminder to Moscow that its neighbors are not going to side with Russia in dividing the oil and gas fields in the region...."

"Russia should also not expect Turkmenistan to use the services of Gazprom, the Russian gas monopoly.... The Gazprom rebuff may have stemmed from Turkmen President Saparmurad Niyazov's April 23 meeting with President Clinton in Washington, at which the United States authorized a \$750,000 grant for a feasibility study for building a gas and oil pipeline on the Caspian Sea bottom without the participation of Gazprom."

Abortion clinic ruling

Continued from Page 4

an attorney representing the clinics, called the decision, "a tremendous victory for women in our country."

Some rightist groups used the decision to paint themselves as the defenders of civil liberties. Scheidler, speaking to the press after the decision, said, "I'm going to talk all over the country. I imagine I'll be getting all kinds of invitations now that I am a racketeer. Racketeers for Life. I will make lemonade out of this. You watch me."

Rev. Robert Vanden Bosch, of Concerned Christian Americans, a conservative group said, "In many ways this is a limitation of free speech. If they can be prosecuted why can't union people be prosecuted for having picket lines?"

An April 21 editorial in the *Chicago Tribune*, entitled "A big chill from a law misapplied," stated: "The use of RICO in this context is egregious. It carries the risk of deterring not only illegal conduct but legal constitutional political protest."

Abortion rights supporters in the Illinois state legislature said the court ruling could help breathe life into a bill pending the in Illinois Senate that would make protesters civil and criminally liable if they block access to clinics.

"The court decision provides an even stronger legal foundation for giving the necessary tools to local law enforcement officials," declared Rep. Jeffrey Schoenberg, a lead sponsor of the bill that passed the House last year.

NOW's strategy in face of clinic blockades and bombings by opponents of a woman's right to choose is to rely on the courts, the government, and lobbying. NOW fought for the 1994 Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances law (FACE), which provides prison time and a fine for blocking clinic entrances.

Lawyers for the defendants said they would appeal.

Helen Meyers is a member of United Auto Workers Local 719 in LaGrange, Illinois.

Russian sailors fight for wages in New Zealand

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

Victoria Mostert told the *Militant*, "There is no unemployment benefit in Russia."
"These ships are our money," Udovenko told the *Press*. "We worked for a New Zealand com-

keepers, and cooks.

At the April 15 rally in front of Harlem Hospital, members of the Municipal Hospital Workers Union Local 420 were joined by residents and other activists chanting "Save Harlem Hospital," and "What do we want? JOBS!" Mark Torres, a caseworker and union representative at Harlem hospital, expressed a common sentiment that the city plans to close the hospital.

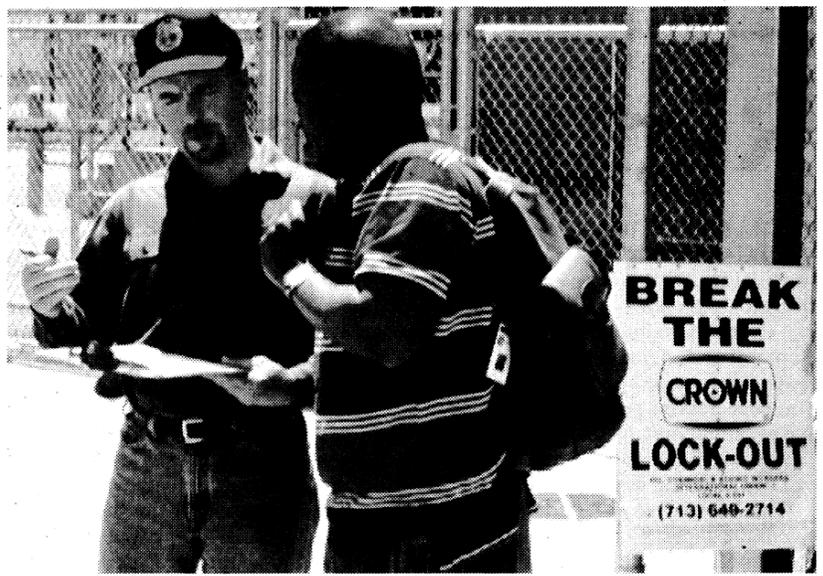
Reneé Davis, a nurse's aide, told the *Militant* she had worked at Harlem Hospital for three years under the city's so-called Work Experience Program (WEP), receiving nothing but her welfare check as pay. After little more than a year as a union worker, with starting wages of \$20,000 per year, she expects to be laid off. "It's not right," Davis said, "Workfare is just another form of slavery."

