

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

1,500 rally to back striking
paperworkers in Canada

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UK troops out of Ireland!

Agreement registers weakening of British imperialism

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — The governments of Britain and Ireland, and the parties participating in the all-party talks in Northern Ireland published an agreement at the conclusion of their negotiations on April 10. Each of the party leaders will now present the agreement to their executive body or membership for ratification.

The parties that drew up the agreement include the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Progressive Unionist Party, and the Ulster Democratic Party. The latter two are linked with loyalist (pro-British) paramilitary groups. Also participating were the reform-

**Communist League
candidates demand: Troops
out! Disband the RUC!**

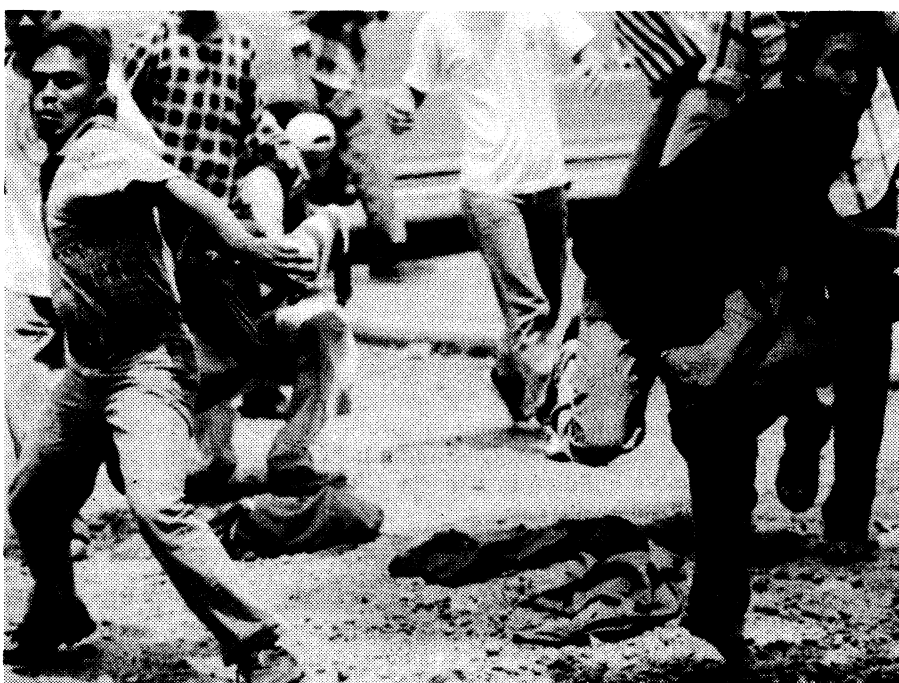
—see statement on page 14

ist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the bourgeois Alliance party, and Sinn Fein, the party that is leading the struggle to end British rule in the six northern counties and establish a united Ireland.

Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said, "This is a phase in our struggle. That struggle must continue until it reaches its final goal." At a plenary session at the end of the talks Adams also explained, "We have resisted attempts to force us out, to marginalize us, to silence and intimidate us...."

"These negotiations and the new arrangements which result from them are part of our collective journey from the failures of the past and toward a future of equals.... British policy in Ireland has manifestly

Student protests sweep Indonesia



Protesting the government and a worsening economic crisis, thousands of students rallied on 25 campuses throughout Indonesia April 15. With a devalued currency, inflation has soared along with mass unemployment in the world's fourth-largest country. Scores of businesses are unable to make payments on loans from foreign investors. Indonesia's total foreign debt is \$133.7 billion. Above, a student protest in March in Jakarta, the nation's capital.

failed. Partition has failed. The decades of unionist rule in the north were exclusive and partisan. Those days are gone forever. There is no going back to the failed policies and structures of the past, to the domination of a one-party unionist state supported by the

British government."

The agreement establishes a 108-person Northern Ireland assembly, to be elected by proportional representation. It states that there will be "checks and balances to en-

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Contract fight heats up between UAW and Case Corp.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL
AND RAY PARSONS

EAST MOLINE, Illinois — In response to company provocations, United Auto Workers (UAW) members at Case Corp. threatened to walk out at midnight April 8. "The company came out with a notice Wednesday morning saying that hourly workers would not get holiday pay for Good Friday, since there is no contract in effect," said William Baker, a machine operator with 24 years. In contrast, Baker noted that management employees would get paid holiday pay.

Another member of UAW Local 1304, who asked not to be identified, said the union set a midnight deadline for walking out over the issue. By 7 p.m. that evening Case relented, agreeing to pay for the day off as had been done in the past.

Tensions between labor and management at Case remain high as UAW members continue to work without a contract. The last agreement, covering 3,300 production workers at five plants around the Midwest, ex-

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Hundreds of workers buy 'Militant' at plant gates in Midwest

BY TIM MAILHOT
AND FRANK FORRESTAL

EAST MOLINE, Illinois — In response to some increased activity by rank-and-file workers in the Midwest, supporters of the *Militant* newspaper have organized sales and reporting teams in Illinois and Iowa over the past six weeks. In that period, 11 teams visited 11 plant gates or union meetings. All together, these teams sold almost 300 copies and seven subscriptions to the *Militant* and a copy of *New International* no. 7, featuring "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq."

Initially the teams were organized to relate to the ongoing fight by United Auto Workers (UAW) members against Caterpillar. The battle there has been a central piece of the *Militant's* labor coverage for almost seven years. On March 22 Cat workers narrowly approved a contract after rejecting an earlier offer and going without a contract since 1991.

At the first contract ratification vote on February 21, supporters of the *Militant* sold 60 copies of the socialist press to workers voting in Peoria and Decatur. The contract offer was soundly rejected in a series of raucous union meetings. A month later, a new contract offer with the provision that all 160 terminated workers be reinstated, was narrowly voted up. At the ratification meet-

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3,000 attend opening of international women's conference in Havana

BY ELIZABETH STONE

HAVANA, Cuba — Thousands of people crowded into the Karl Marx theater here April 13 for the opening session of the International Women's Solidarity Conference.

More than 3,000 participants have already registered, coming from dozens of countries. The largest delegations are from Latin America, North America, and Europe. Many countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East are also represented.

Opening speakers addressed a major theme of the conference — the intensifying attacks on living and job conditions of working people worldwide that disproportionately affect women in semicolonial countries. Vilma Espín, president and longtime

leader of the Federation of Cuban Women, spoke of the devastating impact of policies "whose aim is precisely to make things better for the wealthiest few in the world."

Espín pointed to intensified attacks on the right to medical care and education, to the numbers of women dying of curable diseases in the capitalist world, to figures that show half the children in Latin America and the Caribbean do not finish grade school, to deaths due to clandestine abortions, and to thousands of women who are not allowed to choose how many children to have. "Women should have control over their own bodies," she asserted.

Espín said that increased numbers of women are working in Third World coun-

tries, but under bad conditions with the worst pay, and lack of social services. "Their life is ongoing work, with days with no beginning and no end."

Reviewing the gains by women in Cuba toward more equality since the 1959 revolution, Espín said that progress could not have been achieved without the solidarity of people around the world. "We haven't conquered all, but we must defend all we have conquered," she said.

Mayada Abassi, vice president of the International Democratic Federation of Women, opened the meeting.

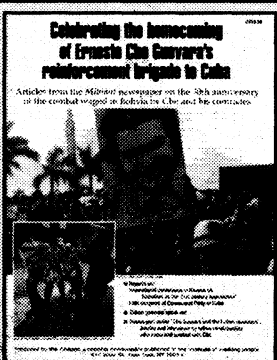
"The large turnout for the conference reflects energetic support for the Cuban people and opposition to the U.S. blockade," she said. "It is the dignity of the women and the people of Cuba that has helped the international community to think more each day that the situation imposed on the Cuban people is unjust."

Nora Castañeda, head of the Continental Front of Women, also spoke. The day closed with musical performances by Cuban artists. The high point of the cultural program was a presentation by Anacaona, a dynamic all-women Cuban band.

Elizabeth Stone is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Chicago.

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S. Africa youth fight for equality

Using tear gas and stun grenades South African cops attacked black residents in the town of Vryburg March 19. Students and others were protesting a local high school's poor integration practices. Cops' tear gas and stun grenades met up against residents' machetes and gasoline bombs. Black youth, who make up about 20 percent of the student population at Vryburg High School, are separated from whites inside the school and receive an inferior education. Tensions began to escalate when 10 black students tried to walk out of school in protest in February. Some white parents stormed the school and attacked blacks with whips and sticks. The day before the March 19 clash, dozens of black students had organized a peaceful demonstration to protest the inequalities. Cops arrested them for protesting without a permit, and some of the white cops slapped students around.

Refugees try to stay in Malaysia

Dozens of immigrants from Indonesia, fearing a campaign to deport 200,000 undocumented workers from Malaysia by August 15, scaled the walls of foreign embassies in Kuala Lumpur seeking asylum. More than a third of Malaysia's labor force is made up of immigrants, half of whom are from Indonesia.

Officials at the French and Swiss embassies turned the immigrants over to local cops. Eight remain in the U.S. diplomatic house. Malaysian human rights groups condemned the embassies for letting the authorities arrest the immigrants, the majority of whom say they are Acehnese people fighting for independence from Indonesia. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights refused to get involved.

U.S. gov't says it may act in Cambodia to arrest Pol Pot

Cambodian government forces are reportedly closing in on Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration is probing the idea of sending U.S. and Thai government forces to make the arrest and try him before an "international tribunal." An unnamed U.S. official was quoted in the *New York Times* saying that without U.S.

Panamanians: 'Health care is a right!'



"Health care is a right, you can't sell it for profit!" and "No to privatization!" chanted hundreds of students, workers, and others April 4 as they marched to the legislative assembly building in Panama City to protest the government's moves to end subsidized health care.

intervention Pol Pot "may die before we ever have a chance to bring him to justice." From 1975-79, Pol Pot headed the Khmer Rouge regime that ruled Cambodia with terror, slaughtering up to two million people. He was ousted with the help of Vietnamese troops. For years afterward, Washington and the United Nations continued to give official recognition to Pol Pot's "government in exile."

Meanwhile, the monarchist Prince Norodom Ranariddh, who was ousted from his position as second prime minister by Prime Minister Hun Sen last July, returned to Cambodia March 30 to campaign in general elections set for July.

Tel Aviv deports migrant toilers

Israel's labor ministry issued an April 2 announcement of its plans to deport nearly 100 undocumented workers in the Israeli resort town of Eilat, "in order to clean the city of those who disturb public order" before Passover tourists arrive from abroad. "Foreign workers are a profound mistake with the most negative effects on the Israeli society," stated Eli Ishai, Israeli labor minister. Tens of thousands of foreign-born workers — most of them from Romania, Thailand, and the Philippines — have taken residence in Israel, since free entry was denied to Palestinian workers five years ago. Ishai is laying down plans to deport up to 1,000 immigrant workers a month. "We wanted to clean the city of all that stuff," commented Ishai's spokesman Nachum Eidan, referring to the non-Israeli workers.

Blast kills 63 Ukraine miners

A methane gas explosion more than 3,600 feet below the surface in Donetsk, Ukraine, killed 63 workers in the Skachinskoho mine April 4. According to the Associated Press, this was "the worst coal mine accident since [Ukraine's] independence in 1991." The disaster was a result of old equipment that was not maintained and unsafe working conditions. Some 290 miners died last year in Ukraine's 229 coal mines. The death toll for this year so far stands at 160.

Haitians demand U.S. residency

Hundreds of Haitian activists and others from across the United States assembled at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., to demand that Haitians be given legal status. Seven busloads reportedly came from south Florida. The March 23 demonstration demanded U.S. legislators pass a proposed bill that would grant legal permanent residency to up to 120,000 Haitians.

