

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Oppose Washington's
intervention in Liberia!

— PAGE 10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 60 NO. 20 MAY 20, 1996

Socialist candidates: No to immigration bill

The following statement was issued May 8 by Socialist Workers candidates James Harris for U.S. president and Laura Garza for vice-president.

The Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. Congress are joining forces to deal a blow against workers rights with the new anti-immigrant legislation they are preparing. The proposals passed by the Senate would codify a second-class status for a layer of the population, denying them access to basic social services, almost doubling the number of immigration cops who hunt down human beings, and introducing something close to a national identification system allowing "Big Brother" to code in information about any worker a boss might want to check up on.

These measures are a threat to every worker. We urge all working people — unionists, youth, those with or without documents, English- or Spanish-speaking — to speak out now and join the debate at union meetings, in the community, on campuses, and in the press to present a working-class point of view and answer the lies of the bosses and the politicians they own.

The first lie is that this move is aimed at "protecting jobs," and that the loss of jobs can be blamed on immigration. But downsizing, layoffs, wage and benefit cuts, and the insecurity that goes with all that is caused by decisions and actions taken by the capitalist class — the owners of factories, agribusiness, and real estate barons. Their economic system is in trouble and they aren't making the profits they want, so they sometimes cut production and look for ways to lower their costs, pay us less, and eliminate their competition.

The bosses foster racist and sexist prejudices to justify paying women less than men,

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"We are a people who fights for its dignity," says banner at April 6 protest in Riverside, California, against beating of two Mexican immigrant workers by cops.

Senate passes bill limiting rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — With virtually complete bipartisan agreement, the U.S. Senate passed a bill May 2 further attacking the rights of immigrants to live and work in the United States. The bill, approved by a 97-3 vote, targets the rights of both undocumented workers and immigrants with legal papers.

This proposed legislation nearly doubles the number of Immigration and Naturaliza-

tion Service (INS) Border Patrol cops. An additional 4,700 INS agents would be hired over the next five years, augmenting the current 5,175-member force. In addition, INS detention centers would expand the number of their beds to at least 9,000, a 66 percent increase over current capacity.

Government officials would be given new authority to conduct wiretaps on those they say are suspected of smuggling immigrants

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Castro: workers in Cuba stand firm

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

HAVANA, Cuba — "Five or six years ago our country was dealt a stunning blow," said Cuban president Fidel Castro, referring to the abrupt termination of long-standing trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries that led to the virtual collapse of production in the Caribbean nation at the opening of the 1990s.

"But like a boxer with a strong jaw, we couldn't be knocked out. We withstood the ideological blows and we proved capable of withstanding the economic blows as well," Castro was addressing the closing session of the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), which took place here April 27-30.

"This accomplishment became clear and palpable in the tone, spirit, and dignity that permeated the remarks of many at this congress," the Cuban president said. "For this reason, one of my very first conclusions is that the revolution is stronger than ever."

"We can't forget that we had to resolve seemingly unsolvable problems," Castro stated. Overnight Cuba lost "markets, raw materials, fertilizers, fuel, credits, and on top of that we were blockaded." In 1993 Cuban industry operated at 15 percent of capacity, down from 85 percent in 1989. Imports in early 1994 stood at one-quarter their 1989 level, and the gross domestic product (GDP)

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Let's sell more books, more 'Militant' subscriptions

BY HILDA CUZCO

In April, supporters of the socialist press went over their goal of selling 1,550 copies of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara to workers and others in the United States and internationally. That month also registered progress in selling Pathfinder titles to commercial bookstores, and signing up new members to the Pathfinder Readers Club. This puts Pathfinder supporters in a good position to move ahead to sell socialist books as they begin a five-week drive to win new subscribers to the *Militant*, and its Spanish-language sister publication, *Perspectiva Mundial*.

From May 11 to June 16, supporters of the socialist press around the world will be campaigning to sell 1,100 introductory *Militant* subscriptions, 350 *Perspectiva Mundial* subs, and 400 copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*. This effort can help step up the sales of books and pamphlets through Pathfinder bookstores, which slipped a little in April to 90 percent of the monthly goal of 1,800. To sell both subscriptions and books, supporters will be getting out more on the streets, the factory floor, at political events, on campuses, and door-to-door in working-class neighborhoods. The combined sales effort will be a central part of the Socialist Workers election campaigns now under way, and for election campaigns

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Youth sign up for exchange to Cuba

BY BROCK SATTER

NEW YORK — Fourteen people attended the third meeting of the New York U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange Committee on Tuesday, May 7, in the student government office at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). The committee

includes students from BMCC and the City College of New York (CCNY), members of the Brooklyn-based Puerto Rican community center El Puente and the Young Socialists, and other interested youth from across the city.

The committee discussed the Cuban revo-

lution and planned fund-raising and outreach activities for the month of May to sign up as many participants as possible for the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange. Those participating in the exchange will be traveling to Cuba July 24-August 6, where they will get to meet a wide range of young people, workers, farmers, and others in Cuba. The delegation is being organized by the National Network on Cuba (NNOC), a national coalition of dozens of groups that oppose Washington's hostile policy toward Cuba.

On Wednesday, May 8, members of the New York committee distributed flyers for their planning meetings at a demonstration against cuts in financial aid programs and increased tuition in the City University of New York system. On Thursday, May 9, members of the committee spoke to student organizations at CCNY to build interest and support for their activities. They also projected outreach at many other political and cultural events during the month of May, including Rock Against Racism on May 18. The committee discussed attending the upcoming meeting of the NNOC that is planned for New York May 18-19. The activists are drafting a fund-raising letter to appeal to churches, community groups, and political organizations for donations and assistance in upcoming activities.

Three fund-raising events are planned for the month of May. Friday, May 17, will be a

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Get your application in now for the
U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange
July 24 - August 6

The National Network on Cuba is organizing a delegation of young people and students from around the United States for a two-week trip to Cuba this summer. The group will spend most of its time in the provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo, with a few days in Havana at the end of the trip. In addition to time spent working with Cubans, participants will visit factories, farms, historic sites, and other places of interest.

The Youth Exchange is open to people between the ages of 15 and 35. The cost is \$855 from Montreal, \$600 from Nassau, Bahamas.

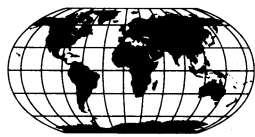
Applications for the trip are due by June 1.



For more information contact:

National Network on Cuba
c/o Cuba Information Project
198 Broadway, Suite 800
New York, NY 10038
Phone: 212-227-3422
Fax: 212-227-4859

A working-class approach to taxes — page 10



BigMay Day march in Mexico

Despite cancellation of the official union rally, up to 200,000 people demonstrated in Mexico City in a May Day parade. Fidel Velázquez, the 96-year-old head of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), tried to call off the demonstration by 40 unions and threatened to expel CTM affiliates for participating. This was the second year in a row the official union federation has attempted to cancel the traditional May Day parade. Last year only three CTM-affiliated unions participated, but this year 10 joined the march, including the large telephone workers union.

"Times have changed. We're here to demonstrate our opposition to government policies," said one worker at the march, José Abel Evangelista. "Now we don't feel so obligated to render obedience to... the government." Since December 1994, when the Mexican peso devaluation devastated wages and threw 1 million people out of work, there has been growing social unrest. The May Day protesters demanded wage increases, job security and an end to the privatization. While they marched, Velázquez joined Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo at an official ceremony, attended by a carefully picked audience that numbered in the hundreds.

Cops in Turkey kill two marchers

Thousands turned out for a union-organized May Day demonstration in Istanbul, Turkey, protesting high inflation and the eroding standard of living. Before the demonstration began, police began searching participants. When some workers refused and protested, the police reacted killing two and injuring four others.

Berlin march protests cuts

Twenty thousand workers turned out for the union-organized May Day demonstration in Berlin, protesting a proposed reduction in sick pay and cuts in disability and jobless benefits. Dieter Schulte, head of the German Federation of Trade Unions, declared, "Whoever takes away workers' sick pay is playing with fire. Under the cover of alleged social abuses, the government is fighting the workers, not unemployment." German chancellor Helmut Kohl recently claimed that abuse of sick pay is one of the greatest bur-



Workers in Mexico City carry coffin with name of pro-government union federation

dens to employers.

Another 10,000 people demonstrated the same day in the eastern Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg. Police attacked the demonstrators with water cannon and tear gas, arresting 60. Some 300 neo-Nazis held a counterprotest calling for "German jobs for German workers."

7,000 miners strike in Chile

At the world's largest copper mine, nearly 7,000 workers went on strike May 2, halting production. Located 1,000 miles north of Santiago, the capital of Chile, the Chuquicamata mine opened with a handful of scabs and supervisors. Workers at the Chuquicamata mine rejected the company's 3 percent wage increase and one-time signing bonus of \$2,715. The miners are demanding a 4 percent raise and a \$4,700 bonus. Workers at the Chuquicamata mine walked out for one week in 1991.

Oil workers strike in Norway

Some 700 workers struck at several Norwegian oil fields May 4. The walkout was called by the Norwegian Federation of Oil Workers in solidarity with more than 400 scaffolding, paintwork, and insulation work-

ers at oil service companies. The maintenance workers have been out on strike for three weeks to demand inclusion in a general wage agreement.

Six off-shore oil platforms have been affected by the strike, which has cut Norway's production of 3 million barrels per day by one-third and is costing the government \$20 million a day. Natural gas output may also be affected if the strike continues. Norway is the largest oil exporter outside the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

U.S. intervenes in Liberia

Asserting the need to protect the U.S. embassy, Washington sent three warships with 2,000 marines toward Liberian shores May 5. On April 30, U.S. troops killed three Liberians and wounded one, alleging they had fired toward the embassy during heavy fighting in the streets of Monrovia, the capital. For six years two rival factions have fought a civil war, which has killed 150,000 people.

Charles Taylor, leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, which is currently in power, warned Washington to stay out of the internal affairs of the West African country. His forces have been fighting those loyal to Roosevelt Johnson, a member of the former national army under the late president Samuel Doe. U.S. troops flew Johnson to safety in Nigeria May 3.

Asian-Americans in New York protest racist comments

Minutes after 2,000 Asian-Americans rallied outside Queens City Hall May 2, councilwoman Julia Harrison was forced to read an apology for racist comments she made in an interview in the March 31 *New York Times*. In the interview, commenting on the growing presence of Asians in Queens, Harrison spoke of them as criminal smugglers, rude merchants and aliens who depressed the wages of U.S.-born workers.

The crowd marched from Columbus Park to City Hall in Queens. Garment and restaur-

ant workers from around the city came to the protest, which was called by the Asian American Alliance, formed by more than 40 Asian-American groups after Harrison's comments. "I couldn't bear not to come," said Ying Chan, a garment worker from Brooklyn who came with about a dozen co-workers.

Caterpillar refuses safety checks

In April, Caterpillar Inc. twice defied a federal warrant seeking to allow a safety inspection by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The company was held in civil contempt May 3 and assessed fines of \$10,000 a day.

U.S. district court judge James McClure Jr. affirmed the earlier warrant authorizing an inspection of the company's York, Pennsylvania, plant, and rejected Caterpillar's attempt to vacate the authorization. In a statement, Caterpillar vice president Duane Livingston said the company was "disappointed" by the order. He also said NIOSH's inquiry "was spurred" by a request from the United Auto Workers union, which represents 1,450 workers at the York plant. In 1994-95 the UAW struck Caterpillar for 17 months. One issue in the strike was safety.

Debate on gas prices

Gasoline and diesel fuel prices in the United States shot up 10-15 percent in the past three months. Republican presidential candidate and Senate majority leader Robert Dole blamed federal gas taxes, particularly a 4.3 cent tax increase implemented by the Clinton administration in 1993, and proposed repealing the levy. Republican senator Philip Gramm supported this proposal, saying, "When I get a chance to cut taxes on working people, I take it." House majority leader Richard Arney joined in, suggesting education funds be cut in return for repealing the gas tax.

Democratic congresspeople and others who defend the tax argue that it protects the environment by reducing fuel use, and that the revenues are needed to cut the federal budget deficit. At the end of April President William Clinton announced the sale of 12 million barrels of oil from the government's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, saying this would bring down fuel prices.

—MEGAN ARNEY

Correction

The In Brief item "300 killed by U.S. cops at Mexican border in 1995" that appeared in the May 6 issue of the *Militant* was inaccurate. According to a recent study at the University of Houston, more than 300 undocumented immigrants from Mexico die each year while trying to cross the border with Texas. Most of these deaths are from drowning and traffic accidents, not police brutality. The study warned that tighter immigration measures will probably lead to an increase in these deaths, as immigrants are forced to take more dangerous routes across the border.

THE MILITANT

Defend the Cuban revolution

The million-strong May 1 march in Havana demonstrated workers' determination to chart a socialist course and their contempt for Washington's tightening of the embargo. The 'Militant' provides coverage of discussions among working people in Cuba who are defending the gains of the revolution. Don't miss a single issue!



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Socialists blast immigration bill

Continued from front page
Blacks less than whites. They use workers' status as documented or undocumented the same way. The immigration laws are designed to aid the employers in their quest for profits by maintaining a second-class layer of the workforce that can be intimidated with threats of deportation and denial of rights.

Working people, especially unionists, have nothing to gain from these divisions. We can only build a labor movement capable of fighting and winning if it defends the interests of the broad masses of workers — beginning with the most exploited layers — not just those who still currently have jobs and benefits. That's why the labor movement needs to lead a fight to raise the minimum wage, end mandatory overtime, and shorten the workweek with no cut in pay in order to create jobs for all.

Assault on social gains of all workers

Another lie is that the U.S. borders have to be defended — mainly against Mexicans — because there's not enough to go around. The wealthy rulers claim social services, health care, and education can only be guaranteed for people in the United States if the government can stop others from entering. What's really happening, though, is a bipartisan assault on health care, education, and social services for *all working people*. The representatives of the capitalist rulers, Democrats and Republicans alike, have the goal of deep cuts in Medicare and Social Security and eliminating social protections like unemployment benefits and welfare. All their debates have been fundamentally over how far they can push in this assault, and how fast.

The recent federal budget agreement, which contained few of the measures initially demanded by the Republican freshmen in their much-touted "revolution," reflects the fact that the rulers fear getting too sharp a response from broad layers of working people and others. The employers are nervous about initial signs of working-class

resistance — an indication to our class that the bosses are not strong and that fighting them does make a difference. But they will continue their assaults on social gains. Part of how they do this is proposals to deny services to the most vulnerable, those they hope are least likely to get solidarity.