"I think they want to privatize Harlem Hospital," Sharon Williams, an intravenous technician for eight years who expects to be laid off, explained. "Right now a lot of new workers here are WEP, and they want the nurses' aides to train them so they can push the nurses' aides out of their jobs."

District Council 37, the union for more than 120,000 municipal workers, filed a lawsuit against the city administration charging that the layoff plans were illegal because the city was using 1,000 workers on welfare to replace them. On April 23 Mayor Rudolph Giuliani announced that every WEP worker would be immediately pulled out of the hospitals, and insisted that the 900 layoffs of union members would go ahead as well.

"The Socialist Workers Campaign supports the fight to stop the layoffs and to keep Harlem Hospital open," Rose Ana Berbero told the rally. Berbero is the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of New York and a member of the International Association of Machinists. "These layoffs are more of the same attacks being carried out by the government against working people. I urge all here to also support the nurses on strike at Maimonides Medical Center and visit their picket line."

The nurses at Maimonides, a private hospital in Brooklyn, approved a contract April 21 ending their three-week strike. They pushed back an attempt to cut their health benefits, but management will impose changes it had demanded in work schedules.



Dean Cook, left, collects signatures for locked-out Crown workers in Houston. Militant/Jerry Freiwirth

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.

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — "We will barricade ourselves behind iron doors. We will get behind the bulkheads of the engine rooms," Artur Udovenko, chief officer on the *Orlovka*, one of five Russian fishing ships tied up in the Christchurch seaport of Lyttelton, told the Christchurch *Press*.

Eighty-nine Russian sailors have been staying on the boats since December 1997 when Abel Fisheries, the New Zealand company that had chartered the boats, went into receivership after being convicted of fraud. The sailors are refusing to leave until they receive NZ\$1 million (NZ\$1 = US\$1.55) in wages that is owed to them. Udovenko was speaking in response to threats from the New Zealand government departments of fisheries and immigration to evict and deport the sailors.

Many in Lyttelton have rallied to their side. Fifteen people picketed on the Gladstone Pier April 23, carrying placards such as "No Wages, No Justification, No Resolution." Val McClimont of the Lyttelton Residents' Association, which organized the picket, said the Russian sailors "should be treated with dignity. Is that a great deal to ask?"

On the same day as the protest, the sailors gained a victory as the Immigration Service agreed before the High Court in Christchurch that they would not take any action before June 1. Udovenko said that of the NZ\$16,000 he was owed for eight months work, he had received only NZ\$350. In an interview with the *Militant*, Udovenko, the ship's captain Petrishcha Vasilily, and Serbaev Adam, repair engineer on the *Osha*, went into more detail. Adam said he was owed NZ\$14,700 for 10 months' work. Some sailors on the boats who had been employed for five months were owed \$4,000, they added.

They emphasized that these wages are a life and death question for the seafarers. Interpreter

pany and catch New Zealand fish." Abel Fisheries had used the ships for most of 1997. After Abel's receivership, the New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries seized the boats, which were owned by the Russian company Karelrybflot.

Abel contends it is owed NZ\$2 million by Karelrybflot, which is based in Murmansk, the home town of many of the sailors. According to the *Press*, 30 percent of this company is owned by the Russian government, and 70 percent is owned by private interests. The media has regularly reported the dispute, including the difficult living conditions on the ships. After the sailors complained of cockroaches, the ships were fumigated. Diesel fuel supplied by the Ministry of Fisheries for the ships' generators has run out. Three ships are now powered from the shore, but the other two are without electricity.

The ministry cut off its supplies of food to the ships in early April, asking the Salvation Army charity to fill the gap. In contrast to the government's hostile attitude, many working people in Christchurch have donated food and other supplies. Among those organizing collections have been the Seafarers' Union and the Lyttelton Seafarers Centre, along with churches and businesses.

The sailors' claim for outstanding wages will be heard in the High Court in Christchurch on July 27. Udovenko emphasized their determination, explaining that in World War II the people of Leningrad had withstood a siege by the German army for three years. "So a month for us will be no trouble."

Hundreds protest hospital layoffs in N.Y.

NEW YORK — Hundreds of workers and others rallied April 15 and 16 in front of Harlem Hospital and at City Hall in New York City protesting the city's announced layoffs for 900 hospital workers citywide, with some 272 of these from Harlem Hospital.

With New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani contending that New York public hospitals are over-staffed, 900 hospital workers are to be laid off by in April and another 600 by the summer. The layoffs will include nurses, nurses' aides, house-

Locked-out oil workers launch public defense

HOUSTON, Texas — "Stop the lies, drop the charges, end the lock-out," declared Dennis Gotcher, a locked-out Crown Central Petroleum worker, as he solicited signatures at another Houston area refinery plant gate on April 20.