Dominican gov't, Cuba set ties

The government of the Dominican Republic opened a consulate in Havana, Cuba, April 7 for the first time in three decades. Dominican foreign relations minister Eduardo Latorre, Presidential Secretary of State Danilo Medina, Deputy Foreign Minister Minou Tavaréz, and Customs Director Miguel Cocco attended the ceremony. Under pressure from Washington and fearing the example of the Cuban revolution, Santo Domingo broke diplomatic ties with Havana in 1964. For similar reasons, other Caribbean governments have had sparse relations with the Cuban government since the 1960s. But in the last year, high level officials from Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and Grenada have visited the island.

The Cuban government set up its consulate in the Dominican capital last December, two weeks after Santo Domingo named its counsel to Havana.

Mexico: troops terrorize Chiapas

About 1,500 cops and soldiers raided a village in southern Chiapas, Mexico, April 8, claiming to search for guns and kidnappers. They arrested three men from the Chiapan town of La Hormiga, San Cristóbal, supposedly on outstanding warrants. The three men arrested are all leaders of peasant organizations and unions. The government forces also "confiscated" 73 automobiles.

Racist youths are convicted for beating Black man in Brooklyn

On April 9 three young men were found guilty of second-degree assault and second-degree aggravated harassment in the racist beating of 27-year-old Kevin Teague. They were acquitted of a more severe charge of attempted murder. A fourth man, Ralph Mazzatto, was acquitted on charges of driving a sports utility vehicle that intentionally hit Teague.

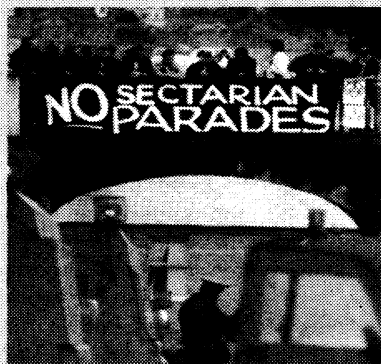
Anthony Mascuzzio, Alfonse Russo, and Andrew Russo assaulted Teague Sept. 20, 1997, after an argument with an unrelated group of Black youths. Teague, who is also Black, was headed home from his job at United Parcel Service when he was waylaid and pummeled with fists, feet, a baseball bat, and a steering wheel lock amid a sea of curses and racial slurs. Teague needed 13 stitches and may have incurred serious eye damage. He also lost two months' work. The three assailants convicted for beating him face up to eight years in prison.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Support the Irish freedom struggle

The recent agreement in Northern Ireland reflects the weakening of British imperialism and the determination of Irish fighters to resist second-class citizenship. From the protests against rightist sectarian marches to the fight for a united Ireland, the 'Militant' covers this important struggle. Don't miss a single issue!



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Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Joshua Carroll, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

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15,000 in Athens protest gov't attack on airline workers

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Fifteen thousand union members marched through the streets of Athens April 9 in the largest demonstration by workers in this country in the 1990s. There were also actions in Thessaloniki and other cities as part of a general strike called by the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE).

It was the culmination of three days of strikes and demonstrations called against the social democratic government's assault on the unions at Olympic Airways. The government submitted a bill to parliament that would end the eight-hour day, impose an 18 percent wage cut, and reduce the number of seasonal workers at the state-owned national airline.

By far the largest contingent consisted of members of the Federation of Unions of Civil Aviation (OSPA), which organizes the Olympic Airways workers.

Close to a thousand flight attendants, mechanics, ground staff, and other airline workers marched while ringing hand-held bells. Shipyard workers, garment workers, nurses, teachers, and others also joined in the march.

The strike shut down public transport, ports, and many other state-owned enterprises for much of the day.

The western terminal at Athens airport, home of Olympic Airways, was paralyzed. Most of its flights were canceled, though a few made it due to staffing by "safety" personnel. These workers are assigned by the union and are required by law to work during a work stoppage.

The Greek government is implementing a series of austerity measures. In the eastern terminal of the airport, where the foreign flagged airlines are based, the Federation of Civil Foreign Airlines Employees (OPXAE) called for a 24-hour solidarity strike. For most union members it was their first strike action there.

The concessions the government demanded at Olympic Airways have already been imposed at the foreign airlines. Fifty percent of the work force in the eastern terminal was assigned to "safety" crews, insuring that each airline had one flight for every destination.

In a compromise voted into law by parliament, the OSPA granted substantial concessions. The government obtained a 45,000



The Greek government is implementing austerity measures that directly affect working people. Above, construction workers in Athens protest unemployment March 11.

drachma (\$140) monthly pay cut for every worker. Cabin crews flight hours have been increased from 70 hours per month to 80 hours per month, with the company having the option to impose 90 hours for three months each year. In addition, family members are no longer eligible for free tickets. At the chauvinist request of the union officials, the government agreed that Olympic would not employ workers from other countries.

The new agreement has resulted in substantial opposition within the union itself. Pilots, mechanics, and some ground staff

have been working to rule and refusing to work on days off since the passage of the bill. This had led to substantial delays in flights. On April 13 general assemblies of the unions are to be held to approve the compromise bill.

Meanwhile, National Economy Minister Yiannos Papantoniou has announced that the government will be presenting a bill in parliament allowing all employers to force unpaid overtime in exchange for time off. The new bill would also allow 20 percent of the workforce at each company to be made part-time.

N. Ireland agreement reflects weakening British empire

Continued from front page

sure unionists cannot dominate nationalists as they did in the previous Stormont parliament, until it was abolished in 1972." The Stormont assembly was abolished following a rise in the national struggle in the early 1970s, and Northern Ireland has been ruled directly by the British government in London since then.

Sinn Fein will discuss whether to participate in the assembly at its national conference April 18-19. The party's chief negotiator, Martin McGuinness, told reporters he would urge the meeting to give the agreement "fair wind." Sinn Fein will be able to take its seats in the assembly without the Irish Republican Army (IRA) "decommissioning" its weapons. Until recently, the British government had insisted that decommissioning take place before and during the talks that just concluded.

The talks were extended past their initial deadline on April 9, as Sinn Fein threatened to walk out after the UUP and SDLP agreed on a deal establishing a three-year time scale for the release of political prisoners. Following an intervention from U.S. president William Clinton, this was rediscussed and a two-year time frame was established. Washington has taken a hand in the negotiations — former Sen. George Mitchell is serving as chair — with hopes that a more stable arrangement for governing Ireland will provide openings for U.S. business interests there.

There are an estimated 698 political prisoners in Northern Ireland, 47 in the Republic, and 12 in British jails. The majority of prisoners are nationalists who have been imprisoned for their role in the struggle to end the British occupation of Ireland. The agreement to release the prisoners extends only to those prisoners who belong to organizations that London acknowledges as having maintained a cease-fire.

The agreement on this front has angered some right-wing politicians, including former Conservative government minister Norman Tebbit, who spoke out against the release of prisoners. Tebbit called the agreement "a considerable victory for the IRA."

After the wrangle over releasing prisoners, UUP leader David Trimble tried unsuccessfully to get Clinton to urge the other negotiations participants to write the decommissioning of IRA and loyalist paramilitary weapons into the agreement. Clinton did not come to Trimble's support. Following the talks' conclusion, former British prime minister John Major demanded that IRA decommissioning begin if Sinn Fein takes its seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The agreement does not contain any commitment to end the British military occupation. Instead it calls for a "security arrangement consistent with the level of threat...

the removal of security installations, [and] the removal of emergency powers in Northern Ireland." A reminder of the reality of British rule was given in the final week of the all-party talks when the army held Sinn Fein president Adams at a checkpoint. British forces in north Belfast have also just begun to build a new "peace wall," a militarily fortified barrier segregating Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods.

Forces among the British ruling class hope the agreement, which will be presented in a referendum in Northern Ireland and in the Republic, will shore up their declining role around the world and put them in a better place to intervene against their imperialist rivals and against other peoples struggling to end imperialist oppression. An April 11 article in the *Financial Times* noted that "in the short term officials believe that the agreement will provide a helpful backdrop to [British prime minister Anthony] Blair's efforts to restart the Middle East peace talks during his four day trip next week."

Liberal Democratic party leader Paddy Ashdown claimed that with the agreement, "Britain now has a number of assets which allow us to pursue a completely different foreign policy.... If this works we would be able to claim a success in reaching a peaceful solution to the most difficult tribal conflict against the most successful terrorist organization in the world. At the same time, a settlement would free up military resources which could be redeployed in peacekeeping roles elsewhere."

Struggle opens over 'marching season'

The agreement was reached just days before the start of the "marching season," when the Orange Order and other pro-British groups organize sectarian and triumphalist marches through predominately Catholic communities in Northern Ireland, which aim to reinforce Protestant domination. These marches have become a flashpoint in the nationalist struggle in recent years. The newly formed Parades Commission rerouted the April 13 march by the sectarian Apprentice Boys along Belfast's Lower Ormeau Road, a small Catholic enclave. Only a handful of rightists showed up for the march, and they did not try to challenge the rerouting.

But the chairperson of the Parades Commission, Alistair Graham, indicated that there should be "one or more Loyal Order parades along Lower Ormeau Road in 1998." Responding to this threat the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community (LOCC), which has mobilized residents and others to block the parades in recent years, said it thought Graham's remarks "had no basis." The LOCC statement read, "The Parades Commission statement indicates their true agenda — to get Orange feet on the Lower

Ormeau Rd." The LOCC called on the Orange Order to engage in direct discussion with Catholic residents about the routing of the parades.

More than 4,000 people marched through the Garvaghy Road area of Portadown at the end of March to protest the forthcoming parades by the Orange Order in that town.

Unionist political forces, which London has relied on to help maintain its rule since it partitioned Ireland in 1921, have come out of the talks weaker and more divided. This was reflected on the last day of the talks, when leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Ian Paisley was jeered and heckled by other loyalist supporters as he tried to hold a press conference at Stormont. The DUP have refused to take part in the talks. Several of Paisley's former supporters shouted such abuse as "You are a dinosaur. Your days are over."

Senior members of the UUP have challenged Trimble's support for the agreement, opposing the gradual release of political prisoners. At a meeting on the day after the talks, a third of Trimble's UUP executive committee voted against the agreement.

The document also contains proposals for the establishment of a North/South ministerial council, to be made up of representatives from the government in the South and from the new assembly in the North. According to Stephen Dodd, writing in Ireland's *Independent on Sunday*, the ministerial council will have no executive powers. However, an article written in the *Observer* states, "The Unionists claim victory since the body is accountable to the assembly, but the nationalists say it has an executive, and therefore has independent powers."

The Irish government has agreed to put to a referendum the replacement of articles two and three of the Irish constitution, which lay territorial claim to the six counties held by Britain in the north. The proposed new wording would read "A united Ireland shall be brought about only by a peaceful means, with the consent of a majority of the people... in both jurisdictions in the island." The British government has agreed to repeal the Government of Ireland Act 1920. It has also agreed to introduce laws allowing further referendums on Northern Ireland every seven years "if it appears likely that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease being a part of the United Kingdom and form a part of a United Ireland."

Adams indicated that he would oppose the removal of articles two and three of the Irish constitution. Northern Ireland's six counties, he said, "are Irish counties. Nothing can change that."

The IRA published a message commemorating the 82nd anniversary of the Easter Rising, following the all-party talks. The

1916 Easter Rising was the first major revolt by the oppressed and exploited in Europe following the outbreak of the First World War. Although London quelled the uprising and executed its leaders, they were unable to crush the nationalist revolt, and by 1921 had to sign an agreement with bourgeois nationalists in Ireland to partition the country and grant independence to the south.

In the message the IRA reaffirm its commitment to "ending British rule in Ireland and the reunification of our country." The message applauds the Sinn Fein negotiating team at the talks and says, "We will carefully study the outcome of the talks process... and face the future with the determination that republican people have shown over the last 30 years."

Speaking at a rally on Easter Sunday, Adams said that the agreement would "see us through to make more significant advances towards our goal of a free and independent Ireland." According to a Press Association report, Adams received a "thunderous reception" at the commemoration rally in Carrickmore.