Creating a category of workers who can be denied social services is simply a first step; if immigrants can be denied basic rights, other working people will be next. We know abundant resources *do* exist to provide adequate education and health care for all, but they go first and foremost to fill the coffers of the profit takers, and to fund their war moves around the world, from interventions in Yugoslavia and Liberia to threats against Cuba. The socialist campaign demands the military budget be eliminated, and the money used to launch a massive public works program to provide jobs by building the housing, hospitals, schools, and roads we need.

'Raza sí, migra no'

The socialist campaign also calls for dismantling the Border Patrol. Wider use of border cops means more inroads against protection from being stopped, questioned, and searched at will by the police. In much of the Southwest, more and more workers are subjected to such arbitrary violations of their rights, with Mexicans and Chicanos (*la raza*) being special targets. Beefing up the immigration cops (*la migra*) who are known for meting out tuggish treatment to Latinos and other immigrants, is part of a campaign to make more acceptable police terror — as well as use of the military — against working people within the borders of the United States and abroad. Striking workers and people protesting police brutality or government policy have reason to fear the more widespread use of such methods, and we should speak out against them. Our campaign stands with those who say *Raza Sí, Migra No*.

Another part of the package capitalist politicians are pushing is the move toward

a national identification system. This is a dangerous threat to all workers and should be steadfastly opposed. Employers could use a government database to check who is "eligible" to work and, if the system is successful in a few test states, it could be extended nationwide. It's not hard to imagine the information that bosses and the government will claim to need, from police records to employment history. The immigration bill now being worked out heads toward requiring people to carry a national ID card. Our campaign rejects this and will join actions opposing these attacks on democratic rights.

The bosses and their spokesmen are trying to line up weapons on their side — harsher laws, more restrictions on democratic rights — to aid them in their drive to force us to accept worse and worse conditions. The immigration bill is part of an ideological campaign to convince workers to scapegoat a section of our own class for the social and economic crisis we face.

But the working class can line up even more powerful forces on our side, all the workers and farmers, who outnumber the bosses here and elsewhere. Our side is strengthened by including Mexican, Central American, Asian, and other immigrant workers in strikes and organizing drives, as well as fights to demand a raise in the minimum wage to union scale, to oppose cuts in Social Security, and other battles. Our class could use more immigrants, more fighters, not fewer.

In Detroit, striking newspaper workers got a boost when Arab-Americans who had protested the Israeli bombing of Lebanon joined the boycott of the two papers trying to break the unions. The same newspaper bosses had refused an ad protesting the bombings. Truckers at the port of Los An-



May Day rally outside Immigration and Naturalization Service building in New York. Sign reads, "Respect the rights of Latino workers!"

geles, mostly Chicanos and *mexicanos*, have been waging an important struggle for decent pay and work conditions. We welcome these workers from Mexico and elsewhere who bring their experiences in fighting and organizing to the side of the working class in this country.

We encourage everyone to join protests planned for August 12 at the Republican convention in San Diego and October 12 in Washington, D.C., to oppose the attacks on immigrant workers. We can answer these attacks by mobilizing to demand:

Equal rights for immigrants!

Health care and education for all is a right!

Jobs for all, shorten the workweek!

For a massive public works program!

Senate passes bill to limit rights

Continued from front page
and using false documents. The legislation also authorizes the INS to spend an additional \$12 million on physical barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border south of San Diego, including triple fences and high-tech detection devices.

The senators also mandated the INS to test several pilot programs that allow employers to tap into an automated national database to obtain confidential information on the legal and financial status of those seeking work. Congress would eventually adopt one of these programs, to be tried first in states with large numbers of immigrants, in what would amount to the creation of a national ID card.

"We have stuff in there that has everything but the rack and thumb-screws for people who are violating the laws of the United States," stated Republican senator Alan Simpson, the bill's chief sponsor.

Democratic senator Edward Kennedy hailed the bill, saying it "makes it much harder for illegal aliens to falsify job applications."

President William Clinton welcomed the bill as an endorsement of his administration's "comprehensive immigration strategy," which he said was making "historic progress" in cracking down on undocumented immigrants at the border and at the workplace.

Republican presidential candidate Robert Dole praised the bill as a "long overdue" effort to toughen enforcement of U.S. "sovereignty." "We cannot remain a great country and fail to control our borders," he stated.

The Senate bill makes undocumented workers ineligible for most government benefits, except certain services like emergency medical care and some nutrition programs.

Immigrants with legal papers would also be cut off from a variety of health-care and welfare programs by requiring that any income earned by those sponsoring an immigrant must be counted in determining whether the individual qualifies for any means-tested assistance. To sponsor an immigrant a person must earn at least 125 percent of the poverty level.

Except for pre- and postnatal nutrition and

school lunch programs, an immigrant under the Senate bill could not receive public benefits until he or she had worked and paid taxes for 10 years or had become a naturalized U.S. citizen.

If an immigrant received any means-tested federal assistance for more than 12 months in their first five years in the country, the person would be subject to deportation.

"Even programs which are available for undocumented immigrants, such as immunizations and emergency medical and disaster relief services, would be denied to legal immigrants under this bill," stated Raul Yzaguirre, president of the National Council of La Raza.

Before reaching President Clinton's desk, the Senate bill must be reconciled with a version approved by the House of Representatives in March. The House bill contains

many provisions similar to the Senate's, but includes further restrictions on asylum-seekers and allows state governments to deny public education to children who are undocumented immigrants.

A May 7 editorial in the *New York Times* praised the Senate's measure as a "sensible" immigration bill. "Those people whom immigration law excludes should be kept out as effectively as possible," the editors wrote. "The Senate has come up with a bill that can help do that. The House should drop its unacceptable education and asylum provisions and go along."

Separate legislation in the Senate to reduce legal immigration has been set aside for this year.

Brian Williams is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 in Landover, Maryland.

Youth sign up for exchange to Cuba

Continued from front page
poetry night at the El Puente community center in Brooklyn to raise funds for the Exchange. Naomi, a member of El Puente, reported that she and another member of the group plan on going to the trip. She filled out her application during the planning meeting.

An evening of art, food, and music is being planned for the following week on May 25. David Medina, an artist who is planning to go on the Exchange, explained that many different artists he knows throughout the city will show their work for the night. Medina will be the disc jockey for the event. On June 1, the committee is planning a concert at a school auditorium in Harlem. Africa Baker, a 20-year-old BMCC student who is working as part of the committee, has lined up three hip-hop groups to perform for the event.

Young people are getting involved in building the Youth Exchange elsewhere around the country as well. The Los Angeles Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba had its first organizing meeting for the trip May 4. Eleven people attended, including three

students from San Diego State University who heard about the Exchange during the February speaking tour of southern California by Jose Ponce, first secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C.

Another student from the University of California-Riverside, who has been active in demonstrations protesting the beatings of two immigrant workers by Riverside cops, was informed about the meeting at a recent protest. He said his main reason for wanting to go to Cuba is to learn more about how Cubans are building socialism.

The participants decided to begin fund-raising for those who are unable to pay the full cost of the trip, and to build another planning meeting. Some fund-raising ideas were selling T-shirts, a raffle, and a party.

Dozens of students took applications for the Youth Exchange during an event at La Raza Cultural Center at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The speaker, Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda, devoted much of his speech defending the Cuban revolution.

Adriana Sánchez, a leader of the Twin Cities Cuba Network who initiated the dis-

cussion on Cuba at the meeting, said that the group received a dozen applications for the two-week visit, "with lots more in people's hands."

Of the Minnesota applicants, the majority are Black or Latino. Nine of the 12 are students at the University of Minnesota.

"People write in that they want to go to Cuba to relate the revolution to their own struggles," Sánchez said, "as well as to learn about Cuba. If you face the facts, whatever your struggle is the common enemy is imperialism, capitalism. And then, it is impossible to deny that Cuba is the only country in the world standing up to that enemy, it is the only example of how to move forward. Everywhere we go to publicize the exchange, people want to connect with Cuba."

"Now, we have to really step up our organizing work," Sánchez said, referring to the June 1 deadline for submitting applications to the Cuba Information Project, which is coordinating the trip for the NNOC.

Laura Anderson in Los Angeles and Jon Hillson in Minneapolis contributed to this article.

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A Program for International Working-Class Struggle Today

Edited by Doug Jenness

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Youth join in socialist campaign

BY VERÓNICA POSES
AND JOSÉ ARAVENA

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — A growing number of young workers and students across the country are getting involved in the Socialist Workers election campaign as Young Socialists for Harris and Garza.

Young campaign activists joined a Cinco de Mayo parade here celebrating Mexico's revolutionary holiday. Among them was 22-year-old Doug Nelson, himself a Socialist Workers candidate for Minnesota state assembly. The night before, they met to make a banner promoting the socialist candidates, as well as signs against police brutality, for immigrant rights, and in defense of the Cuban revolution. At the event the campaigners invited people to a May 6 organizing meeting at the local Socialist Workers campaign headquarters.

A dozen people attended that meeting. During the discussion one person asked whether socialism was dead. Ned Kelly, a campaign activist, replied, "Socialism is not dead, although the capitalist media would like us to think that it was." Young Socialists member Jack Willey added, "There is a living example that we can look to today, and that example is Cuba."

A young *mexicana* attended the meeting after meeting the socialist campaign at Cinco de Mayo. She was marching in a contingent in the parade, when she saw an activist who was promoting the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange with a bright sandwich board that read "Visit Cuba" in Spanish.

She rushed out of the contingent and said, "I want to go to Cuba." She got literature about the Exchange, and then went to the nearby Pathfinder literature table, met the socialist candidates, bought a copy of the *Militant*, and found out about the organizing meeting. After the discussion with other young campaign supporters, she signed up to participate in Saturday morning campaigning and literature sales the next week.

Members of the Young Socialists from Peoria and Chicago held a meeting at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, for young people interested in the Socialist Workers campaign. Two students came, Dawn from Bradley University in Peoria and Chaminda, a 23-year-old Knox College student who is originally from Sri Lanka. The discussion went for about two hours.

The Young Socialists for Harris and Garza explained why the campaign is a fighting alternative to all the parties that support or accept capitalism, including the Republicans, Democrats, and Green Party. They pointed out that the candidates are working-

class political activists and encouraged young supporters of their campaign to join them. Other students dropped by to listen in to the discussion and add their opinions.

Chaminda said he was part of the student protests in Sri Lanka and first thought that the United States would be a paradise. He came to know it as a country where democracy is not practiced, however, he said. Supporters of the campaign suggested that youth who are interested in seeing a true democracy work should go to Cuba.

Dawn asked how Cuba is different from the regimes that called themselves communist in Eastern Europe and how workers and farmers can create a leadership that doesn't become bureaucratic. The best example, campaign supporters said, is in the book *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara. Dawn and a Young Socialists member from Peoria are planning classes on the book.

At the end of the meeting, both Chaminda and Dawn filled out applications for the Youth Exchange and are planning to go to Cuba this summer. They also signed up for upcoming activities surrounding the socialist election campaign.

Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign were among those who attended an April 25 meeting at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to hear Garza speak on a panel discussion on Cuba.

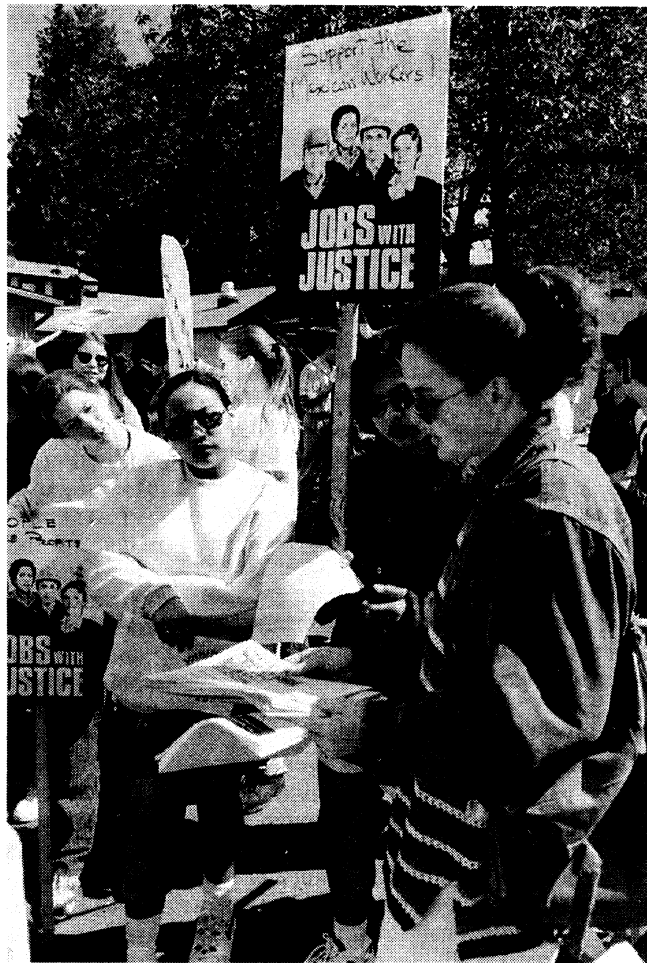
Four youths signed up to work on the Harris and Garza campaign at the event. "We've signed up about 10 Young Socialists for Harris and Garza so far," said Stefanie Trice, who is also a Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in New Jersey.

Socialist Workers presidential candidate James Harris, just back from Cuba, where he and other U.S. unionists attended the national convention of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, is launching his spring election campaign tour Saturday, May 18, with a public meeting in Washington, D.C.

On May 22 at noon, he and vice presidential candidate Laura Garza will hold a news conference at the National Press Club in that city. Harris's next stops will be New York and Boston. Campaign supporters in Boston are sponsoring a public forum June 1, as they kick off petitioning to put their statewide slate of candidates on the ballot.

Garza will kick off her spring tour in Minneapolis with a public talk on Saturday, May 11, at the Pathfinder bookstore. The Young Socialists were among those who invited Garza to campaign in that city, where the group has its national headquarters. Garza's next campaign stop will be Chicago.

The Socialist Workers 1996 National Campaign headquarters is located at 214-



Militant/Rich Stuart

Melissa Harris (right), SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Washington state, at Cinco de Mayo march in Mt. Vernon, organized by United Farm Workers of America.

16 Avenue A in New York City. Requests for Harris and Garza to speak in your area should be directed to the national headquarters at its mailing address: P.O. Box 2652, New York, NY 10009; telephone and fax: (212) 388-1659.