Gotcher was one of three locked-out workers and two supporters who came to the Lyondell-Citgo Refinery plant gate to ask fellow Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) members to sign an "Open Letter to the Chairman of Crown Central Petroleum." The Crown workers came to explain the latest stage in their two-year fight, the filing of a civil suit against 15 union members and the local union by Crown alleging sabotage and conspiracy to commit sabotage. They passed out flyers to the Lyondell-Citgo workers inviting them to participate in upcoming public activities against these frame-up charges and the lockout.

Nearly all the operations personnel coming in or leaving signed the open letter. "Many said they knew about the lawsuit," said Karen Sloan, another locked-out Crown worker who was part of the plant-gate team, "but others were hearing about it for the first time. Some had already signed the Open Letter at their last union meeting."

Gotcher, also a defendant in the suit, addressed that meeting last week. The Lyondell-Citgo unit is part of the same local as the Crown unit, OCAW Local 4-227.

"Few realized that we are maintaining our picket lines every single day of the week. I invited them to come join us on the lines," said Dean Cook, another defendant who was gathering signatures at the plant gate. "So far we've collected about 125 signatures from Lyondell-Citgo

workers. We're planning to come back in a few days to hit two other shifts. Part of the reason for the great response we're getting may be that Lyondell-Citgo management is threatening to demand some of the same takebacks that Crown wants."

The Open Letter is the first step in the public defense that the locked-out workers have launched against Crown's lawsuit, which the company filed January 15. On April 16, a federal judge denied the union's motion to dismiss the suit, so the trial date is scheduled to be set on May 29.

In response, the unionists have been holding bi-weekly open meetings to discuss how best to defend its members from the latest attack by Crown. The Open Letter to the chairman of Crown Central, which was drafted by a committee of defendants and other union activists, is one aspect of this campaign.

"On February 5, 1996, you ordered 252 members of the OCAW escorted out of your refinery," the letter states. "Then, you locked the gates behind them.... Crown's excuse to justify the lockout — that workers committed acts of sabotage — is a lie.... This is nothing but another effort to break the union and the solidarity of these workers."

An Outreach Committee has been formed to arrange for more plant-gate signings at other refineries and plants, in the community and at political events. A Speakers Bureau has begun lining up speaking engagements before union meetings, at college campuses and high schools, and other events.

Patrick Brown in Christchurch; Ruth Nebbia, a member of the United Transportation Union, in New York; and Jerry Freiwirth, a member of OCAW Local 4-367 in Houston, contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Free Basque prisoner!

Ramon Aldasoro, a 42 year-old Basque refugee, was arrested in Miami in December 1997. In Miami, he worked as a sales person at a local car dealership. Since his arrest, Ramon is being held in solitary confinement pending extradition proceedings. He faces extradition to Spain, where the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, the International Prison Watch, and the UN's Human Rights Committee say torture is inflicted on detainees. The general secretary of Amnesty International, Pierre Sane, said during his visit to the Basque Country last month that human rights are being violated in Spain, and that current "anti-terrorism" legislation perpetuates torture.

The Spanish government accuses Ramon of being involved in the killing of several army and police officers in 1983-1988 — accusations

based on statements of detainees extracted under torture by police. These detainees were held in incommunicado detention for a period of five days in a police barracks. If extradited to Spain, Ramon is likely to be tortured or even killed.

The Basque Congress for Peace began a letter campaign in support of Ramon Aldasoro. Please join us and send a message of support to Ramon, who is living in very hard conditions in a Miami detention center. Your message can make a difference to him that there are people who will not let him suffer alone. Please write to Ramon before May 4, as the extradition trial has been scheduled for that day. Send your letter of support to:

Ramon Aldasoro: RN 57937004, Federal Detention Center, P.O. Box 019120, Miami, Florida 33101-9120.
Olatz Arkauz,

New York, New York

Cuban political prisoners?

I am an over-the-road trucker without much time on my hands. I subscribe to the *Militant* and find the information necessary, particularly international news.

In order to have good discussions on various issues, one needs information. So that is why I have felt politically disarmed by the *Militant's* lack of coverage on Cuba's recent release of political prisoners. Or were they? I seem to recall reading a statement from Ricardo Alarcón (of Cuba) that no one can teach Cuba about democracy.

Why doesn't the *Militant* take this head-on? Not doing so leaves many of us ill-prepared to have discussions. Does your silence imply that even groups like Amnesty International are merely dupes of im-

perialism?