Adams gave a more detailed assessment of what had been accomplished on April 11. "The republican struggle so far has come through a series of phases from the civil rights days and the mass and popular uprising of the early seventies through intense periods of armed struggle and the prison struggles including the hunger strikes, into electoralism and the Sinn Fein peace strategy. That struggle goes on," he said. "The real significance of last week's events for unionism was that the Ulster Unionist Party was moved further than it wanted to go. But if it is to play a positive role... unionism will have to move even further.... It is my view that this will happen. But only when there is no alternative.... That is why the focus of all democratic opinion must be on securing changes in British policy and removing the [unionist] veto."

"The agreement registers a weakening of British rule," said Pete Clifford, the Communist League candidate in the May council elections for Angell Ward in Lambeth, London. "Prime Minister Blair spoke of the hand of history being on his shoulder. But the truth is it's London's bloody hand that divides and oppresses the Irish nation. It is a tribute to nationalist fighters over the last 30 years that Westminster can no longer rule in the old ways. Now is the time to stand with these fighters for self-determination and press for Britain to go — at the center of which must be the withdrawal of the source of violence in Ireland: British troops."

Paul Davies is a member of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union in Manchester.

Cuban writers tour Sweden and Iceland

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — "Out of the crisis in 1991-93, new ideas were born," explained Francisco López Sacha, president of the Cuban Writers' Union, at a public meeting here April 4. "Together with publishers in Argentina, books by previously unpublished Cuban authors were produced. With international support, for example from Spain, cultural magazines that had stopped publication could resume. We saw more cultural exchange internationally, more international contacts between authors and artists and publishers."

López Sacha and Norberto Codina toured several cities in Sweden before and after participating in the March 31 - April 2 World Conference on Culture. Codina is the editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, the cultural magazine published by the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC), which the Writers' Union is affiliated to.

At a meeting organized by Casa Latina on March 23, López Sacha explained how the writers' union and others in Cuba organized readings of poetry, short stories, and novels for authors who could not be published because of lack of ink and paper in the early 1990s, following the collapse in favorable trade with the Soviet Union. "In that way, writers could still maintain contact with their audience."

"When the economy started to recover, local publishing houses were founded, publishing books for readers locally and nationally. Six or seven such new publishing houses have been founded since 1993. The situation now means more books are published again. There are still fewer copies than before 1990, but they are read by more people."

The World Conference on Culture was organized by the Swedish Joint Committee for Artistic and Literary Professionals (KLYS), as a parallel conference to a United Nations conference on culture. It brought together more than 80 authors and artists from 35 countries.

Under the point on Culture in Areas of Conflict, López Sacha presented a paper titled "Used Paper Writers." In it he described the lack of paper that every Cuban writer has to cope with. But, as López Sacha noted, "Cuban literature has demonstrated that art and masterpieces are possible even in the midst of the most difficult conditions inside a country: war, blockade, economical crises, or lack of paper.... We have a true literary art, a quality boom in short stories, in novels, poetry, and in drama, a fabulous tradition and the demand of an educated reading public that understands and moves us forward.... We are not suffering and we are not going to suffer the sadness that John Lennon describes in the lyrics of the unforgettable song [*Paperback Writer*]: the pain of the artist obliged to sell, to mutilate or to remake his work in order to satisfy the requirements of those who pay the money."

During their tour in Sweden, López Sacha and Codina spoke at public meetings organized by the Sweden-Cuba Friendship Association in Gothenburg, Sundsvall, Norrköping, Uppsala and Stockholm, as well as the university in Gothenburg. Codina also made a brief visit to Iceland.

BY SIGURLAUG GUNNLAUGSDÓTTIR

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — "In Cuba the freedom of expression is greater than it is said to be in other countries, but less than writers and artists would like. The role of artists and writers is not to change society or to deliver absolute truth or to answer all questions, but to take the pulse of society and ask questions about everything," said Norberto Codina, editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, at a public meeting here March 28. The meeting was hosted by Iceland-Cuba Friendship Society.

Codina had just explained that in the 1970s many writers and artists were marginalized because dogmatic attitudes



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Sergio Corrieri, president of ICAP (Cuban Institute for the Friendship with the Peoples), center right; and Francisco López Sacha, president of Cuban Writers' Union, center left, speaking at an April 4 public meeting in Stockholm, Sweden.

triumphed in literature. This began to change in the 1980s. "When the famous crisis came" he said, and trade relations with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union collapsed, the economic impact affected culture and literature as well. In 1989, 50 million copies of the cheapest books in the world had been produced, Codina said, but in 1992 less than 1 million. *La Gaceta* did not come out for more than a year. At the same time there was a cultural boom. Today "Cuban artists hope to continue to advance and reach new freedom, fighting taboos against certain themes."

During his three-day visit to Iceland, Codina read his poetry and discussed culture and life in Cuba with close to 200 people. He was warmly received by about 60 students and professors at the Spanish Faculty at University of Iceland in Reykjavik. Here a big portion of the discussion centered around questions on relationship between culture and Black tradition in Cuba. Codina stated that in the United States Afro-American culture is a specific cultural sector, "but in Cuba it is a component of society." Codina commented, "I do not consider American movies where the chief of police is Black to be Black culture."

Answering a question on women in Cuban literature, Codina responded in a similar way as to another question on whether there are laws against gays. He noted that many people in the Nordic countries seemed to think these questions can be resolved simply by law. In Cuba there are several law defending the right of women and no law against gays. But the question of overcoming centuries of oppression and discrimination is not simply a legal. Women in Cuba, he said, are fighting to advance as part of the Cuban revolution, including in the field of literature. He proudly said that last year a woman received a very important literature prize.

Codina was invited by the Iceland-Cuba Friendship Society, and his tour was financially supported by the Mál & Menning publishing house, the country's main publisher of Spanish literature translated into Icelandic. Codina was well received as he read poetry at the publisher's Café, where the six copies of *La Gaceta* that were available sold out in less than five minutes.

Sigurður J. Haraldsson, a Young Socialists member in Reykjavik, contributed to this article.

Militant Fund: part of revolutionary history

BY DAVID BERG

NEWARK, New Jersey — The \$110,000 Militant Fund follows a strong tradition in revolutionary movements around the world. In every case, workers and farmers have been the backbone of raising money for the revolutionary press.

In the struggle in which working people overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in Cuba, for example, the July 26 Movement raised funds to print and distribute thousands of copies of Fidel Castro's *History Will Absolve Me* while he and other revolutionaries were in prison in 1954.

In his book *Time Was on Our Side*, Cuban historian Mario Mencía quotes an account by July 26 Movement member José Valmaña, head of the fund-raising effort for this revolutionary manifesto. "Centavo by centavo and peso by peso, hundreds of pesos are being collected to print the pamphlet," Valmaña wrote at the time. Mencía notes that "after exhausting and often risky efforts, it became clear that the funds, meticulously controlled by Treasurer Valmaña, were insufficient to pay for 100,000 copies, as Fidel had suggested, or even a much more modest run."

Mencía adds, "they then resorted to the popular device of holding a raffle — for two TV sets. Numbered tickets were printed up and sold for a peso each, but the buyers were told that there weren't any prizes this time, for the money was to be used in the drive against the tyranny. Since the amount involved was small, the 'non-affle' proved attractive, and it may be said that the first edition of *History Will Absolve Me* was financed chiefly by anonymous people with very little means." The Cuban revolutionaries collected 2,000 pesos that allowed them to do an initial printing of 27,500 copies.

Today, supporters of the *Militant* are using similar means to finance the socialist press — from raffles and fund-raising meetings to appeals to co-workers on the job. Contributions range from \$1,000 to a few dollars. Enthusiastic about the *Militant's*

firsthand coverage of the explosive developments in Kosovo and elsewhere in the Balkans, for instance, a garment worker in Philadelphia recently gave \$5 for a copy of the paper telling *Militant* supporters to keep the change as a contribution.

A sign of the potential to raise funds is the fact that hundreds of industrial workers engaged in union struggles in several parts of North America have purchased the *Militant* as they put up resistance to the bosses' attacks — from auto workers in Iowa and paperworkers in British Columbia to workers at Caterpillar and Case Corp. in central Illinois.

This bubbling resistance and increased opportunities to win workers and youth to the communist movement were major

themes at the socialist conference and second session of the Communist League convention, held in Toronto April 11-12. Participants at the gathering, which included *Militant* supporters from the United States, gave more than \$2,000 to the fund and pledged an additional \$2,000.

At the midpoint of the eight-week international Militant Fund, \$32,650 has been received — but we should be at \$55,000. As the chart on this page indicates, *Militant* supporters now have to take special steps and devote detailed attention to raise the \$110,000 in full and on time.

Contributions can be made out to the Militant Fund, and sent to 410 West Street, New York, New York, 10014.

Militant Fund Drive March 14 - May 10			
CITY/COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
New Zealand			
Auckland	930	551	59%
Wellington	115	67	58%
Christchurch	700	79	11%
N.Z. Total	1,630	697	43%
United States			
Des Moines	2,500	1,450	58%
Chicago	11,000	4,990	45%
Detroit	4,200	1,814	43%
Pittsburgh	5,000	2,145	43%
Miami	2,850	1,150	40%
Philadelphia	4,000	1,583	40%
Twin Cities, MN	7,000	2,515	36%
Boston	6,000	1,880	31%
Newark	8,500	2,645	31%
Houston	6,000	1,665	28%
Atlanta	3,200	875	27%
Los Angeles	9,000	2,420	27%
Washington, D.C.	3,000	805	27%
Birmingham	2,500	662	26%
Seattle	7,000	1,525	22%
Cleveland	3,000	492	16%
New York	14,000	1,486	11%
San Francisco	10,000	100	1%
Other	0	313	
U.S. Total	108,750	30,515	28%
Canada			
Montreal	1,517	478	32%
Toronto	2,414	638	26%
Vancouver	1,000	100	10%
Canada Total	5,000	1,216	24%
Sweden	700	145	21%
Australia	650	50	8%
United Kingdom			
London	600	26	4%
Manchester	400	0	0%
UK Total	1,000	26	3%
France	220	0	0%
INT'L TOTAL:	117,950	32,650	30%
SHOULD BE:	110,000	55,000	50%

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Workers at plant gates, picket lines subscribe to the 'Militant'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

As the drive to win new readers to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Marxist magazine *New International* reaches the midpoint, Socialist Workers candidates and campaign supporters are using the campaign newspaper to reach farm workers, meat packers, workers on strike, farmers, and students. While distributors in some areas are building momentum, there's work ahead to get the circulation drive on schedule.

We welcome *Militant* supporters in France to the chart this week. Young Socialists members in Paris adopted goals for the subscription campaign, and have so far sold 10 copies of *Nouvelle Internationale*.

Organizing to meet lots of workers and youth — and systematically following up with those who are interested in the socialist press — is key to selling subscriptions. Below are a few reports on recent sales activities.

Rail worker Craig Honts reported from the Central Valley region in California, "We have sold 11 subscriptions to the *Militant* and one subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* while campaigning for Marklyn Wilson, Socialist Workers candidate in the eighth Congressional District." Honts is part of a regional team that will travel throughout the valley talking to poultry workers, farm workers, and others. They will wrap up the trip in Watsonville where a rally to defend bilingual education is planned.

Socialist Workers candidate Lea Sherman from Houston wrote, "We have combined sales of the press and petitioning to get my campaign on the ballot for the 29th Congressional District." Sherman said a petitioning and sales team sold two *Militant* subscriptions to Teamsters on the picket line at Laidlaw Environmental Services, a hazardous waste disposal plant in Deer Park, just outside of Houston. The 180 workers went on strike August 7 against Laidlaw when the bosses demanded concessions that included an

insurance co-payment and an end to a pension plan. Management and temporary workers are operating the plant.

"We sold a subscription to a striker who bought a copy of the paper last year from a *Militant* supporter who came to his house," Sherman said. "He recognized the member of the sales team who had sold it to him and readily signed up for the paper when he saw an article on the 252 locked-out oil workers who continue their pickets at Crown Central Petroleum."