Socialists announce candidates in Minnesota

BY JON HILLSON

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — "Our campaign speaks out for the cause of working people against the privileges of capital worldwide," said Tom Fiske, a 52-year-old machine operator at Eaton Corporation and member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), announcing his campaign as the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Minnesota at a May 1 news conference here.

Also declaring their candidacies were Jennifer Benton, 27, an assembler at Eaton and member of the IAM, for U.S. House of Representatives in the 5th Congressional District; Tony Lane, 44, a Northwest Airlines ramp worker and member of the IAM, for U.S. House of Representatives in the 4th

C.D.; and Doug Nelson, 22, for Minnesota assembly in District 63-A.

Fiske said the SWP campaign stands "shoulder to shoulder with striking unionists, with resistance to attacks on affirmative action, abortion rights, and the rights of immigrant workers."

"We embrace the struggle of the Lebanese people against the brutal, immoral, and illegal occupation of their country by the government of Israel," the veteran union activist said. "We stand with Havana in its defiance of Washington's criminal embargo, now tightened by passage of the Helms-Burton law. We support Cuba's defense of its sovereignty against U.S.-backed air pirates, as carried out by Cuban air force pilots in February. We oppose U.S. war moves against Beijing and U.S. meddling in China's internal affairs. We protest the deployment of U.S. troops in Yugoslavia, who will be used to try to restore capitalism through force and violence."

Benton focused her remarks on "defense of Cuba, which is at the heart of the socialist campaign. I'm proud to announce my candidacy on May Day," she said, "as hundreds of thousands of Cuban workers march to celebrate the fact that the reins of power in Cuba are in their hands."

Benton, who visited Cuba as a member of the U.S. delegation to the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival in 1995, explained that her campaign "is telling the truth about Cuba. Despite the worldwide crisis of

capitalism, its government has not shut a single hospital, closed a day-care center, or driven people into homelessness. The revolution makes the land available to anyone who seeks to farm, the opposite of what is happening in Minnesota, where every day farmers lose their land to the banks and the government. Above all," the young unionist said, "workers and farmers, not wealthy parasites, rule Cuba. This is the kind of government working people need in the United States, the kind of government socialist candidates stand for."

Benton urged "young people, high school students, college and university students, and young workers to see Cuba for themselves, as I did, by participating in the upcoming U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange."

Lane, originally from New Zealand, noted the importance of a demonstration of 6,000 defenders of immigrant rights who marched in April in Los Angeles to protest the police beating of two Mexican workers.

Lane, a participant in the mobilization, said, "This is evidence of the fighting spirit that will grow as workers born outside the United States refuse to submit to the outrages of the bosses, the government, and the cops. There will be more and more immigrant workers, and increased protests by them and their allies. We welcome this reality with open arms."

Fiske and Benton were interviewed by several radio stations in the Twin Cities and Duluth after the news conference.

Campaign needs funds now

BY SIMONE BERG

NEWARK, New Jersey — Supporters of the Socialist Workers 1996 presidential campaign have sent in \$9,000 in contributions toward the \$90,000 national fund drive as of May 7. With the June 15 deadline fast approaching, backers of this campaign need

to act now: to adopt a goal and implement a plan to collect the money — getting pledges from co-workers, political activists, and other new and longtime socialist campaign supporters, and sending in the funds. At press time, only a minority of local campaign centers had announced their goals. The money collected has already been used for initial campaign expenses, including campaign brochures in English and Spanish.

With their eyes set on reaching out broadly for new support, Socialist Workers campaigners in San Francisco have taken a goal of \$10,000.

In Minnesota, a student at Mankato State University clipped the coupon from the *Militant*, sent in \$50, and invited one of the candidates to speak at his campus.

Meanwhile, supporters here in Newark have gotten a warm response every time they "shake the can" and appeal for donations from people signing petitions to help put the presidential and vice-presidential candidates on the ballot in New Jersey.

In preparation for Harris's tour of this area and to help collect 1,600 signatures by May 19, campaigners in New Jersey will be fielding a team to meet farm workers in the southern part of the state. Campaigners in Philadelphia enthusiastically volunteered to be part of that team and sent an initial \$2,430 in contributions for the national fund.

Funds are needed to get the spring presidential campaign tours off with a bang.

Contributions, made out to the Socialist Workers 1996 National Campaign, should be sent to the national campaign headquarters: P.O. Box 2652, New York, NY, 10009. Telephone or fax: (212) 388-1659.

Contribute to the Socialist Workers \$90,000 1996 Campaign Fund

	Goal	Paid
Birmingham		40
Boston		210
Brooklyn	7,000	5
Cleveland		20
Des Moines		211
Detroit	3,500	800
Los Angeles		1,027
Miami		340
Newark	5,000	580
New York	6,500	201
Peoria	1,200	0
Philadelphia		2,431
Pittsburgh		1,800
San Francisco	10,000	83
Seattle	5,000	
St. Louis		100
Twin Cities		1,100
Washington DC	2,000	150
TOTAL	40,200	9,098

Campaign for the socialist alternative!

- ☐ Sign me up as a Young Socialist for Harris and Garza. I want to campaign for the socialist alternative and against the parties of exploitation, racism, and war.
- ☐ Sign me up as a campaign supporter and keep me informed of protests, picket lines, and other political activities.
- ☐ Enclosed is a \$ _____ contribution
- ☐ I want to invite a candidate to speak at my union, school, or organization
- ☐ Enclosed is \$10 for a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly, or \$6 for 4 months of *Perspectiva Mundial* in Spanish.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

PHONE _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

Mail to: Socialist Workers 1996 Campaign, P.O. Box 2652, New York, NY 10009

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Continued from front page by other communist leagues around the world, as they reach out to workers on strike, protesters against anti-immigrant attacks, defenders of affirmative action and abortion rights, and others.

Sales in the unions

Socialist workers who are members of industrial trade unions are taking goals for the subscription drive, as a supplement to their ongoing goal of selling 400 Pathfinder books and pamphlets to co-workers each month. "We can build on the fact that nearly 300 co-workers bought copies of Episodes, and many have bought other Pathfinder books in the last couple months," said Dennis Richter, a member of the United Transportation Union and leader of the Socialist Workers Party's work in the trade unions. "While we fell short of our goal in that campaign, we have made real progress in talking socialism and selling books on the job. Many of those who have been reading the books can now be convinced to subscribe to the Militant or Perspectiva Mundial."

Socialist workers will also continue to encourage people to join the Pathfinder Readers Club, so they can get a discount on all Pathfinder titles. The number of readers club members grew by 400 over the last two months, including new members in the unions. The Militant will continue to report the number of readers club members each week, so supporters internationally can keep track of this important figure.

Joyce Fairchild from Manchester, England, described how a team of three Pathfinder supporters combined sales of revolutionary books and the Militant at an April 27 demonstration in Dublin. The all-Ireland

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books											
April 30: 84% should be: 100%											
Through Pathfinder Bookstores			To Commercial distributors			Total			Readers Club Membership		
Goal	Sold	% sold	Goal	Sold	% sold	Goal	Sold	% sold	Goal	Sold	
UNITED STATES											
Los Angeles	120	310	258%	95	171	180%	215	481	224%	80	67
Detroit	77	74	96%	60	174	290%	137	248	181%	52	45
Houston	45	41	91%	32	63	197%	77	104	135%	34	33
Chicago	77	61	79%	60	120	200%	137	181	132%	52	52
Washington, D.C.	54	60	111%	42	47	112%	96	107	111%	37	34
Philadelphia	63	30	48%	49	81	165%	112	111	99%	43	37
Atlanta	48	74	154%	32	0	0%	80	74	93%	31	38
Boston	65	39	60%	50	60	120%	115	99	86%	43	37
Seattle	80	63	79%	60	52	87%	140	115	82%	60	57
Miami	55	30	55%	42	40	95%	97	70	72%	36	32
Peoria *	36	18	50%	28	28	100%	64	46	72%	25	16
Greensboro *	41	18	44%	36	36	100%	77	54	70%	36	28
Salt Lake City	63	28	44%	49	46	94%	112	74	66%	54	38
Morgantown *	32	34	106%	25	0	0%	57	15	60%	21	19
Brooklyn	165	162	98%	130	7	5%	295	169	57%	110	73
Birmingham	65	38	58%	50	24	48%	115	62	54%	43	51
San Francisco	95	85	89%	74	5	7%	169	90	53%	64	69
New York *	175	102	58%	175	80	46%	350	182	52%	115	88
Pittsburgh	63	50	79%	49	2	4%	112	52	46%	43	32
Cleveland	50	39	78%	40	1	3%	90	40	44%	34	21
Twin Cities	86	64	74%	67	1	1%	153	65	42%	60	56
Des Moines	45	29	64%	35	0	0%	80	29	36%	31	29
Newark	171	99	58%	133	8	6%	304	107	35%	115	97
Y S convention sales		74					74				
Total	1771	1622	90%	1413	1046	75%	3184	2649	84%	1219	1049
Goal/Should be	1800	1800	100%	1400	1,400	100%	3200	3200	100%	1200	1200
* no new report											
AUSTRALIA											
36	29	81%				36	29	81%	3	2	
CANADA											
Toronto	90	70	78%	70	41	59%	160	111	69%	60	52
Vancouver	36	40	111%	28	6	21%	64	46	72%	42	50
Montreal	72	59	82%	64	22	34%	136	81	60%	40	36
Total	198	169	77%	162	69	43%	360	238	66%	142	138
Goal/Should be	220	220	100%	92	92	100%	312	312	100%	142	142
NEW ZEALAND											
Auckland	40	59	148%				40	59	148%		
Christchurch	16	17	106%				16	17	106%		
Total	56	76	136%				56	76	136%		

GOALS AND SALES FOR 'EPISODES' FEBRUARY 9-MAY 1			
Totals as of May 1			
City	Goal	Sold	%
Los Angeles +	125	130	104%
Twin Cities +	100	103	103%
Birmingham, AL +	70	72	103%
Miami	50	51	102%
Boston	60	61	102%
Philadelphia	60	61	102%
Salt Lake City	60	61	102%
Atlanta, GA	45	45	100%
Chicago	60	60	100%
Des Moines	45	45	100%
Detroit +	65	65	100%
Pittsburgh	55	55	100%
Seattle	80	80	100%
Washington, D.C.	75	72	96%
Cleveland	45	43	96%
San Francisco +	120	114	95%
Greensboro +	55	49	89%
Houston +	65	57	88%
Newark	133	113	85%
Brooklyn	130	107	82%
Morgantown *	27	21	78%
New York*	140	102	73%
Peoria, IL	30	20	67%
TOTAL	1,695	1,587	100%
SHOULD BE	1,550	1,550	100%
AUSTRALIA			
30	17	57%	
CANADA			
Toronto	56	56	100%
Vancouver	45	45	100%
Montreal	50	32	64%
TOTAL	151	133	88%
GOAL/SHOULD BE	151	151	100%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	35	40	114%
Christchurch	15	12	80%
TOTAL	50	52	104%
IN THE UNIONS			
UMWA	7	7	100%
OCAW	60	50	83%
UTU +	105	78	74%
UAW	110	64	58%
UFCW	12	6	50%
IAM	90	39	43%
USWA	60	25	42%
UNITE	38	14	37%
TOTAL	482	283	57%
SHOULD BE	500	500	100%
+ raised goal			
*no new report			

IAM— International Association of Machinists; OCAW— Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; UAW—United Auto Workers; 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.

GOALS FOR SPRING 1996 INTERNATIONAL SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE MAY 11 — JUNE 16, 1996			
City	Militant	PM	NI
United States			
Atlanta	27	10	8
Birmingham, AL	35	7	20
Boston	40	10	20
Brooklyn	75	35	35
Chicago	40	20	12
Cleveland	20	6	5
Des Moines	30	20	15
Detroit	50	8	15
Greensboro, NC	30	5	5
Houston	30	10	8
Los Angeles	60	30	30
Miami	35	15	15
Morgantown, WV	21	1	6
New York	70	40	35
Newark, NJ	80	30	30
Peoria, IL	15	2	5
Philadelphia	40	10	12
Pittsburgh	40	5	10
Salt Lake City	59	16	19
San Francisco	65	20	40
Seattle	50	10	15
Twin Cities, MN	55	10	15
Washington, DC	30	10	10
Total U.S.	967	310	340
Australia			
10	3	5	
Britain			
London	20	20	3
Manchester			
Sheffield			
Total	20	20	3
Canada			
Toronto	45	10	20
Vancouver	20	3	10
Montreal	25	8	35
Total	90	21	65
New Zealand			
Auckland	30	2	5
Christchurch	12	1	2
Total	42	3	7
International			
1129	357	420	
Total			
IN THE UNIONS			
UMWA	5	5	
UAW	80	15	35
USWA	45	5	35

rally, called by Sinn Fein, commemorated the 80th anniversary of the Easter Rising. "Almost immediately the table was surrounded by youth, students, and others thirsty for information on the international class struggle," said Fairchild. A student of Irish history from South Korea bought several books including Ireland and the Irish Question by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Problems of Women's Liberation by Evelyn Reed, and Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation, a pamphlet by Fred Feldman and Georges Sayad.

Pointing to The Communist Manifesto a young man from Lurgan, in British-occupied Northern Ireland, said, "I want that book, my mate thinks it's great!"

Fairchild reported that the team sold a total of nine Militants, a copy of the theses of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) published in a series by the Militant, Genocide Against the Indians, On the Jewish Question by Leon Trotsky, Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today, Abortion is a Woman's Right, the pamphlets Why is Mark Curtis Still in Prison and The Frame-up of Mark Curtis, and two Pathfinder catalogs. The next day they sold 6 Militants at University College Dublin.

Commercial sales

More than 1,000 books were sold to commercial distributors and libraries in April, a big advance from March. With continued attention and more supporters learning the ropes, this figure can continue to rise.

Pathfinder supporters Priscilla March and Vanessa Knapton from Los Angeles wrote the Militant about a successful day of sales to bookstores and libraries May 1. The buyer at one college bookstore ordered 28 books, including Episodes and two Spanish-language titles. March and Knapton also visited a professor of Chicano studies who expressed interest in The Politics of Chicano Liberation and Episodes, and took a catalog.

At the campus library, the Pathfinder supporters showed a set of books and covers to the collection development librarian for history, who took a few catalogs to share with the librarians for other departments.