Mark Heinecamp
Tucson, Arizona

Editor's reply: In February 1998, the Cuban government released 299 individuals serving prison sentences for counterrevolutionary or common crimes. Of these, 75 were on a list presented by the Vatican of 302 supposed political prisoners. Cuban officials noted that a third of those on the Vatican's list had already been released from prison, and another 20 names were listed twice. Cuban officials point out that these people had been jailed for their actions, not ideas, and were being released for humanitarian reasons.

The *Militant* agrees with the stance that you paraphrase from Ricardo Alarcón, the president of Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power. Neither Washing-

ton nor any other imperialist power — the biggest threat to humanity today — has any right to lecture anyone about human rights. The letter above from a Basque solidarity activist is a small illustration of that. The reason the U.S. rulers rail against the Cuban revolution is precisely because workers and farmers in Cuba, under a leadership responding to their needs, have expropriated the capitalists' property for the benefit of society and over the years have won more and more control over the fundamental decisions affecting their lives.

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.

Right wing gains in Germany vote

BY MARKLYN WILSON
AND CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

BERLIN — The April 26 state elections in Saxony-Anhalt — the only state in eastern Germany to hold elections prior to the September federal vote — were closely watched across the country. The results reflected increasing political polarization, with the ultraright making big gains and the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) suffering heavy losses.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) remains the largest party in the Saxony-Anhalt government. It received 36 percent of the vote — 2 percent higher than in the 1994 elections, but well below the 44 percent that had been predicted. Reinhard Höppner will remain state premiere. The turnout in the elections was 70 percent, compared to 55 percent in 1994. It was less of a victory for the SPD than in the elections in Lower Saxony in early March, where the Social Democrats won a majority of the seats in the state parliament.

The defeat for the CDU, the party headed by German chancellor Helmut Kohl, was much greater than expected. The CDU received just 22 percent of the vote, down from 34 percent in 1994. The CDU and Kohl were the winners in elections in eastern Germany in 1991 and 1994, as the chancellor took credit for the reunification of Germany. Chancellor Kohl campaigned heavily in Saxony-Anhalt leading up to the vote, attempting to rally support for CDU candidate Christoph Bergner.

But there is widespread disillusionment among working people today. Economically, Saxony-Anhalt is the hardest hit of the five eastern states. With one of four residents out of work, it has the highest unemployment rate of any German state, as well as the slowest growth rate.

In the former German Democratic Republic, Saxony-Anhalt was home to the some of the country's main chemical refineries and machine building plants. Employment in those industries has slumped from 200,000 to fewer than 40,000.

The big shake-up in the Saxony-Anhalt elections was that the German People's Union (DVU) received close to 13 percent of the vote. The DVU is an ultraright party that is sometimes labeled "Nazi" in the bourgeois press. This is the first time an ultraright party has won seats in a state parliament in eastern Germany.

As in the 1994 elections, the Free Democrats, Kohl's small but important coalition partner in the federal government, failed to reach the 5 percent mark needed to be seated in the Saxony-Anhalt parliament. The Greens, who did win seats in 1994 and had been in the state government with the SPD, polled only 3.2 percent.

The former ruling party in East Germany, now called the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), got 19.6 percent, slightly less than in 1994. The PDS has tolerated the minority coalition government of the SDP

and the Greens in Saxony-Anhalt, hoping to play a bigger role in an SPD-led government later.

The DVU spent more than 3 million marks (\$1.7 million) on their campaign — more than the SPD and CDU combined. They put up 30,000 posters and sent out 1.2 million pieces of mail, targeting young people. They even had planes with big banners circling bigger cities. But they arranged very few election campaign meetings.

A main theme in their campaign is scapegoating immigrants for the high unemployment in the state. They also played on resentment of the high pay and privileges of politicians.

According to the German daily *Die Welt*, their campaign put forward an undercurrent of anti-Semitism. One of their posters showed a picture of a young woman with a German flag and the slogan "Vote German! Vote DVU." Another states, "Keep the D-mark," referring to the German Deutsche mark, as compared to the projected single European currency.

The leader of DVU, which was founded in 1987, is Gerhard Frey, a publisher in Munich. He was also the spokesperson of the party after the elections in Saxony-Anhalt. When Frey and his supporters tried to enter the parliamentary building to celebrate their seats, they were greeted by a spontaneous demonstration of about 200 youth shouting "Nazis out!"

On May 1 the ultraright group National Democratic Party (NPD) is planning a demonstration in Leipzig. A range of unions, political parties, churches, and artists are planning a countermobilization there.

Officials of the CDU and SPD blamed each other for the DVU's high vote. Both parties are discussing the formation of a CDU-SPD government in Saxony-Anhalt.