Many Teamsters are familiar with the struggle of these refinery workers against the Crown bosses, who insisted on gutting their seniority and replacing the union workers with temporary contract labor. Supporters of the socialist press in Houston have sold seven *Militant* subscriptions to Crown workers since the beginning of the sales drive — one right after the team campaigned at Laidlaw and visited the Crown picket line.

On April 9 a sales team drove to Texas A&M University in College Station, where they set up a table in the "free speech area" and sold a *Militant* subscription. They also organized to get a representative of the Socialist Workers campaign to speak to a class there.

"So far, we've sold six copies of the new issue of the *Militant* with the front cover article on the wharfies struggle on the picket lines," wrote *Militant* supporter Ron Poulsen from Australia, after receiving last week's bundle. "We joined 500 other workers in a mass picket to successfully prevent trucks with containers from entering the Patrick terminal at Port Botany in Sydney." Poulsen added that an all-day sales team in Parramatta, Sydney, sold one *Militant* subscription, 12 copies of the paper and *New International* no. 8 with the article "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism."

"We met our target of selling six *Militant* subscriptions for the week," reports Jill Fein from Atlanta. "We sold a subscription to a student who came to the Militant Labor Forum after meeting a sales team at Georgia State University." One student attending the National Conference of Black Political Scientists purchased a *Militant* subscription and participants at the event also bought 30 Pathfinder titles. Fein said *Militant* supporters there sold a subscription to a woman from Ireland who was standing at the front door of the Pathfinder Bookstore waiting for it to open.

"We sold nine copies of the *Militant* and one subscription at the WHX (Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel) gate in Yorkville, Ohio, on March 27," wrote Cecelia Moriarty and Chris Marshall from Pittsburgh. "We set up a table of Pathfinder literature across the street from the plant with signs saying 'U.S. Hands off Iraq' and 'UAW wins strikers' jobs back at Caterpillar.' One steelworker getting off work decided right away to subscribe after hearing a brief description of the paper. He had never seen the paper before. We introduced ourselves as fellow steelworkers from Pittsburgh and pointed out that the paper had covered and supported their strike." The 10-month-long struggle of 4,500 steelworkers ended last July with the union winning an industry-standard pension.

"Two people asked if it was a communist paper," the two socialist steelworkers added. "One worker stayed to talk because he was surprised that anyone would be a communist. After a discussion about our election campaign and defense of affirmative action, he bought a copy of the *Militant*."

Wisconsin. All told, 185 copies of the paper and four subscriptions were sold.

At one of the most recent sales (April 9) supporters sold 56 papers and one subscription at the East Moline plant gate, despite a constant drizzle of rain. Although most papers were sold to Case employees, many workers from surrounding factories — both union and nonunion — bought the *Militant*. Papers were sold to UAW members from McLaughlin, located next to Case; to relatives of people who worked at Case; and to one semi-tractor trailer driver who stopped his rig smack in the middle of the highway. Many of these workers showed support for the union, since their jobs are directly tied to Case. One nonunion worker, a truck driver, who bought a *Militant* said his boss would fire him if he didn't cross the picket line in the event of a strike. Another said that he wished his plant was unionized. One of the reasons workers are buying the *Militant* is to get information on their fight and related developments in the labor movement. Some said they saw the paper inside the plant in break areas. Many workers wanted to read about the Caterpillar settlement, which was front-page news locally.

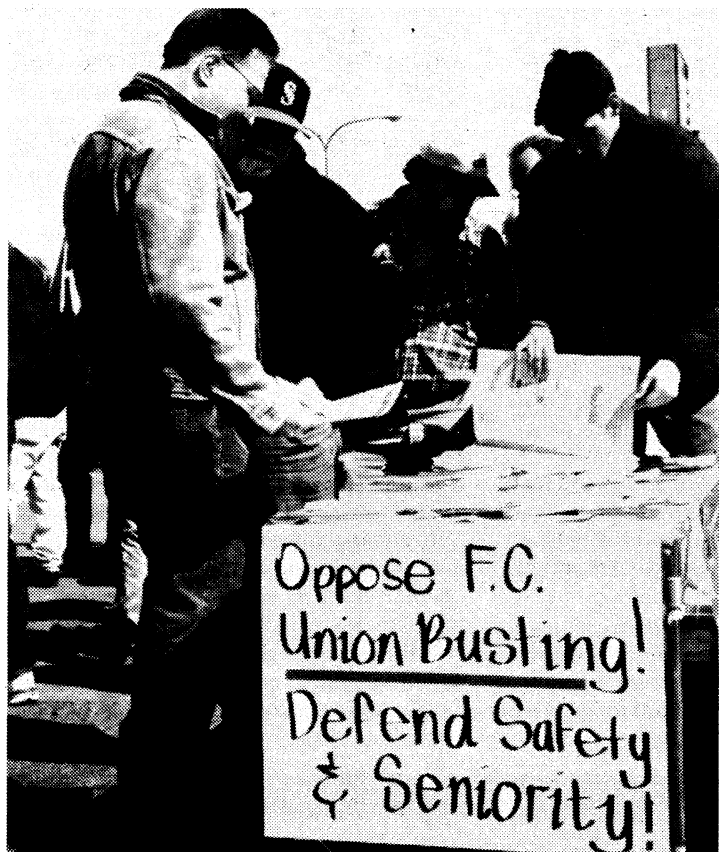
A small layer of workers were attracted to some of the

SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE MARCH 14 – MAY 10

Week 4 should be 50%

	Militant Goal	Sold	%	PM Goal	Sold	NI Goal	Sold
Sweden	16	10	63%	6	3	10	5
New Zealand							
Christchurch	25	16	64%	1	1	8	7
Wellington	4	2	50%	1	0	1	0
Auckland	35	14	40%	2	0	8	1
N.Z. Total	64	32	50%	4	1	17	8
Canada							
Vancouver	50	22	44%	6	3	20	10
Toronto	45	15	33%	8	4	20	13
Montreal	25	6	24%	7	7	25	13
Canada Total	120	43	36%	21	14	65	36
United States							
Atlanta	30	18	60%	13	4	18	5
Houston*	40	22	55%	10	6	18	13
Philadelphia	35	18	51%	8	4	10	5
Des Moines	45	20	44%	25	8	25	4
Boston	50	21	42%	20	8	40	17
Miami	45	18	40%	22	12	20	11
Seattle	70	27	39%	15	6	25	4
Birmingham, AL	50	18	36%	10	4	15	4
Washington, DC	45	16	36%	15	4	15	17
Cleveland	35	12	34%	8	4	10	0
Detroit	40	11	28%	8	2	15	5
Chicago	90	24	27%	40	12	30	7
Los Angeles	100	24	24%	50	9	50	49
New York	150	36	24%	75	32	75	31
Pittsburgh	50	12	24%	3	0	15	3
Newark, NJ	125	29	23%	50	12	60	20
San Francisco	80	16	20%	30	15	35	5
Twin Cities, MN	70	11	16%	12	3	20	4
U.S. Total	1150	353	31%	414	145	496	204
United Kingdom							
London	45	16	36%	8	2	35	14
Manchester	26	5	19%	2		18	4
UK Total	71	21	30%	10	2	53	18
Australia	16	3	19%	5	3	10	6
Iceland	9	1	11%	1	0	3	0
France	3	0	0%	5	0	30	10
International totals	1440	463	33%	465	168	681	287
Goal/Should be at	1400	700	50%	450	225	600	300
IN THE UNIONS							
United States							
UFCW	15	7	47%	16	8	10	3
IAM	60	20	33%	14	3	35	7
UNITE	10	2	20%	12	4	10	3
UTU	50	10	20%	5	0	20	2
OCAW	27	5	19%	5	0	20	0
UAW	45	8	18%	10	1	22	5
USWA	55	8	15%	7	3	30	5
U.S. total	262	60	23%	69	19	147	25
Canada							
CAW	4	1	25%			2	2
USWA	5	1	20%	1	2	6	1
IAM	9	1	11%	1	0	5	1
UNITE	2	0	0%	1	0	2	0
Canada total	20	3	15%	3	2	15	4
New Zealand							
MWU	3	1	33%			1	0
EU	5	0	0%			1	0
SFWU	2	0	0%			1	0
N.Z. total	10	1	10%			3	0
Australia							
AMWU	3	0	0%		0	2	0
TCFU	1	0	0%	1	1	1	0
Australia total	4	0	0%	1	1	3	0
United Kingdom							
AEEU	5	0	0%			6	0
RMT	3	0	0%			3	1
TGWU	5	0	0%			3	0
UK total	13	0	0%			12	1
*raised goal							

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



Militant/Brian Hawk
Workers check out socialist literature at April 4 rally in British Columbia, supporting the strikers at Fletcher Challenge.

'Militant' sales up in Midwest

Continued from front page

ing in Decatur *Militant* supporters sold eight copies and one subscription.

In early April, supporters sold 33 papers at Caterpillar plant gates in East Peoria. In addition, a couple of Cat workers renewed their subscriptions, which had lapsed from years past.

The struggle by UAW members at Caterpillar has resonance to other workers in the region. The main reason is that Cat workers put up a fight that set an example for all working people. This is particularly true for workers at Case, whose contract expired March 29 (see article above). Supporters sold 26 copies at the Case plant in Burlington, Iowa, March 3. The *Militant* that week featured a front-page article on the UAW rejection of the Cat contract.

Supporters of the *Militant* in Des Moines noticed in February that Strom Engineering had placed ads in the *Des Moines Register* to hire potential strike breakers for Case. Getting out the word on this union-busting move was another reason for sending a sales team to Burlington.

Since that time, supporters in Des Moines and Chicago have organized six teams to plant gates and union gatherings in Burlington, Iowa; East Moline, Illinois; and Racine,

broad coverage about the world. One Case worker leaving the first shift explained that he was interested in the article on Clinton's trip to Africa. Supporters didn't have a lot of time to review the paper's contents, given that most times they were positioned in the middle of a busy plant gate entrance with cars and trucks whizzing by. Here and there, a few workers said they didn't want "that commie paper."

Perhaps the most basic reason for heightened interest in the paper has to do with its name, the *Militant*. The paper's title reflects the mood among a layer of workers at Case and at Caterpillar. It fits in with some of the actions workers have taken inside the plants, such as organized hourly "hammer times" at Case.

Over the next period supporters of the paper plan to expand our sales and reporting teams to these areas, as well as to any new developments in the labor movement. Continuing along these lines will ensure that the *Militant* remains the paper looked to by fighting workers, students, farmers, and others. It should also lead to more long-term readers of the paper.

Tim Mailhot is a member of USWA 310 in Des Moines, Iowa.

Labour government in Britain steps up probes against social entitlements

BY SHELLIA KENNEDY

LONDON — "Thinking the unthinkable" is British prime minister Anthony Blair's catch phrase for a deepening assault on the social wage, targeting the benefits received by the disabled, single parents, unemployed youth, and pensioners. On March 26 the Labour government issued its initial proposal to "reform" the social security system. The proposals are the latest step in a political campaign that began under the previous Conservative government to undermine support for social entitlements and place more of the burden of social crises on individual workers and their families.

Right after the election of the Labour Party government in May 1997, Blair appointed Frank Field as the second-in-command in the social security ministry. Field is a Labour member of Parliament well known for arguing that the so-called welfare state enacted in 1945 is "unsustainable," and should be scrapped. He describes workers and youth receiving benefits as a "dependency culture" and proclaims that means-tested benefits are "morally bad, discouraging self-help, taxing honesty, rewarding claimants for being either inactive or deceitful." He calls for "remoraliz[ing] welfare." Field has since been anointed Minister for Welfare Reform.

Blair calls the current plan to slash £3.2 billion (£1 = \$1.69) from social benefits and impose draconian restrictions a "new deal." Around 9 million people are now living in households that receive income support, of whom 3 million are single parents, 2 million are aged 60 or over, 2 million are unemployed, and 1.4 million are disabled. Millions more working people depend on other types of social security benefits.