March and Knapton also stopped at a private bookstore in Los Angeles, where they received an order for 16 titles, including Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It, The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara,

Cointelpro, and The Assassination of Malcolm X. In another visit the day before, one university bookstore ordered 51 titles.

Reviews of 'Episodes'

Reviews of Episodes appeared in the Sun-Sentinel of southern Florida on April 7, and in the Irish republican weekly An Phoblacht/Republican News April 18. Both reviews agreed on Guevara's honest account of the Cuban revolution. "Guevara gives his own account of the revolution in a series of letters, essays and memoirs, proving himself in the process to be a fine observer and a writer of uncommon gifts, even though the prose is rough at times. Guevara seems intent on telling the truth of what it was like on the ground, outmanned, unarmed, desperate, yet confident of victory," says the Sun-Sentinel reviewer.

"Most of the articles were first published in the early 1960s and Guevara could have easily airbrushed out the many mistakes he and others made. Instead he leaves us with an invaluable honest account. This is real history," notes An Phoblacht, which also comments on Guevara's Bolivian Diary. The article concludes, "These books provide an unrivaled introduction to both the Cuban revolution and the work of Che Guevara."

Beginning next week, the Militant will be reporting subscription sales results, in addition to sales of Pathfinder books. Subscriptions received with payment by noon Eastern Daylight Time each Tuesday will be included in the chart. Reports on sales of Pathfinder books and readers club memberships are due by 8:00 a.m. Mondays. Remember that sales of New International should be included in the overall book total, as well as reported separately for the subscription chart.



Militant/Linda Joyce Sales table at April 26 rally against Georgia nuclear reactor

Pathfinder books sold to co-workers				
Unions	Goal	Sold	% sold	Readers Club
				Goal Sold
UAW	100	82	82%	70 49
IAM	71	50	70%	60 19
UMWA	5	3	60%	4 7
OCAW	50	24	48%	50 25
UFCW	12	5	42%	11 0
UTU	85	32	38%	80 40
UNITE	42	14	33%	26 7
USWA	58	17	29%	58 13
Total	323	227	57%	289 111
Goal/Should be	400	400	100%	400 400
as of 4/30				

Castro addresses Cuban unionists

Continued from front page
at an estimated 65 percent of the 1989 figure. This is what Cubans refer to as the "special period."

Last year industrial and agricultural production edged upward with a 2.5 percent growth in the GDP, a trend that continued in the first quarter of this year.

The imperialist powers cannot stand the fact that the Cuban revolution did not "collapse on the fourth day after the fall of the socialist camp and the USSR, and that, to the contrary, they see that years pass and, without exaggeration, we can say it is stronger," Castro said, "and it has begun to make advances."

It is out of frustration, the Cuban leader noted, that Washington imposes new laws and a more rigorous economic blockade with "the obsessive idea of destroying the revolution."

As the theses for the CTC congress explained, and as thousands of workers said in workplace assemblies to discuss the resolution, Castro stated, "What we are building is socialism, what we want is socialism, and what we defend is socialism. Let no one have the slightest doubt about it." The audience rose to a standing ovation and chants of "Long live socialist Cuba!"

The Cuban president said he very much agreed with the comments of a delegate earlier that evening that the most important conquest of the revolution is that the working class took political power and continues to hold it.

"The spirit our people showed in their work in the last six or seven months, since June or July of last year, in planting, cleaning fields, constantly mobilizing, is a spirit we haven't seen for a long time," Castro said.

The reversal of the decline of sugar production this year, he noted, is largely due to the decision by tens of thousands of workers to go cut sugarcane with machetes where even the best combines could not enter the fields because the ground was damp. By the closing of the CTC convention on April 30, the country's mills had refined 4.15 million tons of sugar, well on the way toward meeting the national quota of 4.5 million tons in May, Castro announced. This marked a big improvement over the 50-year-low of 3.3 million tons in the previous harvest.

During this period the Cuban government was able to obtain some credits for investments in production of sugarcane, tobacco, rice, and other products "even though we have to pay the highest interest rates in the world for these loans."

The Cuban people have won this breathing space because of "our own efforts, our own resistance," Castro said. "That is what makes them [Washington] despair."

Imperialists not euphoric

The U.S. government and other capitalist powers are "no longer in a state of euphoria and hope, as they were five years ago," the Cuban leader said. They have poured billions of dollars in loans and donations into Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in order to sweep socialism away. But production in those countries is falling and the economic crisis deepens, he remarked.

"Every time their illusions cost them more and more," Castro stated. "Capitalism does

not resolve anything. Not only where socialism existed, but even in capitalist countries they are marching toward ruin. So they are bitter about these problems. But they are bitter because of their own contradictions and their intercapitalist conflicts."

The competition between the imperialist powers leads them to "dogfights over markets and raw materials," Castro said.

And how do the U.S. rulers and imperialist institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank try to solve these problems? the Cuban president asked. "They throw millions of workers onto the unemployment lines, close schools, shut down hospitals, and slash indispensable social services without consulting anyone."

"In the United States they have unleashed a barbaric barrage of measures to cut social benefits for the U.S. people to the detriment of the retired, the elderly, the sick, everybody," Castro said. "They do it with a fanatical faith that the laws of the market will solve everything."

And what is the difference with what Cuba had to do during its special period? Castro asked. As one of the international guests at the congress noted, the Cuban president said, in the capitalist countries a handful of representatives of the ruling class meet, adopt their measures, "and then impose them on the people, without pity, with horses in the streets, with tear gas and police cars."

These are the people who accuse Cuba of human rights violations, Castro said. "These are the people who have backed bloodthirsty regimes that have disappeared tens of thousands — and there are those who say more than 100,000, as was the case in Guatemala and in South America — with their weapons and their instructors. These are the champions of torture, of using inconceivable methods they learned during the war against Vietnam and then passed on to the repressive forces throughout Latin America to prevent another Cuban revolution from succeeding."

'We always consult the workers'

"We can say that during the entire special period we did not adopt any measures without first consulting the people, especially the workers," the Cuban leader said.

During the first half of the 1990s, entire factories were idled due to lack of electricity, spare parts, and raw materials. In Havana alone daily bus routes were reduced from 30,000 to 6,000 because of lack of fuel, Castro said. "We had to obtain 2 million bicycles in order to ease the transportation crisis." Cuba was able to import only a tiny fraction of animal feed, powdered milk, cloth, and other raw materials that now have to be purchased at world market prices.

"What did the revolution do to confront the tremendous economic difficulties?" Castro asked.

"In the first place no one was thrown into the streets. The workers in the factories that shut down continued to be paid, and even if they didn't receive 100 percent of their wages, they got enough to be able at least to buy the few things that were available," he said. These problems began to be addressed in 1994 with a series of leadership moves, fiscal measures, and efforts to reallocate the workforce.

The measures included increased foreign investment; raising prices on some nonessential items, like cigarettes and rum; charging for sporting and cultural events, which had been free; raising or instituting fees on electricity and other services; and establishing an income tax. These steps were aimed at bringing down the rapidly rising rate of inflation, which was seriously eroding the purchasing power of the peso. The inflation was spurred by the fact that few workers were laid off or lost unemployment benefits, despite many closed plants and declining production. Cuba's revolutionary government was trying to lessen the impact of the economic crisis on workers and farmers.

Castro described how these measures were adopted. During the December 1993 session of the National Assembly, deputies discussed, but put off decisions on these steps. Since the measures under debate would have an impact on the prices Cuban workers paid, the deputies agreed to the proposal by the CTC leadership to first organize discussions in every factory and solicit



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Delegates at CTC congress discuss how to confront challenges facing revolution

the opinions of the workers. Millions took part in a round of workers assemblies in 1994 and subsequent "economic efficiency meetings."

"At a moment when it was raining advisors of all types," Castro said, "we stayed firm and did what we thought had to be done: we discussed in the National Assembly, then we went to the streets, we brought it back to the National Assembly, then returned to the streets to talk about all the measures, the economic openings, the joint ventures, the possibilities for foreign investment."

"We began to win the battle with revolutionary and democratic methods."

Build monument to special period

"Some day we'll have to build a monument to the special period," Castro stated. "If we continue to learn as we have been learning, if we can have another two or three congresses like this one, we will be laying the first stone for such a monument."

Castro noted that after half a decade of economic decline the country's budget deficit was reduced from 34 percent of the GDP in 1993 to 5 percent in 1995. The peso has been revalued from the low of 150-1 in the exchange rate with the U.S. dollar in mid-1994 to 22-1. Nickel, machine manufacturing, and sugarcane production are on the upswing. Production of fruits and vegetables has increased significantly, and availability of food is greater through agricultural markets even though prices remain high. Blackouts have been reduced to a few hours per week, while public transportation is beginning to improve.

All these are visible achievements, Castro said. "But there is one that has caught my attention above all. That is how the reaction of the people has evolved... to the point that the idea of economic efficiency has sunk roots among the people — one of the most important and decisive results registered at this congress." Workers are playing a more direct role in improving production, productivity, and working conditions, as well as reducing waste and cutting losses by state

enterprises, he stated.

Today with one ton of oil, one ton of steel, and the same machines, workers in many factories produce three times what they produced a few years ago, Castro said. The Cuban president praised the innovators among the workers, as well as researchers and scientists, who have made tremendous efforts to ensure that machines run even with a shortage of spare parts. In many cases they have made the difference on whether plants would continue production.

Castro pointed to the example of a delegate from Holguín who donated to the state \$16,000 she received in tips while working in tourism over the last few years. Another delegate from Ciénaga contributed \$20,000 during the congress. At the CTC congress, the minister of tourism reported that in the last year workers in tourism have made such voluntary contributions from tips they receive in hard currency amounting to \$1.8 million. The contributions are used by the state for the import of medicines that are in short supply.

"It's not that we are exhorting citizens to do what those [two delegates] did, that would not be conceivable," Castro said. "But you feel pride and admiration for the human species when you meet people who are so selfless, so generous."

"This spirit of solidarity among our people, their generosity, their willingness to help out... this communist spirit is unparalleled," Castro said.

"The measures the government has adopted during the special period — including the decriminalization of the use of U.S. dollars, legalization of self-employment in dozens of occupations, and the opening of agricultural markets — have also led to greater social inequalities," Castro stated.

Wages for most workers in Cuba reflect the high social wage represented by free medical care and education, low rents, and subsidized prices for basic food rations. But the self-employed today often earn many times the salaries of factory workers.

Castro pointed to the what happened in

Continued on Page 8

May Day parade in Manzanillo, Cuba

Printed below is a letter from two *Militant* readers who recently visited several cities in Cuba, including Manzanillo in the east.

We were just able to wrap up our nine-week visit to Cuba by attending the May Day demonstration in Manzanillo. It summed up what we had begun to learn and feel throughout the trip. There is a sense that the special period has hit bottom, and that some real gains are being made. *Militant* readers have seen reports on the big May Day march in Havana, but there were activities in the other provinces too.

Manzanillo is a pretty small city — about 90,000 — and we were told that it had been hit especially hard by the shortages of the last few years. There had been no May Day parade for the last two years, because of problems with transportation, and even with human energy. But this year was different.

The parade started at 9:00 a.m. sharp, and we watched for two hours as group after group passed the reviewing area. Guesses on the crowd ran from 30,000 to 50,000. The crowd was vibrant, conga dancing, blowing horns, beating drums, chanting, and waving signs. We've never

seen anything like it. Retired workers from the shoe factory, artists, fisherman, metal workers, schools, farms, and others all had their contingents, and everybody had something they were proud of.

The signs most popular were "*Socialismo o Muerte*" (Socialism or death) and signs denouncing the Helms-Burton law, but there were hundreds and hundreds of varieties, mostly home-made. People brought their children, one guy had a lion on a leash, and others brought their special period inventions. Our favorite was a four-wheeled, three-person-powered bicycle. After the parade the conga lines and impromptu fiestas spread out across the city.

Seeing the spirit in Manzanillo was a real treat. There was no question that this was a grass-roots outpouring of support for the revolution, an enormous mobilization for a city of this size, and people had great fun doing it.

From the radio we got the impression that other small cities were having similar marches. It was the perfect end to a trip that convinced us that the revolution is alive and kicking in Cuba, in spite of all the difficulties of the last few years.

Syd Stapleton
Anne Chase-Stapleton

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Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution

by Mary-Alice Waters

In *New International* no. 10

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New International 10

What the NYNY shock market crash reveals

Imperialism's march toward fascism and war

Defending Cuba, defending Cuba's socialist revolution

MARY-ALICE WATERS

U.S., Cuban workers share experiences

BY GUY BLUE
AND MARK FRIEDMAN

HAVANA, Cuba — The Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) hosted a meeting at the Jose Martí International Airport here May 2 for airline workers attending the federation's 17th congress. Workers from Argentina, Colombia, the United States, and Cuba participated, including ramp workers, mechanics, flight attendants, air traffic controllers and those in airport operations.

Union leader Emilio Vázquez Pérez welcomed the delegation to this 100 percent unionized airport of 5,000 workers. He said that leading up to the CTC congress, airport workers discussed efforts to modernize and improve productivity, efficiency, and service without layoffs.

Vázquez explained that airport workers have been part of many of the important tasks of the revolution, including volunteer labor to help in the sugar harvest and airport construction. Many have participated in Cuba's internationalist solidarity efforts in countries like Angola.

Fabio Mármol, a worker at Colombia's state-owned Avianca airline, discussed government efforts there to reduce the number of full-time union workers and replace them with contract employees who receive significantly less pay and benefits. This has been combined with the privatization of major state enterprises resulting in massive job losses. In response to workers fighting back, more than 1,000 unionists have been assassinated by right-wing government-linked terror squads during the past several years. Many workers are in jail.