Meanwhile, tensions are up between the



In Denmark more than 560,000 workers — a quarter of the national workforce — walked off the job April 27 after rejecting a pay deal proposed by the employers association. Factory production, transport, construction work, and garbage collection were largely halted, in a work stoppage that is expected to last at least a week. This is the first large-scale strike in Denmark since 1985. Next week's *Militant* will carry a first hand report from the picket lines. Above, strikers rally in Copenhagen Town Hall Square.

Social Democrats and the Greens, who hope to share power with the SPD after the general elections in September. In late March the Greens ordered its members in parliament to vote against NATO expansion. The SPD candidate for chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, sharply criticized their position. "Nonsense will not become government policy," he declared. "Voters can know this for sure: in no government of mine will the radical pacifist wing of the Greens have a role to play." In their election program the

Greens recently included demands to raise the fuel price to 5 marks a liter (about \$10 per gallon), cut the size of the army by half, and withdraw German troops from Bosnia.

Marklyn Wilson is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1432 and the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress, 8th District, in San Francisco. Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

Castro tells Canadian prime minister: 'We will never give up our revolution'

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — "Jean Chrétien came and went, and Fidel Castro stood firm," wrote the *Toronto Globe and Mail* in an accurate summary of a highly publicized 40-hour trip to Cuba by Canadian prime minister Chrétien April 26-28.

This was the second such visit to the island by a Canadian head of state since the Cuban revolution, the first one having been by then-Premier Pierre Eliot Trudeau in 1976. While in Cuba, Chrétien co-inaugurated with Cuban president Fidel Castro a third terminal, partly financed by Canadian interests, at the José Martí International Airport in Havana. He also held two private meetings with Castro for a total of six and a half hours and met with Catholic Cardinal

Jaime Ortega and representatives of three Cuban nongovernmental organizations.

In the days leading to Chrétien's visit, government officials and the media across Canada projected the trip as a major step by this country's imperialist rulers toward increasing their investments in Cuba against their U.S. competitors. U.S. companies are prevented from doing business in Cuba by Washington's decades-long embargo against the Caribbean nation. The trip was also billed as a means to put pressure for political concessions on Cuba's socialist government, under the guise of "defending human rights" and the supposed need for Havana to adapt to a "changed world."

Several dozen Canadian companies have invested Can\$610 million (Can\$1 = US\$0.70) in Cuba between 1992 and 1997, mainly in mining, construction, tourism, and biomedical industries. Total trade is about Can\$700 a year between the two countries, a significant increase from the early 1990s. Today, Cuba is Ottawa's fourth-largest trading partner in Latin America, and Canada is the second-biggest foreign market for Cuba, accounting for 11 percent of exports.

Like their capitalist counterparts in other countries, Canada's rulers have waged an ongoing campaign to paint the Cuban government as a one-man, one-party dictatorship. Their class hatred is based on the fact that Cuban workers and farmers led a powerful revolution in 1959, taking power out of the hands of their capitalist exploiters and using it since then to build a society based on human needs, dignity, and international solidarity.

On the economic front, the only concrete outcome of Chrétien's trip was an agreement for the Cuban government to pay Can\$12 million for a Canadian insurance company nationalized in the early 1960s. Most Canadian businesses that were expropriated at the

time of the revolution have been compensated as of 1981. Only a handful of insurance companies are still negotiating payment with Havana.

Fidel Castro used his welcoming remarks at the airport on April 26 to sharply denounce the criminal embargo imposed on the Cuban people by Washington. "No country should give itself the right to kill another people with hunger and disease," said Castro. "This is a genocide."

In their first meeting the next morning, Chrétien asked Castro to release four people currently jailed in Cuba and described by the media here as "political dissidents." According to Chrétien, Castro said he would consider the request. In early April Ottawa welcomed 14 Cuban prisoners released after a January visit to Cuba by Pope John Paul II.

In Washington, U.S. president William Clinton commented on Chrétien's visit to Cuba, "We can have different approaches to a common goal, and I do think we have a common goal."

Many media and political commentators here underlined the irony of Chrétien going to Cuba supposedly to preach democracy, and then cutting the visit short to be back in time to defeat a motion in the federal parliament proposing that the government compensate all victims of hepatitis C who contracted the fatal disease through tainted blood transfusions under Canada's national blood system in the 1980s. Ottawa is offering a financial aid to only a portion of the thousands of people who were infected.

As Chrétien's plane was leaving Havana, Castro replied to a journalist who asked him if he would take some specific steps to change Cuba following the visit. "The revolution is the biggest change in history," Castro declared, "and we aren't going to give it up."

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