Some 13.3 million people — about a quarter of the population — are living in families whose income after housing costs is less than half the national average. In 1979 fewer than 10 percent were below this line.

The most prominent part of the so-called new deal involves the scapegoating of unemployed youth as lazy freeloaders who need to be forced to work. Young people under the age of 25 who have been out of work for more than six months and are not single parents will be forced to choose

among four "options" or risk losing their benefits. The options include going to school full-time, signing up for six months of work for a volunteer agency or "environmental taskforce," or finding a job with a company that will receive a £60-a-week subsidy for employing them for up to 26 weeks.

An article in the April 1 *Guardian* described this plan as follows: "In the words of Cabinet Ministers, [beneficiaries will] no longer have the option of lying in bed all day while claiming the dole. Instead, they will be called in for interviews with their local employment service, where a 'personal assistant' will, wherever possible, offer them four choices. Anyone who fails to take up those options will see their benefits removed for two weeks on first offense and for four weeks on the second. It's not quite 'jobs or jail,' the favored American term, but Labour is putting a new emphasis on the work ethic."

Blair declared that the new deal would also provide free alarm clocks, so job seekers would get up for interviews. These are to be issued by the "personal advisers."

Some big-business papers have harped that 20,000 of the young people pushed into the "new deal" have criminal records. When the grocery chain Tesco announced that it would be taking on 1,500 such employees, the right-wing *Daily Mail* shouted, "Tesco lets criminals work at checkout." Tesco will receive a £6 million subsidy for hiring these workers.

Along with threats of loss of benefits if young people don't accept the "new deal," the Education and Employment Committee — a cross-party group — have argued that "disaffected pupils" should start work at 14 years old. Nicholas St. Aubyn, a Conservative member of the committee, said, "Some children are already prepared for the adult world at the age of 14 and can cope with life in the workplace or a further education college."

Unmarried women with children are another political target. One measure recently adopted will cut benefits for lone parents by £5 per week. The Blair government is also pushing "welfare to work" schemes for those receiving this benefit, but so far on a "voluntary" basis and without the same sanctions levied against youth. One suggestion minis-



Militant/Brian Taylor

An April 10-12 socialist conference and convention of the Communist League in Toronto brought together 240 participants from around the world. Militant reporter Argiris Malapanis and Young Socialists leader Jack Willey gave presentations titled, "Eyewitness to resistance in Kosovo and Albania" and "Rebuilding an anti-imperialist youth movement worldwide." Convention delegates discussed recruiting new layers of workers and youth through orienting to labor battles. Above, participants view and discuss conference display. Further coverage on the convention will appear in an upcoming issue.

ters have floated is an "availability for work test" when the youngest child starts the second term at primary school. While the government hasn't been confident enough to propose it yet, Minister for Welfare Reform Field opined, "Sanctions could be a useful signal of intent and need to be a part of the new deal."

A recent conference of Black women's organizations discussed the fact that single women of oppressed nationalities, who face discrimination in hiring and wages, will be especially hit by these cutbacks.

The government also proposed limiting the length of time that claims of social security benefits could be backdated to one month, instead of three, in the name of shaving £57 million from the government budget. This scheme, which would affect anyone who didn't immediately apply for benefits when they become eligible, has been withdrawn for now. Patricia Hollis, junior social security minister, commented, "It is not sensible to make changes to the backdated rules in isolation."

The British rulers are making more cautious probes against disability benefits. These include the Incapacity Benefit, claimed by 2.4 million people; Disability Living Allowance (DLA), claimed by 1.8 million; and Attendance Allowance, paid to 1.2 million people over the age of 65. Attacking these payments is deeply unpopular. The government has floated the idea of

means testing or outright cutting, saying it needs to reduce the £23.5 billion that is spent.

The proposals pushed by the new Labour government, continue an offensive begun under the previous Conservative government. Many workers don't see much difference in approach to social benefits by either government. The Tory Social Security Secretary, Peter Lilley, had warned of the supposedly unsustainable growth of benefits spending and claimed that almost a third of the projected increase in benefits costs to the year 2000 would come from sickness and disability allowances. He argued for "the value of making unemployment benefits conditional and providing active help to people to return to work" and said there should be "no reason in principle why people should not...opt to make provision for themselves privately rather than through the state system."

These cuts are coming at the same time that industrial production is on the brink of an official recession. Government figures showed 0.5 per cent fall in output from all production industries in February. The quarterly figures showed industrial production down 0.6 per cent in the past three months compared with previous quarter. Marian Bell, the Royal Bank of Scotland head of UK Treasury research, said manufacturing would officially be in recession if the March figures showed a further decline in output.

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books

MARCH 1998

Countries/Cities	March			Previous months		
	Goal	Sales	% Sold	Feb.	Jan.	Dec.
SWEDEN	60	92	153%	127%	63%	67%
ICELAND	8	11	138%	113%	140%	100%
FRANCE	30	35	117%	43%	77%	37%
NEW ZEALAND						
Auckland	39	47	121%	100%	31%	95%
Christchurch	32	26	81%	91%	72%	34%
N.Z. Total	71	73	103%	96%	49%	69%
CANADA						
Vancouver	50	64	128%	88%	60%	44%
Toronto	80	80	100%	81%	163%	180%
Montreal	68	54	79%	51%	38%	103%
Canada Total	198	198	100%	73%	94%	111%
AUSTRALIA	36	35	97%	117%	97%	36%
UNITED STATES						
Los Angeles	120	257	214%	120%	60%	68%
Boston	65	135	208%	151%	120%	154%
Washington, D.C.	70	134	191%	113%	67%	96%
New York	245	299	122%	78%	43%	45%
Chicago	77	91	118%	125%	105%	61%
Philadelphia	55	58	105%	129%	75%	122%
Detroit	45	47	104%	89%	58%	69%
Miami	65	67	103%	149%	125%	112%
Atlanta	48	48	100%	152%	171%	81%
Des Moines	54	54	100%	50%	100%	110%
San Francisco	200	165	83%	87%	57%	45%
Newark	171	138	81%	47%	12%	16%
Houston	65	52	80%	52%	29%	31%
Pittsburgh	63	46	73%	75%	56%	35%
Birmingham	45	29	64%	84%	93%	184%
Cleveland	50	31	62%	78%	38%	42%
Seattle	80	36	45%	54%	74%	34%
Twin Cities	104	41	39%	59%	38%	103%
U.S. Total	1622	1728	96%	88%	62%	66%
Goal/Should be	1800	1800				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	150	142	95%		135%	71%
Manchester	56	28	50%		43%	43%
U.K. Total	206	170	83%		110%	63%
GREECE	13	8	62%		0%	69%

IN THE UNIONS

Unions	March			Previous months		
	Goal	Sales	Total	Feb.	Jan.	Dec.
BRITAIN						
RMT	6	9	150%	117%	17%	0%
AEEU	5	3	60%	20%	40%	120%
TGWU	7	2	29%	86%	29%	0%
UK total	18	14	78%	61%	28%	33%
CANADA						
IAM	7	6	86%	86%	29%	100%
USWA	18	3	17%	32%	23%	0%
Canada total	25	9	36%	45%	24%	28%
UNITED STATES						
UFCW	10	9	90%	90%	79%	131%
UNITE	20	14	70%	105%	50%	57%
USWA	40	20	50%	88%	63%	50%
IAM	60	25	42%	92%	48%	23%
OCAW	22	7	32%	114%	23%	0%
UTU	72	15	21%	82%	17%	14%
UAW	50	7	14%	82%	40%	46%
U.S. total	274	97	35%	89%	37%	31%
NEW ZEALAND						
EU	2	1	50%	50%		
MWU	3	0	0%	33%		
SFWU	1	0	0%	0%		
N.Z. total	6	1	17%	33%		
AUSTRALIA						
AMWU	4	0	0%	0%	0%	25%

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

Socialist Workers open California campaign

Candidates will orient to union struggles, winning youth to communism

BY JIM ALTENBERG

LOS ANGELES — The 1998 Socialist Workers campaign "will be deeply oriented to the working class, to our co-workers, and other fighters in the unions; to the Black community; to farmers and fighting youth," said Norton Sandler. "We will reach out to labor resistance, and discuss why the capitalists' march toward fascism and war is endemic to capitalism itself." Socialist candidates will campaign actively against Washington's war moves in Yugoslavia and Iraq. They will explain why the U.S. ruling class is determined to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the borders of the Russian workers state. "Our campaign starts with the world class struggle. That is what thinking workers are hungry for," Sandler added.

Sandler, a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the International Association of Machinists (IAM), gave the opening political report to the California state nominating convention of the SWP held here April 5. He outlined some of the major themes socialist candidates and campaigners would be taking to working people between now and the November election. Seventy-one people attended the convention, including delegates from SWP branches in San Francisco and Los Angeles; Young Socialists (YS); as well as party supporters and invited guests.

Practically all those attending also took part in a one-day socialist conference the day before. The featured presentations at that event were "Eyewitness to Resistance in Kosovo and Albania," by *Militant* reporter Argiris Malapanis; "Rebuilding an Anti-Imperialist Youth Movement Worldwide" by Young Socialists leader Jack Willey; and "Cuba in 1998 — 40th Anniversary of the Decisive Battles of the Revolutionary War," by Mary-Alice Waters, the president of Pathfinder Press and a leader of the Socialist Workers Party. (An article on this conference appeared in last week's *Militant*.)

At the California state convention, delegates nominated Gale Shangold, a garment worker in Los Angeles, to head the Socialist Workers ticket as the party's candidate for governor of California. Jim Gotesky, a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) in the San Francisco Bay Area, is running for U.S. Senate, and Eli Green, an oil worker and OCAW member in Los Angeles, is the candidate for lieutenant governor.

The Socialist Workers will also field three candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives: Marklyn Wilson in the San Francisco Bay Area; Laura Anderson and Carlos Hernández in Los Angeles. Wilson is a railroad conductor and member of the United Transportation Union. Anderson, an airline ramp worker, is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Hernández, a member of the Young Socialists, is a bilingual education teacher in Los Angeles. Shangold is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE).

In adopting a plan to launch the campaign immediately, delegates pointed to the wide opportunities open to reach workers and youth coming into struggles today. Sandler pointed out that young people are attracted to a party rooted in industry and with a clear explanation of the world. "The campaign provides a chance to build campus meetings for recruitment to the Young Socialists," said Samantha Kern, a Young Socialists member from San Francisco.

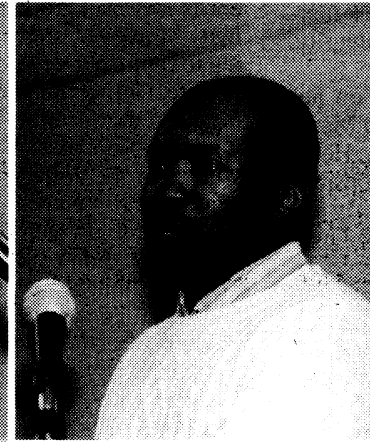
Plans for special campaigning team

Socialist campaign supporters will field a team to the San Joaquin Valley and the strawberry fields around Watsonville, California, where farm workers have been trying to organize themselves into the United Farm Workers union (UFW). Candidates and campaign supporters will begin in Bakersfield, a Valley city of railroad yards, oil production and refining, and agriculture. They will travel up the valley, taking campaign literature, the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, Pathfinder books and pamphlets to the Mexican and Sikh workers who struck the huge poultry processing plants in Fresno and Livingston last year; workers in other agriculture-related industries; farm workers; and students on campuses in Fresno, Modesto, and Turlock. The team



Militant photos: Top/Ellen Berman; Right/Carole Lesnick

At state convention, socialist workers discussed participation in labor struggles like farm workers support rally for strawberry pickers in San Francisco March 29. Right, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of California Gale Shangold and Eli Green, candidate for lieutenant governor.



will also visit the Watsonville area.