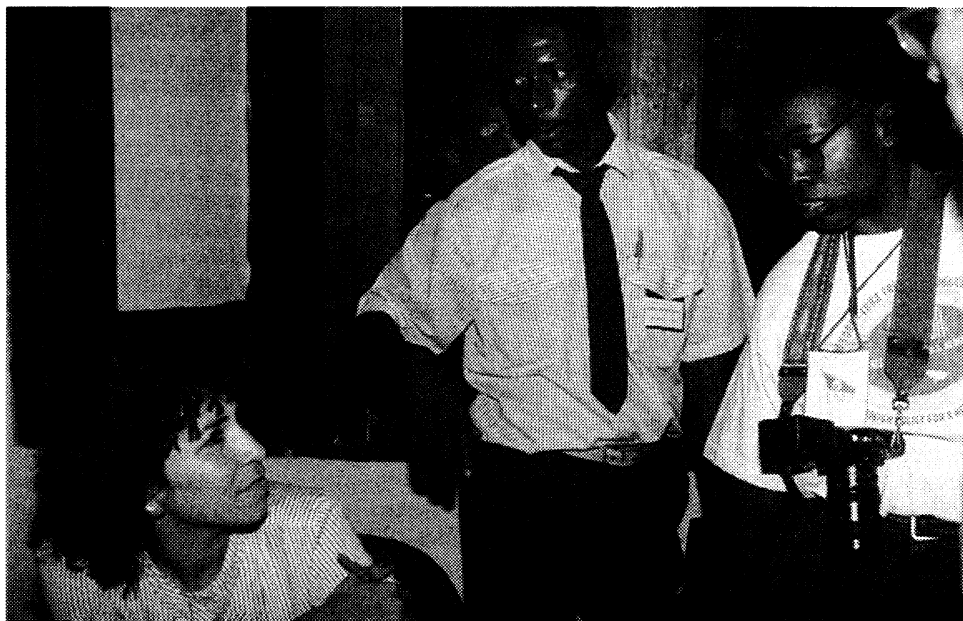
Argentine unionists at the meeting pointed to similar assaults taking place in their country. These are linked to demands by the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank for cutbacks in social services, and austerity measures against the workers and farmers to pay the foreign debt.

Sally Goodman, a United Airlines aircraft mechanic from Chicago and a member of the International Association of Machinists, described attacks workers in the United States have faced over the last two decades, and resistance such as recent demonstrations in defense of immigrant rights and the strike by newspaper workers in Detroit.

"Cuba is an inspiration, an example," she stated, "Observing the CTC congress showed us what real workers and union democracy is in practice when workers have political power and run the country."

"We have a lot of work to do when we get back to increase support for Cuba among our co-workers and to bring a larger delegation to your next meeting," Goodman said.

The U.S. unionists presented their Cuban brothers and sisters with a donation of work gloves, ear plugs, and safety glasses they had collected from co-workers on the job in the United States.



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Rail conductor Glova Scott (right) from Philadelphia talks with Cuban rail workers.

Acela Claro Sánchez, leader of the Cuban Transport Workers Union, which includes airline, marine, rail, taxi, truck, and dock workers, also spoke. She is in charge of women's work for the union at the airport. The first and only female air traffic controller, Sánchez described the "double burden" of women, especially during the special period of the early 1990s when there were widespread food shortages and electrical outages. Her job is to help get women into nontraditional jobs and to educate the women and the men about the importance of women having access to all jobs.

Guy Blue and Mark Friedman are members of the International Association of Machinists.



BY OMARI MUSA

HAVANA—Two of the five members of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) from the United States attending the 17th Congress of the CTC toured the Níco López refinery in Havana, at the invitation of Irán Exposito Rassi, general secretary of the Chemical, Mining, and Energy Workers union.

Before the collapse of trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the refinery had a workforce of 2,300. The Soviet Union was the major source of crude oil to Cuba. Since then the workforce has been reduced to 1,500. The 800 others are working on minibrigades in the construction industry, or are receiving 60 percent or more of their pay until new jobs can be found for them.

"Where does Cuba get the crude oil?" Mary Pritchard, a member of OCAW Local 4-367 in Houston, asked.

"We buy oil on the open market," Exposito said. "Because of the U.S. embargo, no one is prepared to sell us oil up

front. Not only do we have to pay the highest price on the market, we also have to pay what we call a 'political tax.' This is to cover the chances sellers take making the oil available to us."

Several workers noted that while they didn't make their production goals last year, this year is better. One of the workers made reference to the theses for the CTC congress. "We discussed the thesis thoroughly and sought to apply it to our work here at Níco López," he said. "We have to normalize production and increase it. We also have to increase our efficiency and continue to be mobilized to meet the challenges of the 'special period'." He then took us to Plant No. 1. The plant was on shutdown for maintenance. Workers were laying a new floor, walls, and panels in the control room. Others were painting and cleaning up. The unit was spotless. "This is part of our mobilization to be more efficient," he said.

At the conclusion of our visit, Pritchard told our Cuban counterparts that she and several others in Houston refineries had discussed this trip with as many co-workers as possible. "We decided to collect money to buy safety equipment to contribute to you," she said. "The response was very good. Everyone didn't want to contribute, but some who weren't supporters of the revolution did. Our contribution includes overalls, safety glasses, face masks and filters, and some boots." Exposito accepted on behalf of the union and gave the delegation a plaque in solidarity.

Omari Musa is a member of the OCAW in the San Francisco Bay Area.



BY JOE SWANSON

HAVANA — "It's a lot different working on the railroad now," railroad engineer Juan

Presencia said. "When Batista was in power you couldn't even approach the bosses to raise a problem. If they ever did call you into the office, it was to fire you. And the union then was in cahoots with the company. They were cutting their own deals."

Presencia was speaking to five U.S. rail workers, members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, who were in Cuba attending CTC congress. They visited the main Havana passenger rail station late one evening. Railroads, like all industry in Cuba, are state-owned. The 58-year-old engineer has worked on the railroad for 42 years, both under the Batista dictatorship and under the revolutionary government that came to power in 1959.

"What about safety?," one U.S. rail worker asked, noting that in the United States accidents are frequent. Scores die every year in train wrecks and crossing accidents. The equipment is old — some of the locomotives go back to the 1950s — and much of the track is in bad shape, Sánchez said. "And our trains leave the station late about 30 percent of the time. But we have few accidents." Road crossings are protected and prominent signs placed when there are crews working on the tracks.

Safety is also helped by crew size. Passenger and freight trains have a minimum five-person crew: an engineer, fireman, conductor, and two brakemen. Another brakeman is added for every additional 10 cars.

Joe Swanson, a conductor at Amtrak in San Francisco, was impressed. "In the United States," he told Sánchez, "in the drive to increase company profits, many crews have been reduced to engineer and conductor only, greatly increasing the safety risk."

Sánchez introduced the U.S. workers to brakemen, yardmasters and, dispatchers.

Naida Infante Verdecia is one of a handful of women who work as train dispatchers, but there are no women who are engineers or brakemen. "I think the first woman was hired about 10 years ago," Infante says. "The revolution eliminated discrimination against women, but some changes still come little by little."

When Infante learned that Glova Scott from Philadelphia was one of a few women at the Conrail freight line who are conductors, she said, "I really like that. Congratulations. That's really a tough job."

Infante then joined the delegation for the rest of their visit. When the group entered one office, Infante pointed Scott out to dispatcher Ziomara Moracén. "Look Ziomara, she's a conductor." Moracén smiled.

James Thornton, a conductor at Conrail in Philadelphia and editor of a local newsletter for the UTU there, said he enjoyed the visit. This was Thornton's first trip to Cuba.

"It looks to me like Cuban workers really do run their country," Thornton said. "I'm not sure this would work in the United States, but it seems to be working here."

Unionists call for international conference in Cuba

BY SEBASTIAN O'GRADY

HAVANA — More than 300 unionists from 42 countries met at the city's main convention center here May 2. They approved a proposal by Pedro Ross Leal, general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), to hold an international conference of trade unionists in Havana in the summer of 1997 to discuss coordinating labor efforts in the worldwide struggle against unemployment, cuts in social programs, and other effects of the capitalist economic crisis. The event will also discuss broadening working-class opposition to the U.S. economic embargo of Cuba.

"Every day workers are losing jobs. Every day, nations are losing their sovereignty," Ross told the unionists attending the one-day solidarity meeting. Most of the participants had taken part in the CTC's 17th Congress, which concluded two days earlier.

"In the face of growing attacks on the rights and living standards of working people, the union movement cannot remain dispersed," Ross said. "We are especially worried about the hard reality confronting those who live in third world countries," where the economic crisis has been devastating.

The Cuban trade union leader noted that in capitalist countries around the world, including in imperialist countries like the

United States, wages are frozen or declining, unemployment is rising, and social services are being slashed.

Cuba has also faced a deep economic crisis, Ross said. "But even with the tightening of the U.S. blockade, not one hospital has been closed and not one teacher has lost his or her job."

Ross explained that this is due to the advances made by the Cuban revolution. "Before 1959, we were virtually a colony," he said. "The United States dictated to us our national policies."

As a result, "we had an infant mortality rate of 100 per 1,000 live births. Tens of thousands of workers were jobless." This situation was reversed, he said, with the victory of the revolution.

Fight against U.S. embargo

Ross called the new U.S. legislation escalating Washington's economic war on the Cuban people a "slavery law." The measure is officially titled the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act.

"Ironically they named this Helms-Burton bill a law for democracy and solidarity with Cuba. But even with 100 laws they will not succeed in bringing Cubans to their knees," the CTC leader said.

To face both the attacks on the rights and standard of living of working people around

the world, and the attempts by the U.S. government to tighten the embargo, Ross said, "we need the solidarity and alliance of our class brothers."

"We are one single working class and we have common interests," Ross said. "The Cuban union movement is loyal to its internationalist tradition and will always be on the side of those who struggle for their legitimate interests."

The CTC proposal for the international conference was well-received by delegates at the meeting. Those present came mostly from the Americas and Europe. They included representatives of several major union federations as well as officials of local unions and some rank-and-file workers. There were also delegates from union federations in China, Laos, Russia, South Africa, Uganda, and Vietnam.

Sara Shartel, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers and a leader of Worker to Worker in Canada, a group that organizes unionists in that country to visit Cuba, noted the resistance to deep layoffs and cutbacks in social services taking place in Canada today, including several demonstrations of tens of thousands.

"There are 30,000 homeless including 15,000 children in Canada today," Shartel stated. "Then we look at Cuba. No child is without a school or homeless."

Oliva Bouchard, president of the National Federation of Teachers of Quebec, spoke next. Her delegation came to see the revolution firsthand, Bouchard said. "In Quebec we are fighting for our independence and sovereignty. We like the values we have seen in Cuba."

Brian Taylor, a member of the International Association of Machinists, and Gloria La Riva, a member of the Communication Workers of America, also spoke. They were part of a delegation of 53 trade unionists who came to the CTC congress with the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange.

Taylor stated that young people and workers who are involved in struggles in the United States, such as the fight to defend abortion rights, the movement against anti-

Continued on Page 8

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Unionists call for international meeting in Cuba

Continued from Page 7

immigrant attacks, and strike battles, are open to learning the truth about the Cuban revolution. "These fighters see how the big-business media misrepresents, perverts, and lies about their struggles," Taylor said, "and begin to wonder if the media has done the same to the fighting people of Cuba."

Luis Matos from Local 1199 of the hospital workers union in New York also attended the CTC meeting along with a six-person delegation. "It's been extremely important for us to participate in the 17th Congress of Cuban workers," Matos said. "We could see how Cuban workers and the government sit down together to seek solutions to their problems. I haven't seen this in any part of the world except in Cuba."

Bernardo Rojas, from the United Workers Federation in Paraguay, noted that re-

sistance to austerity programs there has been growing. "A 48-hour general strike will take place this week," he reported, "to protest the neoliberal policies of the government." Several union leaders and activists have been arrested by the government in an attempt to head off the strike. "That's why we need more Cubas in Latin America," Rojas concluded.

A participant from Lebanon condemned the latest Israeli attacks there. "You are all aware of the situation in my country," he said. "Throughout April we faced the savage Israeli aggression. We are asking for solidarity in the face of all the attacks." He thanked the CTC and the Communist Party of Cuba for their support in the struggle against the onslaught by Tel Aviv.

"Cuba is a beacon of conscience and dignity for the world," Ross stated at the end of

the day. "This world meeting against neoliberalism will also be a meeting against the economic and financial blockade against Cuba and against the Helms-Burton law. It will be an expression of solidarity with the Cuban people and the Cuban revolution."

On May 3, two dozen people met at the CTC offices in Havana to begin concretizing plans for the 1997 conference. The event has been tentatively named the International Conference of Workers for Unity in Action against Neoliberalism. Along with the CTC, the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) of France and other union federations around the world will be co-sponsoring the gathering.

It will take place concurrently with the World Festival of Students and Youth, which is hosted by the Union of Young Communists (UJC), Federation of University Stu-

dents, and other youth organizations in Cuba. The UJC issued the call for the youth festival during the massive May Day mobilization in Havana.

The next planning meeting for the 1997 international trade union gathering will be held here in November.

Castro speaks to Cuban trade unionists

Continued from Page 6

Las Tunas, where buses virtually disappeared and "private drivers appeared — they solved the problem but they charged one peso for a 10-minute ride and began making 3,000 to 4,000 pesos per month."

Along with the agricultural markets at unregulated prices, "the middlemen also inevitably surfaced," charging high prices, he noted.

"If we are not careful we can allow a new layer of rich people to emerge who can make up to millions, while we have to continue to pay for child-care centers, schools, hospitals, clinics, family doctors, and all the services the revolution provides, which we are not willing to renounce," Castro said. "We are even less willing to allow a layer of millionaires to emerge."

The way to deal with this amassing of wealth at the expense of society, Castro said, is to ensure that anyone with excessive income pays an equitable tax. Since Cuba's National Assembly adopted a new tax code in August 1994, the government has not been able to properly organize the collection of taxes from these middlemen or from those who are self-employed, the Cuban president said. Steps are now being taken to implement these measures.

"We do not hold anything against the rich. What we want is that they not rob the people and that they pay taxes," he stated.

At the same time, Castro noted, the government has put off implementation of a special contribution from workers' wages toward the social security fund, which was also approved in principle as part of the new tax code. During workplace meetings organized by the CTC, many workers expressed strong concerns and reservations about the impact of a social security tax on wages. "We do not want to rush with any such measures," especially when wages are under pressure, Castro said.

Responding to a question raised by a delegate about regulating the prices on the agricultural markets, Castro noted that the opening of those markets "was not an ideal formula... but a measure that had to be

taken, with its advantages and disadvantages. You either establish this measure and the prices are free, or you don't establish it at all." The Cuban president said these markets have helped make food more accessible and affordable than when the black market predominated in 1993 and 1994. But, he said, only further increases in food production will lead to lower prices.

Castro pointed to several stories told by delegates during the congress where members of Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC) and volunteer work contingents in agriculture took initiatives that led to leaps in raising production of fresh fruit and vegetables, and milk in a few cases, as well as improving the living conditions of agricultural workers.

'We are winning the battle'

"We are following the correct road," Castro stated, "and it is an enormous pleasure to see how our working class understands this. That means we have won the battle."