Farm workers have returned to Watsonville after the winter. Sandler reported that they are picking up their organizing efforts. At the end of last season, the UFW did not hold a union representation election in the strawberry fields. The growers, meanwhile, stepped up their attacks against the union, with increased use of anti-union thugs and a demonstration against the UFW in Watsonville itself aimed at intimidating union supporters. Sandler pointed out that as the union makes progress, the growers will not roll over. Along with their goons and thugs, the growers will try to call on Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) cops to deport union activists. The socialist candidates aim to win farm workers to socialism, as well as to promote solidarity among other workers with fighters in the fields. Delegates also decided to organize campaign events at the gate of every factory where socialist workers are presently employed over the next few weeks.

A few days before the convention, University of California officials announced that the incoming freshman class at UC's Berkeley campus would include only 171 Blacks and 574 Latinos. Sharp drops in admission of Blacks, Latinos and American Indians were also registered at UCLA. The announcement was met with protests and marches in Berkeley and elsewhere. The University of California regents had voted to end affirmative action at the university three years ago. In 1996, proposition 209 was adopted, which aimed to ban affirmative action in public agencies across California. Convention participants pointed to a group of Black workers who have taken the Boeing aircraft company to court to protest racist discrimination as another example of the need for the socialist candidates to actively champion affirmative action, and join with those who want to fight around it in the working class and on the campuses.

Defending bilingual education

Sandler took up two ballot propositions that are slated to appear on the June 2 primary election ballot. These initiatives "are designed to put policies into law and go after the rights and confidence of the working class," he said. Proposition 227 aims at eliminating bilingual education. It would require children who do not speak English to learn it in one year in classes not divided by age levels. Teachers who use languages other than English could be sued. Although the ballot measure is directed at immigrants, primarily Latinos, a layer of Latino parents support proposition 227. While the measure has support from rightist "English only" groups, its backers make a point of also promoting Latino spokespeople who argue that

their children are not learning English in the current system. Sandler explained that many supporters of 227, like those pressing for vouchers to fund private schools with tax money, see that no real education is going on behind the metal detectors and cops found in every school building in working-class neighborhoods.

"The socialist campaign has to give a serious defense of bilingual education," he said. "Bilingual education was the product of struggles. The right to use your own language at school, work, and in all areas of life is central to combating national oppression."

"The question posed by the fight around bilingual education is equality," said Doug Jenness, the Socialist Workers national campaign director. "The working class has to champion this struggle for equality. Otherwise the employers divide us." Sandler noted that initiatives like proposition 227 give the employers confidence that they can attack workers' rights as well. He referred to a letter he received from a worker at the Veterans' Hospital in Menlo Park, California, where the management recently promulgated an "English only" rule that was directed against Filipino nurses who speak Tagalog among themselves.

Also on the ballot is proposition 226, which is aimed at curtailing the right of

unions to contribute money to election campaigns. The measure requires that no dues money be used by a trade union for "political contributions" without the written authorization of each worker involved. Backers of 226, including California governor Peter Wilson, pose as defenders of workers' rights against union officials.

The tens of millions of dollars in union funds spent promoting the capitalist Democratic Party don't advance workers' interests, Sandler said. But this measure is a further step toward the employers and the government involving themselves directly in the affairs of the trade unions. It is an obstacle to the ability of the unions and the working class to function independently of the government.

Proposition 226 also contains a series of reactionary restrictions on campaign contributions from so-called "foreign nationals," including immigrant workers. Its aim is to scapegoat "foreigners and big labor" for the social crisis and governmental corruption in the United States. The Socialist Workers campaign urges working people to vote against propositions 226 and 227.

Convention participants also discussed stepped-up moves by the government to force socialist election campaigns to disclose the names of campaign contributors. Scott Breen, the 1997 SWP candidate for mayor of Seattle, reported on the fight against Seattle election officials' demands for the names and addresses of

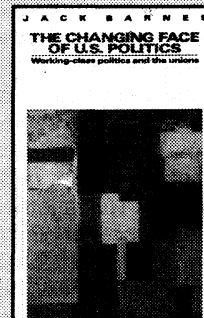
those who had donated money to the campaign. This fight has attracted widespread support in the Seattle area, forcing the election board to retreat from imposing a \$6,000 fine on the socialist campaign.

Jenness told the convention, "We've never, ever disclosed the name of a single contributor," since laws requiring disclosure came into effect 25 years ago. The SWP has been able to win exemption from these laws since 1979, but government election officials "have been trying to find ways to take the exemption away." They say campaign supporters do not face harassment or victimization as in the past, and put the burden on the party to show that harassment continues today. "The Seattle case is the most serious breach of our rights thus far," Jenness added.

"The 1998 campaign will strengthen everything we do," said Sandler. "It will enable us to improve on talking socialism on the job, on campuses, at protest activities and on picket lines." If we carry out an effective campaign, he went on, "we will have more workers and others who look to the SWP and the *Militant* for clarity and a guide to action."

Jim Altenberg is a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union in San Francisco.

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Helen Scheer: a worker-bolshevik for 54 years

BY DOUG JENNESS

MINNEAPOLIS — Helen Scheer, a veteran cadre of the communist movement for more than half a century, died here of cancer on April 11. She was 76 years old and had been an active member of the Socialist Workers Party since 1944.

Most of her political life was spent in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, where her example and experience helped to recruit and educate scores of young people as they were drawn to and became active in the communist movement. She also served for 12 years on the SWP's Control Commission, a national, elected body that investigates matters related to the party's security, integrity, and democratic functioning.

Helen was born Oct. 24, 1921, on her parents' farm on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Her family name was Holloway. Helen and a younger brother assumed responsibility for chores and field work at an early age when the difficulties created by the Great Depression that began at the end of the 1920s forced her father to seek additional employment off the farm. When she was old enough to reach the pedals, she drove a truck and acquired confidence with other machinery.

As was often the case in that part of Maryland, Black tenant farmers lived and worked small plots of land on her family's farm. Jim Crow segregation was strictly enforced in the Eastern Shore, a bastion of chattel slavery in the old Confederacy. Helen and her brother worked alongside the Black workers and developed a respect that only comes from working together. She recounted more than one example of co-workers rescuing her from accidents that could have been more serious. This experience clashed with the institutionalized segregation that so dominated the area and brought Helen increasingly into conflict with the racist attitudes of neighbors and parents.

The independence and self-confidence that came from doing the same work as her brother and other male co-workers led her to prefer this work to the tasks traditionally left to girls, including helping in the kitchen and other household chores. She liked sports, although work on the farm made it difficult for her to be as active in extracurricular activities as she would have liked. When she was able to participate she chafed at not being able to compete in the same races as boys. She sometimes lined up on the sidelines of the school racetracks and ran along side the boys. Her recollection was that she usually beat them.

Helen loved to read as a child and was a good student. She graduated valedictorian of her high school class. Her parents proposed she go to a nearby business school, but she wanted to get away from home and opted to attend Antioch College in southern Ohio. One reason she chose this school was its program of alternating work and study.

Repelled by racism and social injustice

At Antioch she played on the field hockey and lacrosse teams. However, she didn't feel that she fit in so well because most of the students were from cities and their experiences and backgrounds were dissimilar to hers. Moreover, she was at loose ends trying to figure out what she wanted to do with her life. During this time she was first introduced to the *Militant* and came in contact with the Socialist Workers Party. A co-worker in the college library was married to an at-large member of the SWP, and Helen became friends with both of them. At that time Helen didn't yet consider herself a socialist, although she was opposed to racism and social injustice and knew that such opposition placed her against the stream of the propertied powers in this country.

After three years at Antioch, Helen dropped out and with the help of friends found a job on a farm in the Ozarks in Missouri. While working there she enrolled in nursing school at the University of Missouri in Columbia, graduating three years later. World War II began while she was in nursing school and she recalled later that she was opposed to the war, not from a thought-out class perspective, but for humanitarian reasons. She suffered a direct blow when her brother, with whom she had been close, was killed on a boat sunk by the German military after he enlisted in the armed forces.

Helen first came to Minneapolis as part of an exchange program that the University of Missouri nursing school had with a big hospital there. Her friend from Antioch urged her to look up the SWP there. She did and became friends with Elaine Rosen, a young SWP member who she would later room with. She returned to Missouri to finish nursing school, graduating in 1944. She then moved to Minneapolis where she joined the SWP in the fall of 1944.

At the time Helen joined the SWP many of the leaders of the Minneapolis branch were serving time in federal penitentiary for their uncompromising opposition to imperialist war and refusal to subordinate to the war drive their class struggle trade-union leadership and working-class political propaganda. They were framed up on charges under the Smith "Gag" Act of "conspiring to advocate the violent overthrow of the U.S. government." Altogether there were in prison 18 local and national leaders of the SWP and of the Minneapolis-area Teamster veterans, then members of General Drivers Local 544-CIO.

Many of the prisoners had been leaders of the labor battles in the 1930s that led to the large-scale unionization of truck drivers and warehousemen in the Twin Cities and throughout the Midwest. These struggles, led by class-conscious revolutionaries, marked not only the labor movement in the area but the SWP branch that Helen joined. More than any other single local organization of the SWP, the Twin Cities branch was the branch stamped by the seriousness, discipline, and the best habits of the workers' movement of the 1930s.

Helen collaborated closely with and took her lead from Vincent Ray Dunne, one of the central leaders of the Teamsters battles, a founding member of the communist movement in Minnesota, and until his death in 1970 the central political leader of the SWP in the Twin Cities.

One of Helen's first experiences after joining the SWP occurred while selling the *Militant* at the Labor Temple in Minneapolis. She and another party member were selling the paper when a goon squad from the Stalinist Communist Party attacked them. Helen's companion was beaten and his pa-



pers torn up; Helen was able to get away and save her papers. The Communist Party at the time was the most strident and aggressive force in the labor movement supporting the U.S. imperialist war effort and acted as thugs within the working-class movement trying to choke off all voices of opposition to the imperialist war aims.

Gained confidence working in industry

For a little more than a year after she joined the party, Helen worked as a nurse. She was a good nurse, and the discipline — and recognition that all deeds have consequences, and not just for one's self — she developed in that occupation stayed with her throughout her life. At the same time, she disliked the work. Nurses then were poorly paid, worked long and odd hours, and had no union rights or protection. Most importantly, the work schedule prevented her from participating in many political activities. In 1946 Helen quit nursing and got a job in a General Mills-owned home appliance factory working as a punch press operator. The United Electrical Workers union (UE) organized the workers in the plant. There was a lot of motion in the labor movement at the time with a postwar explosion of strikes throughout the country. This had an impact on many of the men and women that Helen worked with.

During a panel discussion at a 1974 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, on the experiences in the labor movement of women who are revolutionary socialists, Helen explained that she was quiet until she got off probation. The Stalinists of the Communist Party dominated the leadership of the UE at that time and she didn't want to get herself fingered as a Trotskyist and fired unnecessarily.

During seven years at this plant Helen participated in a wide range of fights, including for safety and better wages and against piecework. Hers became a voice many of her militant co-workers looked to.



Helen Scheer was an active cadre of the Socialist Workers Party her entire adult life, selling the *Militant* and helping to organize actions like February 1998 protest against U.S. war moves in Iraq at top. At right is Charles Scheer. Above, Helen in Minneapolis with (from left) Harold Swanson, Farrell Dobbs, Ray Dunne. Swanson, Dobbs, and Dunne were leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters struggles and were all indicted in 1941 under the Smith Act. Swanson was acquitted. Dobbs and Dunne each served more than a year at Sandstone Federal Penitentiary. All three were members of the SWP, and Dobbs and Dunne were national leaders of the party.