Pointing to the increased challenges the Cuban people face from Washington's intensified economic war, Castro said working people "are not fighting primarily for ourselves."

Cuba has become a symbol for the peoples of the world, Castro noted in concluding his

speech.

"For this reason we are pleased when they call us internationalists, when they call us socialists, when they call us communists. For those who have any doubts about what we are doing... let it be clear that we will continue to be socialists and communists. Because those who do not change banners win more respect.... Those who do not betray their ideals, their principles win more respect. That's why Cuba and the Cuban people are more respected today."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

MASSACHUSETTS

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Defend Affirmative Action: Oppose Resegregation of Boston Schools. Speaker: Mary Nell Bockman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Report from Cuba by Participant in the Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers. Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey (corner Raymond). Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

The Minimum Wage Debate. Speaker: John Staggs, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

CANADA

VANCOUVER

Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) Holds Congress: 5.5 Million March To Defend Revolution. Speakers: Mark Severs and Guy Blue, members of International Association of Machinists in Seattle, who attended the convention of the CTC. Sat., May 18, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

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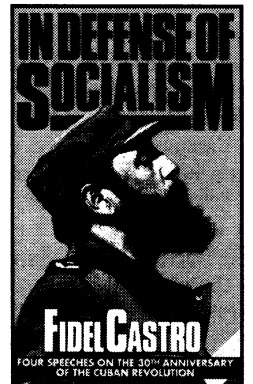
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CALENDAR

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

Benefit for U.S. Cuba Youth Exchange. Sun., May 19, 5-8 p.m. *New Riverside Cafe, Cedar Ave. S. and 4th.* For more information, call (612) 823-0093. *Twin Cities Cuba Network, c/o Resource Center of the Americas, 317 17th Ave., S.E.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Working Class Alternative to the Parties of War, Racism, and Depression. Speaker: James Harris, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president. Sat., May 18, 7:30 p.m. Reception: 6:30 p.m. *1930 18th St. N.W. (entrance on Florida) Donation: \$5. Tel: (202) 387-2185.*

AUSTRALIA

Cessnock

Memorial Day Service. Commemorate the recently opened Memorial Wall listing 1,532 coal miners killed in accidents in the Northern District since 1847. Sun., May 26, 3 p.m. *67a Aberdare Rd. Sponsored by United Mineworkers Federation NSW Northern District.*

Convention fling— Christopher Kerins, a New Jersey cop, was busted in Cincinnati on



Harry Ring

charges of holding up an area bank. After a seven mile chase, he was caught when he ran his car into a dead-end street. He was attending a law enforcement conference, but apparently skipped a session.

Funny, we thought things were worse than we thought — "Much of what is said about the plight of workers is inflammatory, dema-

gogic, or flat-out wrong....In reality we live in a time of immense economic opportunity for employees at all levels." — A spokesman for the National Association of Manufacturers, which reports workers are better off then they think.

Don't confuse us with facts — Over the past five years, corporate profits increased 75 percent, workers' pay increased 16 percent and consumer prices were up 17 percent. That's according to Robert Eisner, professor emeritus of economics at Northwestern University.

For kicks, they're chained to an oar? — The *Wall Street Journal* reports that a growing number of companies prefer terms like "team members" to such harsh words as employees or workers, which, they

contend, "connote an unhealthy division between management and labor." At one company, employees are "crew members" and eat in a company "galley."

The secret's in the sauce? — A major April 1 fire and blast at the Shell oil refinery in Martinez, California, was followed by several more fires and accidents, including one that took a worker's life. An April 20 fire in the company sewer system was attributed to a butane or propane leak. A folksy Shell spokesperson explained it was "like the stuff you'd use in a backyard barbecue or camp stove."

Smoking files — Ticked off at Ronald Tamol, her fiancée and a retired Philip Morris research exec, Harriet Heep of Richmond, Vir-

ginia, turned over eight cartons of his files to lawyers suing the tobacco industry. Reportedly the documents, left in her basement, focus on the level of nicotine needed to keep users hooked. Stay tuned.

Beat the Marlboro Man?!! — Harriet Heep's break-up with Tamol was sparked when her daughter announced she had finally quit smoking. When she said she had smoked Marlboros, a puzzled Tamol responded that she should not have been able to quit and asked if she would explain to company researchers how she did it.

Electronic impulse? — Dropping its offer to replace defective ignition switches for a fee, the Ford company ordered a recall of 8.7 million cars and trucks with

switches that can cause the steering column to erupt in flames. A recall ordered in Canada, and eight class-action suits apparently changed Ford's mind. Also, two litigants created a Web site on the Internet urging others to come forward. The site name — Assn. of Flaming Ford Owners.

Thought for the week — "When I went to Hollywood when *Strawberry and Chocolate* was nominated for an Oscar I said I would be happy to make films in America because they are seen everywhere, but I was afraid of the price I would have to pay. I'm not sure I would have the freedom that I have in Cuba." — Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Cuba's gifted filmmaker, who died April 16.

Activists win ruling against deportation in L.A.

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — A federal judge has issued a preliminary injunction here halting the government's deportation proceedings against two of the political activists known as the Los Angeles 8.

The ruling was made on grounds of selective prosecution. Earlier, U.S. district judge Stephen Wilson issued a similar injunction covering the other six.

The April 29 decision poses an advance challenge to the constitutionality of key provisions in the "antiterrorist" law signed by President William Clinton in April. The new statute denies noncitizens due process of law in deportation proceedings.

The government has been trying to deport the eight — seven Palestinians and a Kenyan — since 1987. They are charged with being supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an affiliate of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Washington brands the PLFP "terrorist."

When arrested, the eight were charged with advocating "communism," based on the thought-control McCarran-Walter Act. But in 1988, Wilson ruled key sections of the act unconstitutional and the Justice Department then moved to get them deported under Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regulations. The INS is a division of the Justice Department.

Six of the eight are here on visas and, until Wilson ordered a halt to the proceedings, the INS was trying to deport them on grounds of technical violations of their visas.

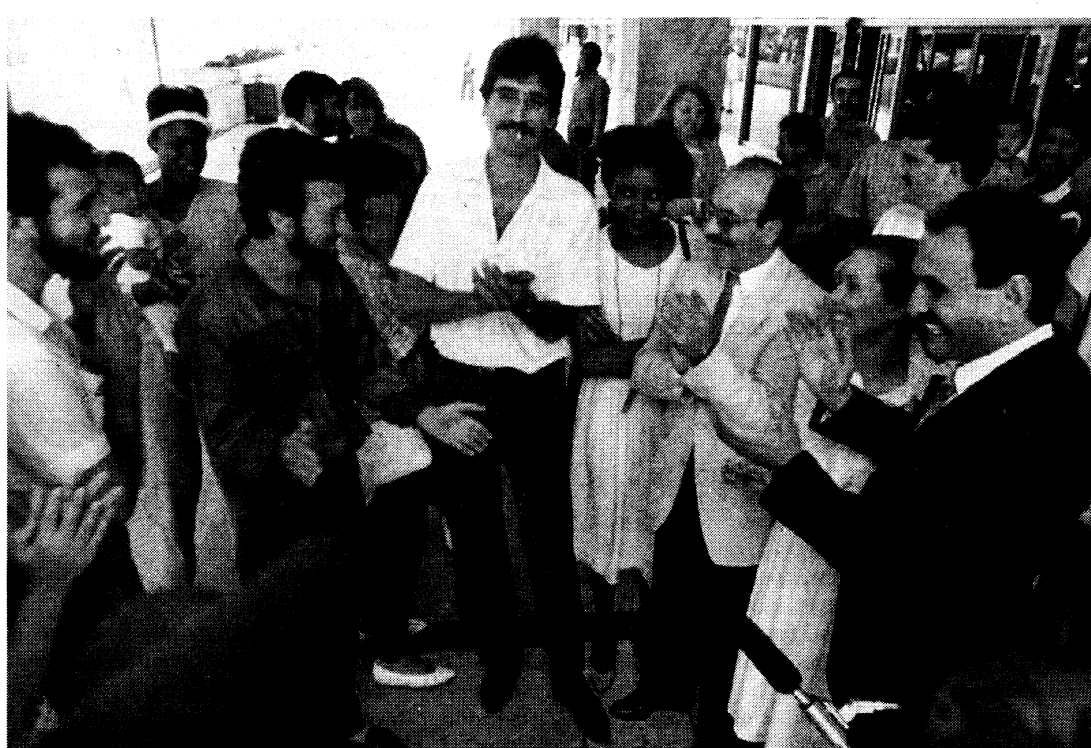
The other two, Michel Shehadeh and Khader Hamide, are permanent residents. To be deported, they must be stripped of that status. To that end, an INS judge has held protracted hearings in which the Justice Department has presented a pile of hearsay evidence, such as newspaper clippings, to establish that the PFLP is "terrorist." These hearings are now halted by the judge's ruling.

Last November, the Ninth District Court of Appeals upheld earlier rulings by Wilson that non-citizens are entitled to the same First Amendment guarantees of free speech as citizens, and that secret evidence cannot be used in deportation proceedings.

In his current finding that the Justice Department selectively prosecuted the eight, Wilson scoffed at the government contention that the decision to prosecute was made solely by a lawyer in the Los Angeles office of the INS.

Wilson declared, "Abundant evidence shows that higher-up national and regional INS officials, as well as representatives of the FBI, were involved in the decision-making process."

Buttressing his finding, the judge noted an absence of effort to deport supporters of such groups as the Nicaraguan *contras*, which in the 1980s sought, unsuccessfully,



Los Angeles 8 outside federal justice building in Los Angeles May 8, 1987.

Militant/Nelson Blackstock

to defeat the Nicaraguan revolution.

Pointing to the government's hearsay evidence of PFLP "terrorism," Wilson said none of it showed that the eight had been "implicated in any way."

The injunctions against the Justice Department were won by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, which went

into federal court early on to challenge the government moves to railroad the eight out of the country.

David Cole of the Center for Constitutional Rights, who is a member of the eight's legal team, hailed the judge's ruling. "This is a tremendous decision," he declared. "It says that the government cannot deport immigrants for simply expressing unpopular views. Government evidence showed that our clients had, at most, distributed literature, engaged in political demonstrations, and raised money for lawful activities."

"Today's decision confirms that all people in the United States have a First Amendment right to do just that."

Co-attorney Marc Van Der Hout of the National Lawyers Guild added, "We hope the government will take this opportunity to reconsider their long-standing efforts to deport our clients."

So far, the government has not indicated what its next move will be.

Philadelphia cop gets 13 years for brutality

BY JESSIE LUDLOW

PHILADELPHIA — In a major exposure of police brutality and corruption, five Philadelphia police officers have been given sentences ranging from 10 months to 13 years in prison. They were convicted of theft, illegal searches, and false arrests.

The investigation has resulted in a review of 1,800 arrests involving the five cops. So far, 116 criminal convictions have been overturned and civil suits totaling millions of dollars in claims have been filed.

John Baird, a 14-year police veteran, was sentenced April 15 to 13 years without parole, almost twice what federal prosecutors recommended. Baird pleaded guilty to beating, framing and robbing civilians.

The recent exposures of police criminal conduct began in February 1995 with the indictment of the five former officers from North Philadelphia's 39th District on charges that they stole \$100,000 from people, most of whom were arrested with bogus warrants.

Last August, a sixth former 39th District cop pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to five years in prison. On April 3 of this year four more officers were indicted on corruption charges, two from the 25th District and two from the Highway Patrol. All four cops were accused of stealing \$28,000 and are awaiting trial.

One of the many ongoing cases against police brutality in this city is that of Moises DeJesus, a 30-year-old tow truck driver. DeJesus was killed as a result of being beaten by police near his North Philadelphia home. Testimony by numerous neighbors and fam-

ily members who witnessed the beating contradicts the story being told by the cops.

As a result of community outrage, the Police Advisory Commission determined on Dec. 22, 1995, that the cops lied about their assault on DeJesus.

The commission recommended that the six officers be suspended for 15-30 days each and that Police Commissioner Richard Neal respond within 30 days. On April 29 Neal suspended eight cops for 10 days, not for beating DeJesus but for "lack of candor" about the beating.

The city administration paid \$20 million over the previous 28 months to resolve more than 225 lawsuits against police misconduct.

The April 21, 1996 *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that from 1990 to 1995, the Philadelphia Police Department fired 82 officers it found had committed robbery, rape, extortion, drug trafficking, and other offenses. One was convicted of murder. Of the 82 cops, city records show that 79 consistently received top ratings until the time they were dismissed, including the murderer.

Meanwhile, testimony is proceeding in a civil suit against the city and former police and fire commissioners for the May 13, 1985 assault on a house belonging to the organization MOVE.

On that day, police riddled the house with more than 10,000 bullet rounds. They then dropped a bomb on the residence, that started a fire that killed 11 individuals, including five children.

While police and firefighters stood by and watched, 61 houses were consumed, 250

residents were left homeless, and a city block was destroyed by the flames.

Ramona Africa, the sole adult survivor, and relatives of two slain MOVE members are seeking monetary damages for the assault. Former Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode testified the first day, stating he approved the use of an explosive, but never knew it was a bomb. The trial is expected to last several weeks.

from Pathfinder



FBI on Trial The victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying

Edited by Margaret Jayko

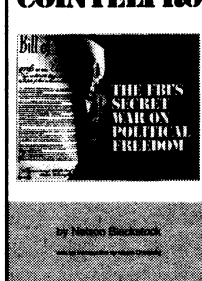
The victory in the case fought from 1973 to 1987 "increases the space for politics, expands the de facto use of the Bill of Rights, increases the confidence of working people that you can be political and hold the deepest convictions against the government and it's your right to do so and act upon them" --from the introduction. \$17.95

Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom

Nelson Blackstock

The FBI's spying and disruption against socialists and activists in the Black and antiwar movements. Includes FBI documents. \$15.95

COINTELPRO



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

U.S. hands off Liberia

The Clinton administration has deployed three U.S. battleships with 4,000 marines and Navy personnel to Liberia's shores. Some 300 marines are in Monrovia, the capital. A U.S.-backed "peacekeeping" army of 8,500 troops from several African countries, led by generals from the Nigerian military dictatorship, has intervened there since 1990. Through these brazen military threats, Washington is trying to impose its will on Liberian workers and farmers.

Oozing with hypocrisy, big-business spokespeople clamor for U.S. intervention in the name of bringing "peace," stopping "warlords," and ending "chaos." As with the 1992-94 U.S. invasion of Somalia, they seek to dehumanize the Liberian people as savages who cannot govern themselves and must be saved by the "civilized" U.S. of A.

Humanitarian peacekeepers? James Bishop, former U.S. ambassador to Liberia, was more blunt about U.S. capitalists' real interests in that West African nation. In a recent newspaper column titled "A Solution for Liberia: Send in the Marines," the ex-proconsul wrote: "At American urging [read: orders], Liberia entered World War I and World War II, facilitating the Allied victory in 1945 by providing crucially needed rubber and welcoming the American troops who built and guarded strategic military transport facilities. During the cold war, Liberia allowed the US to build and operate on its soil major communications, navigational, and foreign broadcast installations. American military aircraft enjoyed unrestricted access."

In other words, Wall Street and Washington have used Liberia as a virtual colony to plunder its raw materials and as a military staging platform for wars abroad. They uttered not a peep until the Liberian people began to fight to end a long dynasty of U.S.-backed dictatorships, which came crashing down in the 1980s. A civil war has un-

folded since 1989 between rival armed groups. Imperialism couldn't care less about the 150,000 people killed and the thousands left homeless — its sole concern has been to bring one or another of these groups under its thumb and get back to profits as usual. The U.S. government is most hostile to the Liberian forces led by Charles Taylor because he has not done Washington's bidding.

Will U.S. intervention benefit the Liberian people? The verdict is already in: Washington has dominated Liberia for 150 years, perpetuating exploitation, hunger, disease, and government brutality. The entire crisis is of U.S. making. It was Washington that for decades propped up regimes based on a privileged Americo-Liberian caste, reinforcing divisions among various national minorities.

The U.S. government is also intervening to stave off competing imperialist — particularly French — influence in Africa. In recent years Paris has sent its troops repeatedly into some of its former colonies, such as the Central African Republic and Rwanda. Faced with falling profit rates and driven to seek new markets, Washington and rival imperialist predators are increasingly relying on military means to protect their class interests. The Clinton administration has recently deployed troops or threatened military force against Yugoslavia, Cuba, China, North Korea, Libya, and Sudan, as well as backing the Israeli bombing of Lebanon.

The path to peace begins with the U.S. marines and other invading armies getting out of Liberia for good. This is the only way Liberian working people themselves can have the necessary breathing space to fight for national sovereignty and find a road to get the exploiters off their backs. Working people around the world should stand with our brothers and sisters in western Africa by telling Washington to keep its hands off Liberia.

Help sell Pathfinder books

For the last few months, socialist workers and young socialists in several countries have systematically stepped up their sales of books and pamphlets produced and distributed by Pathfinder Press, making this a focal point of their work.

Socialists who are in the industrial unions are getting more books by revolutionary fighters and about working-class struggles into their co-workers' hands each month. They have also sold many copies of the resolution that Cuban workers discussed at their national union congress at the end of April. In the process, a small but important layer of workers are being drawn closer to joining the communist movement.

Socialist campaigners are also taking these books to fellow fighters in different struggles — for immigrant rights, in defense of affirmative action, demanding Israeli troops get out of Lebanon, and others. They are beginning to reach out broadly in working-class neighborhoods and on campuses. As they do so, they find those who want to sign up for the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange or get involved in other activities.

Now there are two interrelated tools that can advance this effort: the Socialist Workers election campaigns and the drive to win new subscribers to the *Militant* and

Perspectiva Mundial, a Spanish-language socialist monthly.

Speaking at the Young Socialists convention in April, Socialist Workers presidential candidate James Harris explained that the socialist candidates are only ones who urge workers and young fighters to read, think about politics scientifically, and act on that basis. He and vice presidential candidate Laura Garza, together with local and statewide Socialist Workers candidates, are encouraging those they meet to do exactly that.

Each week and month the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* give the facts about the struggles of working people around the world, as well as covering what the socialist campaigners are doing and the ideas they are raising. Selling subscriptions to those who've been buying Pathfinder books will help them understand and act in today's politics. And those who become regular readers of the socialist press will want to get more deeply into political questions through the Marxist magazine *New International* and Pathfinder books.

The *Militant* encourages all our readers to join in these efforts. You can contact the nearest Pathfinder bookstore, or send in the coupon on page 3 to get involved with the Socialist Workers election campaigns.

A working-class approach to taxes

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — The article "Patrick Bucha appeals to farmers with his counterfeit anticapitalism (March 11 *Militant*)" was a meaty piece that was read with interest by working farmers and workers interested in the struggle of producers on the land. To each one of Buchanan's demagogic nostrums and procapitalist proposals, Bill Kalman offered concrete counterproposals that

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

point toward forging an alliance with wage workers to carry on a struggle against the capitalist bankers, landlords, and factory owners.

Some of the proposals that Kalman presents, such as cheap credit, are not ones wage workers would normally demand as part of their own fight against the employers. But in order to work toward an alliance with farmers, class-conscious workers need to offer support for the demands of working farmers, as well as small businessmen, that help bring relief from their particular forms of exploitation.

A resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party and communist organizations in other countries in 1938 pointed out, "The alliance proposed by the proletariat — not to the 'middle classes' in general but to the exploited layers of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie against all exploiters, including those of the middle classes — can be based not on compulsion but only on free consent, which should be consolidated in a special 'contract.' This 'contract' is the program of transitional demands voluntarily accepted by both sides." (See "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* by Leon Trotsky, from Pathfinder Press.)

Clearly presenting this "contract" and demonstrating their commitment to fight for it is the most effective way communist workers can counter the demagoguery of ultrarightists and fascists like Buchanan.

One of the issues around which some capitalist politicians attempt to garner support is discontent with high taxes. Steve Forbes, a former Republican presidential hopeful, called for a flat tax of 17 percent on incomes. This appealed to some working farmers who are weighed down by a myriad of taxes with complicated forms and filing requirements. Buchanan echoed support for the flat tax. "The IRS [Internal Revenue Service] is too powerful and intrusive," he told a Houston rally. "It needs to be downsized if not one day eliminated, and we believe a flat tax is an idea that needs to be pursued and studied."

No taxes on working people

The problem with the flat tax is that it assesses the same rate of taxation on wage workers and working farmers as it does on the wealthy. Kalman countered this proposal with a call for "a single graduated tax on income from capital. All exploited producers in the countryside, such as working farmers would be exempt from such a tax."

Simply calling for a single graduated income tax, rather than one on "income from capital," actually would be more effective and more in keeping with the tradition of the workers' movement. There are some multimillionaires, such as performers, athletes, and other professionals, whose high income doesn't come from capital but should be steeply taxed. The main point is that the threshold should be high enough to exempt workers and exploited producers.

It's difficult to improve on the demand presented in 1847 in the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. They called for "a heavy progressive or graduated income tax." Likewise, in Russia on the eve of the October 1917 revolution, the tax program presented by the Bolshevik Party led by V.I. Lenin was simply, "An income tax with progressive and very high rates for large and extra-large incomes...." Lenin added that this measure could remain largely fiction, however, unless the workers could force the employers to open their books to public scrutiny and expose the multitude of loopholes through which they evade paying taxes.

Finally, the statement in Kalman's article that "Socialists oppose capital gains, sales, or value-added taxes. They all work to the benefit of the ruling rich...." This is clearly true for all forms of sales taxes, which assess the richest capitalist and poorest worker or farmer at the same rate, forcing workers to lay out a much larger percentage of their income in tax on necessities. This includes opposing so-called sin taxes on tobacco, alcohol, gasoline, and other items that are sometimes motivated on the grounds that "it's for your own good."

But capital gains taxes derive primarily from the profits investors make on the sale of their stocks or real estate, and don't generally affect exploited workers and farmers. It would be an error to campaign against a tax that primarily hits capitalist profiteers. At the same time it's not necessary to promote this measure, as the single graduated income tax is sufficient to include all income the capitalists make.

— DOUG JENNESS

Arab-Americans boycott Detroit newspaper

BY JOHN SARGE
AND DOUG DOUTHAT

DETROIT — "The Metro Detroit Service Stations strongly advise all gas station members to stop selling the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* until further notice." This is the opening sentence in an April 20 letter to the 600-plus members of a predominantly Arab-American small business group. It gave a big boost to the circulation boycott being organized by the members of six unions on strike against this city's two daily newspapers.

Some 2,500 editorial, production and distribution workers walked out July 13 against the *News*, *Free Press*, and Detroit Newspaper Agency, which manages production, circulation, and advertising for both newspapers.

More than 2,000 workers remain on strike, fighting the company's attempt to cut

jobs and wages, and push back working conditions and the right to negotiate jointly.

The Arab-American gas station owners called for the boycott after the struck papers refused to run an advertisement against the Israeli assault on southern Lebanon. A Lebanese gas station operator explained that the newspapers raised the price for the half-page ad three times, which the organization agreed to pay, before refusing it. "No News and Free Press Wanted Here" yard signs, prominent in many working-class neighborhoods, are now appearing in front of gas stations that were selling the papers.

Striking newspaper workers continue to reach out and win new support as their strike enters its 10th month. The month of April opened with a demonstration by 2,000 auto workers and others attending the United Auto Workers (UAW) Bargaining Convention in downtown Detroit. They joined hun-

dreds of strikers in the largest rally at the *News* editorial offices since Labor Day.

Striking newspapers workers and their supporters then gathered April 14 to protest the continuing refusal of the companies to negotiate. The meeting also marked the opening of the trial of nine unfair labor practice charges brought by the National Labor Relations Board against the newspapers for refusing to negotiate in good faith before the strike began.

Strike support rally

Some 2,000 people, about 80 percent of them strikers, filled the ballroom in Detroit's Cobo Hall to listen to speeches by national and local labor officials, including John Sweeney and Richard Trumka from the national AFL-CIO; Ron Carey, international president of the Teamsters union; and Linda Foley, president of the Newspaper Guild.

The main activities they projected were fund-raisers and the weekly campaign of symbolic civil disobedience, organized by Readers United.

At the rally Al Derey, chair of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions and head of striking Teamsters Local 372, responded to press reports that his local had offered to make a separate settlement with the newspapers. "This strike started with six unions standing together and that's how it's going to end," he said.

The indoor rally was followed by a march to the Detroit News Building. Addressing marchers there, U.S. representative John Conyers blamed immigrant workers, a frequent refrain of his.

The congressman told protesters, "I'm going to talk to our friend [Attorney General] Janet Reno about where these people from outside the U.S. are coming from to be scabs. They're crossing right here at the Windsor-Detroit border." He also threatened to organize pickets at convenience stores owned by Chaldean immigrants from Iraq if they did not stop selling the scab papers.

Although Conyers is popular with many strikers because he has attended many of their protests, his attacks on immigrants worry some unionists. At least two strikers told these reporters they planned to "talk to him" about his remarks.

Strikers also report that their speakers bureau is having a big effect. In April strikers traveled to New York, Baltimore, Chicago, Dayton, Ohio, and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the newspaper bosses aren't backing off from their union-busting drive. The boycott called by the Arab-American businessmen occurred just before Knight-Ridder, the parent corporation of the *Free Press*, held its annual stockholders meeting in Miami. Twenty strikers took part, confronting the board of directors with a *Free Press* internal report that shows circulation is at least 30 percent below last year's level.

The following day the *Free Press* declared a bargaining impasse and imposed its last offer to the Newspaper Guild. The proposal included a merit pay plan, which allows the company to decide who gets pay raises, and an open shop clause.

The companies have declared more than 100 unionists fired for strike activity, and the list is growing. One striker said he recently received a letter firing him for something the company claimed occurred last fall. When asked what the notice meant to him, the worker replied, "Nothing. I'm still here and I'll be here until the company signs a contract."

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 and Doug Douthat is a member of UAW Local 247 in Detroit.

6,500 truckers rally in Los Angeles

BY CRAIG HONTS

LOS ANGELES — Truckers in southern California took action April 28 to reduce to a trickle the flow of goods out of the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. These ports are the two largest in the nation, and combined they are the world's third-busiest harbor. Two days into the strike by independent truckers, organized by the Communication Workers of America (CWA), some cargo carriers reported operations had slowed to 20 percent of their normal pace.

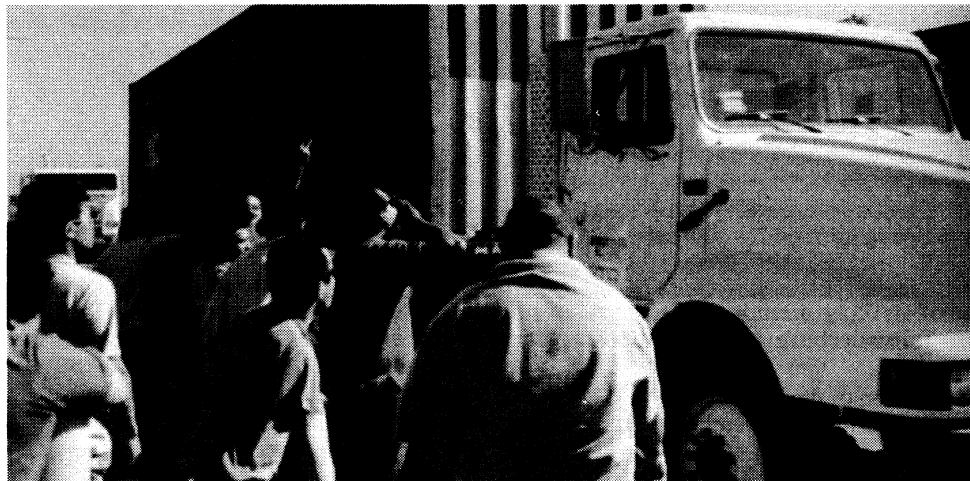
Usually 20,000 truckloads a day travel between the ports and major rail yards near downtown Los Angeles, where they are loaded onto trains for shipment east.

A spirited rally of 6,500 truckers launched the April 28 action, culminating an 18-month organizing drive by the CWA. Weekly union meetings have been drawing thousands of workers.

On the picket line at the big Maersk terminal in Long Beach, one trucker, José Barbaro, explained why they were striking. "It's gotten so that we can't make a living doing this anymore. We own our own rigs and pay for insurance, gas, tires, maintenance, registration fees, and taxes.

"They pay us \$50 to go from the harbor to the Santa Fe Railroad yard and \$25 for the return trip. That can take three hours or it can take all day. We can spend hours sitting in line at Santa Fe. It's real easy to lose money doing this. The companies we contract with have corrupt dispatchers who give jobs that make money to those operators that pay them off. This is why we need a union."