She served as a shop steward, on the grievance committee, and as a delegate to the Hennepin County CIO Council. In the 1974 panel Helen stated in a typical self-effacing manner, "I want to point out that I became a leader in the Home Appliance Division, among the women and throughout the plant, primarily because I was a political person... and understood, from being in the socialist movement, what the purpose of the union was — to fight the bosses and work for members and to build the union bigger and stronger. And we did that, not through collaboration and deals with the bosses, but through struggle. I consulted with the party all the time. I was inexperienced and young and I was ultraleft and, you know, would make mistakes here and there; there isn't anybody who doesn't. But I consulted with the party and had their help. And it was our policy that the workers responded to, not me."

Helen also described the faction fight that led to a split in the UE in 1949. The Stalinist-led UE was expelled from the CIO without putting up a serious fight. The CIO then attempted to win for the newly established International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) bargaining rights held by many of the UE locals. The SWP opposed the split and didn't support either side. But once it was done, the question remained as to what stand to take in the fight for representation. Helen

Continued on Page 12

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CRIST SOUTH OF SUNS DRIVE

Kosovo: daily marches press independence

NATO troops launch aggressive raids to arrest chauvinist Serbs in Bosnia

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"More than 10,000 people marched today in downtown Pristina for freedom and independence of Kosovo," said Albin Kurti in a telephone interview from Pristina, Kosovo's capital, April 16. Kurti is the international officer of the Independent Students Union at the University of Pristina, one of the main groups that has organized mass protests demanding national rights for Albanians. It was the seventh demonstration in eight days for self-determination of the Albanian nationality there. This latest series of mobilizations began April 9, when tens of thousands filled Pristina's downtown

Socialists plan conference in Miami

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

MIAMI — Socialist workers and young socialists from throughout the South are organizing and publicizing a one-day regional educational conference in Miami on May 3. Titled "Reports from Kosovo, Cairo, and Havana," the Southern Regional Socialist Conference will feature talks highlighting some of the historic changes unfolding in world politics today and the resulting opportunities to build revolutionary working-class parties in countries around the world.

Two of the keynote speakers, *Militant* staff writer Argiris Malapanis and Jack Willey, organizer of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists, reported for the *Militant* in March on the revolt by working people in Kosovo, Yugoslavia, who are fighting for the self-determination of Albanians in that region, and other developments in the Balkans. They were also in Cairo, Egypt, where they took part in a March 5-8 meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and reported on large student demonstrations against Washington's attacks on Iraq.

Mary-Alice Waters, the other featured speaker, led a *Militant* reporting team to Cuba in February that covered the International Book Fair in Havana and other political developments in that country. Waters is the president of Pathfinder Press and the editor of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War: 1956-58* by Ernesto Che Guevara.

The meeting will bring together workers and young people who have been active in a range of political activities, from support for union struggles in the Midwest by workers at Caterpillar and Case Corp. to participation in the recent convention of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI) in Puerto Rico. It will include many who are active in Miami and other cities in the defense of Cuba's socialist revolution.

A Young Socialists leader will be touring the region to win new members to the revolutionary organization and to build the conference, which will be an opportunity to learn more about the socialist movement.

Organizers of the regional conference are urging participants to come to Miami early to attend an important political event taking place there the day before, on May 2. The meeting, titled "100 Years of Resistance — The Struggle of the Puerto Rican and Cuban People Against U.S. Imperialism," will feature the well-known Puerto Rican independence fighter and former political prisoner Rafael Cancel Miranda, Andrés Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, and Mary-Alice Waters. A representative of Cuba is also expected to speak (see ad on page 8).

The May 2 event is being publicized more widely than most of the previous events in this city that have featured speakers who support the Cuban revolution. Besides members of the main sponsoring organizations — the Miami Coalition Against the U.S. Embargo of Cuba, the Antonio Maceo Brigade, and the Alliance of Workers in the Cuban Community — some of the activists from the group "Cuba Vive" in Tampa, Florida, are actively building this event. Participants are expected from other cities in Florida as well.

area after a two-week lull in public rallies.

At the same time, Belgrade has been building up its special forces occupying Kosovo. Clashes between Serb police and army units and Albanians supporting independence have continued in the Drenica region and in areas near the Kosovo-Albania border. At least 85 Albanians, one third of them children, were killed in brutal assaults by Serb police in Drenica February 28 and March 5. Over a dozen Albanians have been killed since.

Washington pushed through the United Nations Security Council a resolution imposing an arms embargo on Belgrade March 31, but failed to get acceptance for tougher sanctions because of opposition from Moscow. The U.S. rulers have since continued to try to take advantage of the conflict to deepen imperialist intervention in Yugoslavia, under the guise of supporting national rights for Albanians in Kosovo. Their aim is to reimpose capitalist social relations throughout Yugoslavia and tighten the imperialist encirclement of Russia.

In early April, NATO forces announced plans to arrest chauvinist Bosnian-Serb leader Radovan Karadzic — indicted by an international tribunal in The Hague on "war

crimes" — and waged a raid in a factory in Pale, Bosnia, that had been used by Karadzic as his headquarters in the past.

Noontime rallies

"Tens of thousands of people have been marching in the center of Pristina and many other cities of Kosovo every day for the last week, between noon and 12:30 p.m.," said Kurti. "We are demanding an end to the terror by the regime in Belgrade, withdrawal of the special police and army forces, an end to the siege of Drenica and other regions that has been going on for nearly three months, and independence."

The noontime rallies have been called by a protest committee set up by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), other political parties, the Independent Trade Union of Kosovo, and youth and other organizations. The LDK is the main political party among Albanians in Kosovo.

Kurti said the Independent Students Union has its own protest council, which has not called separate demonstrations this month. "We are waiting to see if Serbian authorities will abide by the agreement they signed to reopen high schools and the University of Pristina to Albanians," he said.

"They are supposed to return three university buildings to us by the end of this month. We are still skeptical. If they renege we'll organize new mobilizations."

Serb authorities signed the education agreement March 23 and gave the keys of the Institute of Albanian Studies to Albanian professors March 31. The accord, scheduled to be implemented in phases by June, would end the ban on Albanian-language instruction at state high schools and the university system, in place since the early 1990s.

The ban was imposed by Belgrade after the regime of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic revoked Kosovo's autonomous status in 1989. Since then, Kosovo — a region formally part of the Republic of Serbia, with 90 percent of its population of 2.1 million being Albanians — has been ruled under a state of emergency. The overwhelming majority of Albanians have been fired from state administration, health care facilities, schools, and industry for refusing to sign "loyalty oaths" to Serbia.

Since the beginning of April, Belgrade has been deploying additional forces and weaponry into the Drenica region. Serb

Continued on Page 14

Southern Regional Socialist Conference REPORTS FROM KOSOVO, CAIRO, AND HAVANA

Miami, Sunday, May 3, 1998

8:00 a.m. — 9:00 a.m. REGISTRATION

9:00 a.m. — 9:15 a.m. WELCOME

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■ *Why Washington Lost the Cold War*

■ *Youth in Balkans Confront Imperialism*

Speaker: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Staff writer for the *'Militant'*; coauthor of *'The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention'*

[Discussion will continue following the second talk.]

11:30–1 p.m. LUNCH (CATERED)

1:00–2:45 p.m.

REBUILDING AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST YOUTH MOVEMENT WORLDWIDE

■ *International Response to U.S. Aggression against Iraq*

■ *From Central Illinois to the Australian Wharves: The Retreat of the Working Class has Ended*

■ *Report from Cairo Conference of the World Federation of Democratic Youth*

■ *From Ireland to Puerto Rico, from Namibia to Cuba and the U.S.: A Vanguard of Anti-Imperialist Youth are in Contact*

Speaker: JACK WILLEY

Organizer, National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists

2:45–3:30 p.m. BREAK

3:30 — 5:30 p.m.

CUBA IN 1998— 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

■ *Cuba and Puerto Rico: 100 Years of Resistance since the First War of the Imperialist Epoch*

■ *Havana Book Fair: Politics and Publishing — the Truth about the Past is a Weapon for Today and Tomorrow*

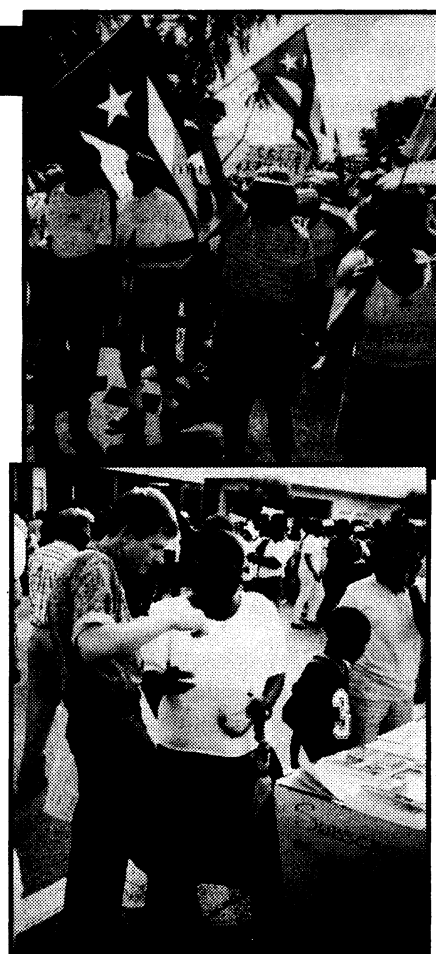
■ *How the Working Class Transforms Itself Through the Battle for Increased Discipline and Productivity*

Speaker: MARY-ALICE WATERS

President, Pathfinder Press; editor of *'Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War: 1956-58'* by Ernesto Che Guevara



Rally in support of Caterpillar strikers, Peoria, Illinois, March 1992.



Top: Strike and rally against privatization of phone company in Puerto Rico, October 1997. Above: Selling the *Militant* at immigrant rights action in Miami, October 1997.

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Boeing to eliminate 20,000 jobs and push for speedup

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE — Boeing has announced that it is eliminating 8,200 more jobs by the year 2000. *The Boeing News* outlined a plan "to streamline facilities, focus manufacturing and assembly operations, and eliminate redundant laboratories." These job losses are in addition to the company's intention to reduce commercial airplane employment by 12,000 people in the second half of 1998. Those layoffs were announced Dec. 16, 1997.

The Boeing Company, the largest aerospace company in the world, employs some 239,000 people nationwide and about 118,000 in the commercial airplane division.

According to Boeing, they will close down 15 percent of its factory space around the country, lowering its costs by some \$1 billion. Boeing management says these reductions will help "improve productivity and reduce costs." In effect, they are part of their plans to speed up production and increase exploitation of its labor in order to resolve their current profit crisis.

At the same time it's cutting jobs, Boeing continues to rev up its production of commercial airliners to their highest ever. Over the last two years as it hired and recalled over 32,000 workers — about a 30 percent increase — it more than doubled its production rates for its jetliners. Boeing is again boosting production to 43 planes a month, hoping to up it to 48 a month by mid-year. The aerospace giant plans to double production of the popular Boeing 737 in the second quarter of 1998 to 14 per month, and then to 21 per month late in 1998. It is projecting delivery of 550 airplanes this year; in 1997, it delivered 374. That's almost a 50 percent increase in production.

Boeing plans to cancel MD80 and MD90 jetliner production at its Long Beach facilities, eliminating 3,000 jobs there. At the same time it will slash 800 jobs in a Toronto, Canada plant that does subcontracting work for MD 80/90 airplanes. Boeing will cut 900 jobs by terminating its commercial helicopter division in Philadelphia. And it will combine and consolidate various certification and test laboratories and facilities around the country, eventually closing several of them, which will result in the elimination of more jobs.

Production delays cause concern

This plan is the another step in the so-called rationalization of production in the "new" Boeing Company after its mergers with McDonnell-Douglas and Rockwell's aerospace and defense operations last year. One immediate result of these mergers was to make Boeing the largest manufacturer of military jets in the world and the second-largest military contractor in the United States, closely behind Lockheed-Martin. Phil Condit, Boeing's chairman and chief executive, said, "We are strategically re-

aligning the use of our facilities to provide better value to our customers and shareholders."