Another demand by many owner-operators was for an end to abusive treatment. The



Militant/Craig Honts

Truck drivers picket at Los Angeles port, demanding decent pay and conditions.

overwhelming majority of the operators working out of the harbor are Mexican or Chicano. Edwin Menjivar explained that whenever they raise a complaint, "Company officials will call us 'wetbacks' right to our face and tell us to 'go back to your own country if you don't like it here.'"

"This is a strike for our dignity and for the right to earn a living," Carlos Reyes, another operator, stated.

The Transport Maritime Association (TMA) announced April 30 it was signing a contract with CWA Local 9400 in which workers would get called to work out of a union hiring hall and have the option of selling their rigs and receiving a flat rate of \$25 an hour for their work.

An estimated 4,200 truckers who own and operate their own rigs, roughly two-thirds

of the truckers in the harbor, have signed up to work exclusively for TMA or other firms having contracts with the union. The trucking firms that haven't signed agreements with the union are being struck. Pickets are going up all through the harbor where these firms are attempting to haul for the carriers.

After the labor action began, the *Press Telegram* noted in a headline that trucking bosses were "nervous on May Day," expecting the heavily Mexican workforce to mark the international working-class celebration with widespread demonstrations. Their fears materialized, as pickets spread to every terminal at both ports that day.

Craig Honts is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1674 and works for the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad.

LETTERS

Terms too black and white

I've been a big fan of your labor coverage since the CPRS [rail] strike. Where we part company is your stance on international issues. Are Stalinist regimes like North Korea and China worthy of your support? And if those Khomeini heads in the Hezbollah aren't fascists I don't know who is. Such socialists I met during the strike were good-hearted people but, as my wife observed, naive. It's all very interesting — Che, Cuba, and all — but that's all it is. I simply cannot see the world in such black and white terms.

At least you guys are never boring.

Jeff Grab
member, United Transportation Union Local 1882
St. Paul, Minnesota

Tearing apart the lies

Recently I had the opportunity to represent Cuba in a model UN held at my high school here in Evansville. Much fanfare was made there over the concurrent, so-called Bosnia Peace Project, which involved a 20-by-48-foot re-creation of a Norman Rockwell painting by students. Addresses to the assembly were made by Congressman Lee Hamilton and Ivan Misic, Bosnia's ambassador to the UN.

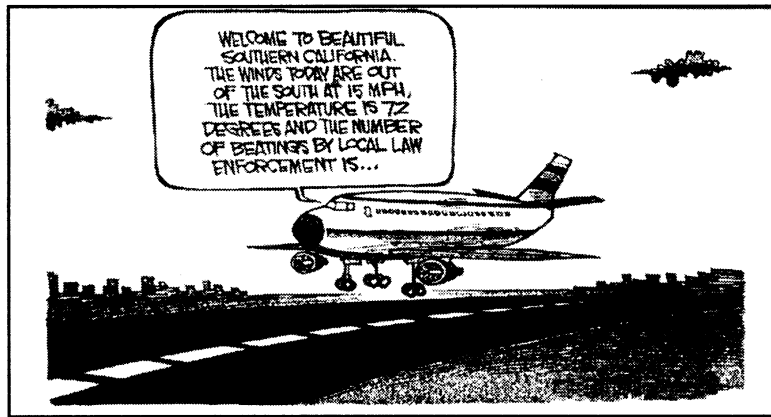
The issues we debated included the embargo of Cuba, nuclear proliferation, the situation in Palestine, and a possible entry of Taiwan into the UN with "observer status." It was enjoyable to tear apart the lies spouted by the representatives of the imperialist powers, and to present the truth, which is what Castro, Guevara, and Alarcón have always done in the United Nations.

I could find no information concerning Cuba's stand on the situation in Yugoslavia, and so I put forth the perspective found in *The Truth About Yugoslavia* and in the pages of the *Militant*. I would like to thank the *Militant* for providing the coverage it does, and presenting a working-class approach to politics. Without it, it would not be possible for myself and others to get our bearings in the class struggle. As is proclaimed on the Pathfinder Mural: "The truth must not only be the truth; it must also be told."

Adam Wolfe
Evansville, Indiana

Socialist campaigning

During a ten-minute spot on a community cable TV network, Sylvie Charbin, the Communist League candidate in the federal by-election in the Toronto riding of Etobicoke North, had full-screen shots taken of the *Action Program*



to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis, Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War by Che Guevara, and a copy of the *Militant*. She said that these publications would help explain what her campaign was all about.

It was an exciting time to have a socialist campaign. Charbin participated with pickets of the province-wide Ontario Public Sector Employees Union fighting to close down government buildings in order to defend union rights. In a heated all-candidates debate, she stood alone in her support to Quebec's right to independence. She spoke at a rally in support of revolutionary Cuba in front of the U.S. Consulate and at a demonstration of a 100 against the racist cop killing of Andrew Bramwell. At a

plant-gate distribution, many of Sylvie's co-workers at Ford Electronics stopped their cars to take campaign literature. And a Toronto Young Socialist chapter was formally organized during the campaign.

Joanne Pritchard
Toronto, Ontario

First, vote in Nader

Last March I attended an International Solidarity with Cuba conference. American "militants" were there to protest against the Helms-Burton Act. I found myself wondering about the credentials of the U.S. "militants." They have done nothing to give themselves and us even one of those secular-humanist anti-creationists so despised by Jesse Helms.

While Canada's diminishing numbers of "socialists" can proudly point to three "Social-Democrat" governments in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Quebec, despite a hostile, U.S.-inspired Canadian media, you American "militants" do little to change the tradition of Darth-the-Invader-style presidential candidates. Instead of doing like Spartacus, Galileo, Jesus, Robert the Bruce, Luther, or Martí, people with few resources who changed their societies, you come to Montreal to tell us, "Down with Jesse Helms!"

By all means, free Mark Curtis — after you've succeeded in voting in Ralph Nader.

Brian Jewitt
Cantley, Quebec

Irish struggle

I especially appreciate your coverage on Ireland. I don't get it anywhere else.

A.M.
New York, New York

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.

Millions hold walkout in S. Africa

National strike is part of range of actions to abolish legacy of apartheid

BY GREG ROSENBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than 300,000 workers took to the streets and several million stayed away from work throughout South Africa April 30, heeding a call by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) for the first nationwide strike since the 1994 non-racial elections. The 1.6 million-member trade union federation called the one-day walkout to demand that South Africa's new constitution not entrench the right of employers to lock out workers.

Parties in South Africa's government are negotiating a new constitution, under a May 9 deadline. If a draft constitution is not presented to Parliament and ratified by a two-thirds majority, the constitution may go to a national referendum.

The fifth working draft of the new constitution states, "Every worker has the right to strike." Capitalist parties in the coalition government insist on the inclusion of a clause guaranteeing every employer "the right to lock-out."

South Africa's current interim constitution was the result of multiparty talks forced on the former apartheid regime earlier in the decade, as a result of the mass revolutionary democratic movement led by the African National Congress.

COSATU estimated that 75 percent of workers in major industrial areas joined the strike action, in the face of a universal chorus of condemnation, threats and forecasts of economic doom from the employers, their press, and all capitalist political parties.

Some 15,000 marched on Parliament in Cape Town; tens of thousands crowded around the Union Building in Pretoria; 80,000 rallied in Johannesburg. In smaller cities and towns, workers poured into the streets: 10,000 in Vereeniging; 7,000 in Mafikeng; more than 3,000 in Kimberly; 5,000 in Nelspruit; and 10,000 - 15,000 in Pietersburg.

Union estimates showed weaker support for the strike in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. Support varied greatly in different industries and locales. The South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union, for example, reported that 75,000 workers, or 85 percent of the industry, stayed out in Natal. In the Western Cape 43,000 — almost 60 percent — stayed away from work.

"The African National Congress calls on freedom-loving South Africans to support COSATU's 24-hour national strike," the ANC had said in an April 20 statement. "Those parties which are seeking to entrench fundamentally undemocratic provisions in the constitution must realize that the people of this country will not accept a constitution which hampers the democratic trans-



Millions of striking members of Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) took to the streets in Johannesburg April 30, opposing plans to give employers the right to lock out workers.

formation of the country."

Big business howled in protest, invoking defense of the national economy. "When [South African and ANC president Nelson] Mandela says the ANC will not turn its back on the unions, he is indicating clearly to the markets where his economic priorities lie and how fragile is his commitment to market-orientated policies," said the *Financial Mail*, a prominent voice for capital.

"It's not one day — it is an attitude," complained Raymond Parsons, head of the Chamber of Business. "To take this kind of action at this point in time just doesn't fit with the kind of South Africa that we want to develop...it's going to be expensive for the country to indulge in this kind of luxury."

The National Party, Democratic Party, and Inkatha Freedom Party condemned the strike.

"Addressing the huge inequalities we've inherited from the apartheid era is going to require the collective power of ordinary people," responded COSATU spokesperson Neil Coleman.

The Democratic Party warned that the strike would send South Africa's currency, the rand, which lost nearly one-quarter of its value against the dollar in recent months, into free-fall. This prediction did not materialize, as the currency remained around 4.38 to the dollar throughout the week.

In response to claims that the walkout would paralyze foreign investment, Mandela remarked that "strikes are part of Western society." South Africa, he said, "has always had a history of strikes. I don't think investors should be alarmed. They know workers are striving for parity with their white counterparts."

The one-day walkout is part of a range of

actions being taken by the working class to abolish apartheid's legacy. On April 18, for example, 5,000 mineworkers at Anglo-American's Elandsrand gold mine near Carletonville held an underground sit-in. They demanded an end to the practice of docking black miners one day's pay if they report five minutes late — a penalty nonexistent for white miners.

Communist League candidate launches Australian campaign

The Communist League announced May 2 it is running Marnie Kennedy in the by-elections in Blaxland. Kennedy, 27, is a production worker at the F. Muller plant, a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, and the Young Socialists. The following is the Communist League's announcement of its election campaign.

"The Coalition government has announced plans to accelerate attacks on working conditions, union rights and our social wage. Prime Minister Howard's proposals will deepen a course already begun under Labor, a course to force more of the burden of the capitalist economic crisis onto the backs of working people and the oppressed," said Kennedy.

"What the employers and their government accomplish remains to be seen. The strikers at Weipa and Vickery showed CRA that union busting will meet powerful resistance. And just last week NSW teachers, 10,000 strong, marched to state parliament to press their wage demands.

"Our campaign rejects the nationalist framework of the Labor, Liberal, Democrat, and Green candidates. We reject Australian chauvinism, like Buy Australia campaigns. We identify with the struggles of the oppressed and exploited against the increasingly brutal assault by the wealthy minority the world over.

"We support an international union-led struggle for 'Jobs for all!' with the demand to shorten the workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work around and for a massive public works program to put millions to work building much-needed housing, schools, hospitals, and roads.

"We favor affirmative action for women and oppressed nationalities in education, housing, and employment, and oppose racist attacks. We support Aboriginal land rights and condemn Black deaths in custody. We oppose attacks on immigrants, like the proposed welfare cuts. The government's scapegoating of immigrants and Aboriginals

Talks on the constitution have deadlocked over several outstanding issues. In particular, the National Party insisted on an education clause in the Bill of Rights making possible the survival of overwhelmingly white state-funded Afrikaans-language schools. The ANC stands for teaching every child in his or her first language — but only in multilingual schools. "We are deadlocked on some very apartheid issues," remarked ANC negotiator Moham-med Valli Moosa. "Compromising on these rights would be a betrayal of the victims of apartheid."

The constitutional talks are being led by Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC secretary general and former mineworkers union leader. Ramaphosa recently announced he was leaving Parliament to assume a post in a new black-led capitalist consortium.

The South African government announced May 6 that it was postponing the May 29 local elections in KwaZulu-Natal. The ANC had proposed the postponement in the face of

a fresh wave of violence instigated by Inkatha.

In an escalation of this course, Inkatha thugs assaulted a Zulu royal household on April 26, critically injuring Queen Buhle Mamathe Zulu and several others. A niece of the Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelithini, was hacked to death. Police arrested nine suspects at a workers hostel loyal to Inkatha near Durban.

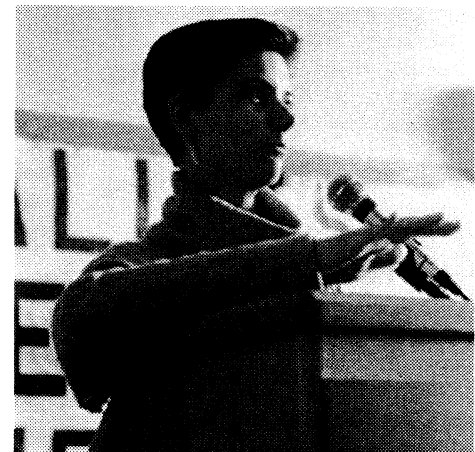
gives the green light to openly right-wing racist demagogues like Pauline Hansen and Bob Katter.

"As a working-class alternative in the elections, our campaign stands for independence for East Timor, West Papua, and Bougainville. We oppose the continued embargo of Iraq, which Canberra's warship helps enforce. Our campaign joined the thousands who marched through Sydney's streets on April 20 condemning Israel's terror campaign against Lebanon.

"Last summer I participated in the Cuba Lives Festival hosted by the Cuban Union of Young Communists. Over one thousand young people came to Cuba from 66 countries. We discussed the conditions facing young people and workers in today's world marked by economic depression and the drive toward fascism and war.

"Revolutionary Cuba is a real example that my campaign points to. Working people there built revolutionary organizations, took political power away from the bosses and landlords, and overthrew capitalism. Today they run society in the interests of the vast majority, the workers and farmers," Kennedy said.

"We need to do the same thing here in Australia."



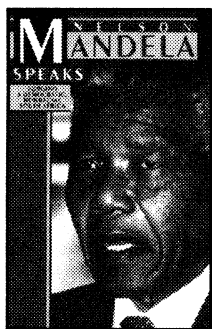
Marnie Kennedy

Militant/Jon Hillson

from Pathfinder

Nelson Mandela Speaks

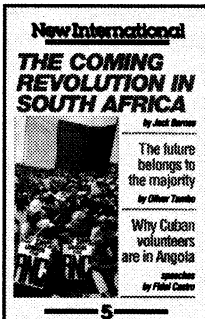
Mandela's speeches from 1990 through 1993 recount the course of struggle that put an end to apartheid and opened the fight for a deep-going political, economic, and social transformation in South Africa. \$18.95



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