Boeing's production problems have cut into profits, greatly concerning its owners and Wall Street. Last year Boeing suffered its first profit loss in 50 years, stunning stockholders and Wall Street traders. It missed airplane deliveries to airline customers, had massive parts shortages and production snarls, actually shutting down the 747 and 737 production lines for a whole month in 1997. Its Next-Generation 737 airplane suffered a \$700 million loss last year when Boeing was forced to make extensive changes and retrofit its planes to correct flight problems and achieve government certification. Boeing forced massive amounts of overtime on its workforce, and workers suffered increased accidents and injuries on the job.

These production problems resulted in \$2.6 billion losses against earnings in 1997, creating a profit loss of \$178 million last year. In 1996, Boeing posted a profit of \$1.8 billion. The company's stock prices dropped, falling 20 percent over a few days in October last year, on news of its production problems and write-offs. Its stock price today is still below its high point last summer. Some Wall Street analysts and brokerage houses have sounded the alarm that Boeing management might not be able to turn around its situation. When Boeing announced it will reduce its expected pretax first quarter profit of \$400-\$450 million by \$350 million to cover continuing losses on its 737 aircraft, Standard and Poor placed its long-term ratings on Boeing on a credit watch. In response to these production and profit problems, Boeing's board of directors froze top managers' salaries and cut their bonuses for 1997.

Recent articles in the financial press have decried Boeing's inefficiency and called for accelerating attacks on the workforce. *Fortune* magazine, for example, published a major article on January 12 this year entitled: "Boeing's Big Problem." Their solution to its profitability crisis calls for Boeing to "complete the factory-floor restructuring it so obviously needs." The article quotes Ron Woodard, president of Boeing's commercial aircraft group, explaining, "We've pretty much run out of technological evolutions on our products." "With no new airplanes on its drawing boards," the article continues, "Boeing has only one place left to look for competitive advantage — the factory floor."

Despite public pronouncements that Boeing's production problems are behind it, the company has been forced to acknowledge their continued difficulties in making scheduled deliveries and meeting customer demands. Recently, front page articles in the Seattle newspapers reported on a private meeting Boeing's top executives had with "frustrated" European airline executives this



Boeing plans to dismiss 8,000 more workers while increasing production of 747s shown above at the assembly factory in Everett, Washington. Last October the company stopped production of its 747 jumbo jets temporarily after massive parts shortages.

month. According to the *Seattle Times*, the European customers — Air Berlin and four other airlines — complained about production delays and errors, damaged aircraft and eroding customer support." Steve Hazy, president of International Lease Finance Corporation (ILFC) publicly criticized Boeing for delivery delays as "by far the worst situation we've ever seen." ILFC has more than 200 Boeing planes on order.

Sharp competition with Airbus

At the heart of Boeing's profit crisis is its increasingly fierce, price-cutting competition with the European consortium Airbus. Boeing has about a 70 percent share of the airplane market, and Airbus the remaining 30 percent. Last year Airbus boosted its sales by 30 percent, but it posted a 61 percent decline in profits for 1997. According to industry analysts, the competition for orders has driven commercial aircraft prices down 20 percent in the past two years, squeezing both manufacturers' profit margins.

It is in this context that Boeing has been carrying out various attacks on its workforce and unions in order to bolster its sagging profit rates. Speedup will continue, as Boeing strives to increase its production rates and lower its costs. Workers will be pushed to work harder and produce more in a shorter period of time in order to lower its overtime costs and avoid hiring more workers.

CEO Condit defends actions like the job cuts to "help keep the company competitive for new business opportunities." Harry Stonecipher, the new president of Boeing, is more straightforward in explaining the interests behind such moves. He describes himself as "profitability driven." Stonecipher told the Seattle Rotary Club recently that for years he has defended the widely viewed perception that he is only interested in making money. "After a while I just said, you're right, I am."

Stonecipher was the chief executive officer of McDonnell-Douglas when it forced a strike by the Machinists union at its St. Louis plant in 1996. After helping to organize the merger

of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, he became the president of aerospace giant.

In his speech to the Rotarians, Stonecipher bemoaned Boeing's financial results that have "ranged from a little better than average in recent years to absolutely dismal in 1997." He declared "That's something we can and we will fix."

He told the businessmen that "the biggest threat to the Boeing Company is failure to execute inside." The Boeing president ended up his speech by outlining what his role in the company was today: "I can stop a lot of spears for Condit and I can also throw a lot for him."

The intended victims of those "spears" are Boeing's workers. However, there are already signs of collective resistance developing. On March 25, 250 employees in Seattle protested Boeing's new benefits program, which the company is unilaterally imposing on more than 100,000 salaried, nonunion employees. These benefits will mean cuts in medical and retiree benefits. Another rally of several hundred workers protested the cuts on April 8. This time the event was during the workers' lunch hour and was held on Boeing's airfield tarmac. It was jointly organized by SPEEA (Seattle Professional Engineering Employees Association) and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM).

Additionally, 41 Boeing workers — 40 of them Black — have filed an \$82 million lawsuit accusing the aerospace giant of race discrimination in hiring, promotions, and work conditions.

Many Boeing production workers organized by the IAM in the Seattle plants are already discussing how to prepare for a contract battle with Boeing in 1999, when the current contract expires. In 1995 unionists carried out a 69-day strike that pushed the company back. All this indicates that workers here will find ways to resist Boeing's collision course with its workers.

Scott Breen is a member of IAM Local Lodge 751A at Boeing in Everett, Washington.

U.S. court overturns affirmative action program

BY HILDA CUZCO

Striking a blow against affirmative action programs, a federal appeals court overturned a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requirement that radio and television stations encourage job applicants of oppressed nationalities.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia claimed the program does not serve the purpose of ending racial discrimination but instead gives special breaks to Blacks and others.

"We do not think it matters whether a government hiring program imposes hard quotas, soft quotas, or goals," reads the April 14 decision, written by Judge Laurence Silberman. "Any of these techniques induces an employer to hire with an eye toward meeting the numerical target. As such, they can and surely will result in individuals being granted a preference because of their race."

According to the FCC, the percentage of Blacks, Latinos, and other oppressed nationalities employed full-time in radio and tele-

vision broadcasting has more than doubled since the affirmative action measure was put in place, from 9.1 percent in 1971 to 19.9 percent today.

The FCC employment recruitment guidelines, first adopted in 1968, were among many affirmative action measures conquered in the late 1960s and early '70s by the struggle for Black rights and the women's liberation movement as a way of combating discrimination in education, industry, society and politics.

The FCC regulations, which had been revised over the years, required that broadcasting businesses' hiring reflect the composition of the community regarding oppressed nationalities and women, and establish affirmative action programs for recruitment, job applications, and training.

The case was brought by an appeal of a Lutheran church in Clayton, Ohio, against a 1989 FCC ruling penalizing its two radio stations for not taking steps to recruit employees of oppressed nationalities.

The FCC has not said whether it will appeal the decision.

From Pathfinder

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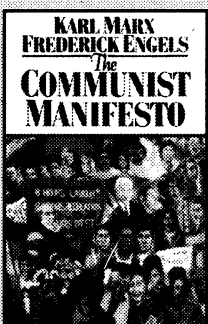
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1,500 workers rally to support strike at Fletcher Challenge

BY JACOB GAVIN

CAMPBELL RIVER, British Columbia — Some 1,500 pulp and paper strikers and their supporters rallied April 4 in this Vancouver Island town in support of a nine-month strike against Fletcher Challenge Canada (FCC).

The high-spirited solidarity rally for 2,400 workers at three British Columbia pulp and paper mills was joined by a protest march through the town of several hundred Hospital Employee Union members protesting government cutbacks. Locals of the two unions on strike at FCC, the Communications, Energy and Paper (CEP) worker's union and the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC), sent contingents to the rally from around the province.

There were contingents from other unions as well, including the Canadian Auto Workers and the International Association of Machinists (IAM). The rally was organized by CEP locals 630 and 1123 from nearby Elk Falls.

Workers at the rally said that the event was an important morale boost for this long strike, which has no end in sight as negotiations are at a standstill. "This rally — solidarity — is the wave of the future. It's what we're going to need against what all companies are trying to do," said Dan Pankhurst, vice president of CEP local 630.

The main issue in the strike is the company's drive to introduce "flexibility"

on job-classification and contracting out jobs in order to make the mills more "efficient" and "competitive." For workers, flexibility translates to a major blow to seniority rights, layoffs, and unsafe working conditions. Andy Berends, a machine operator of 16 years at one of the struck mills, gave the *Militant* his view of flexibility. Management "wants to tell you what to do and when to do it. It all boils down to a power struggle," he said.

The day before the rally, FCC ran a full-page ad in the local daily *Campbell River Mirror* attacking the CEP for "double standards" on the flexibility issue, claiming the "powerful" union has accepted flexible language with East Coast competitors. This was one of a series of ads recently run by the company in hopes of dividing the community and weakening support for the strike. The CEP answered one of these ads with a letter from 2nd vice president Keith McKay, which was distributed at the rally. The letter explains, among other things, that flexibility would result in job loss, unsafe practices, and contracting out.

The FCC ad also faults the unionists' struggle for the economic downturn in the B.C. economy. Thousands of jobs have been cut in recent months, particularly in forestry. "The CEP strike is preventing \$1.7 billion dollars in revenue from flowing through our company into the B.C. economy in a normal year — revenue that supports the com-



Three CEP members from Howe Sound Pulp and Paper at April 4 rally in Campbell River. They were among a busload of unionists who came to show solidarity with strikers at Fletcher Challenge.

munities where we live and operate." With such rhetoric, the company has sought to exploit working people's fears of the downturn to pressure strikers into accepting concessions.

Many workers at the rally saw through such arguments. Through the course of the strike, pulp and paper workers explained, FCC has been inflexible in negotiations and the company has refused to budge on flexibility, which they view as a direct drive to break their union.

Union officials addressing the rally focused on the fact that FCC is a New Zealand company. Organizers called on participants to bring Canadian flags, and hundreds more were distributed at the event. Fraser McQuarrie, president of CEP local 630, stated in his address, "We don't want Malaysians, Indonesians, and others coming

here to run our country. I don't want my children to grow up in a Third World country. I want to be in the best country in the world." This chauvinist perspective weakens working-class solidarity in the fight against Fletcher Challenge.

The main aspect of the rally was the determination and solidarity of strikers and their supporters to stand firm in face of the company attack. Striker Bryan Knippshild explained, "If Fletcher wants to stay out a year, we'll stay out a year and a day."

As we go to press the contract mediator has put forward a proposal for negotiations.

Jacob Gavin is a member of the Young Socialists and Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 178. Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of IAM Lodge 764, contributed to this article.

Tensions mount between unionists, management at Case

Continued from front page

pired March 29. The union here has not been on strike since 1979. At that time the East Moline plant was part of International Harvester, and many workers still refer to the facility as "IH."

Case workers are on a strike footing, realizing that the company has every intention of playing hardball. Early in the process, Case hired Strom Engineering, a Milwaukee-based employment agency, which has placed ads for strikebreakers in newspapers in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin. This action rankles many workers, who watched how Caterpillar and Bridgestone/Firestone used replacement workers during long strike battles in the 1990s. "Case spokeswoman Patty Holzbauer has been quoted as saying the move was part of a routine contingency plan," reported *The Dispatch*, a local big-business daily. To prepare for the strike, the company has also installed a chain-link fence around the plant.

To date UAW officials in Detroit have said little about the looming battle. "As long as progress continues to be made, we want to continue the bargaining process," said UAW vice president Richard Shoemaker.

Negotiations between the UAW and Case, which began in February, are ongoing in Milwaukee. Ron Sweet, a federal mediator, has been assigned to oversee the talks. The company and the union representatives have agreed to a media blackout while negotiations continue. Workers in East Moline told the *Militant* April 9 that they have heard almost nothing on the status of the talks.

Despite this, the few articles that have appeared in the local press have been favorable to the union. "Mad" is the word for Case Corp. workers who say they feel cheated by the Racine, Wisconsin-based farm equipment manufacturer," reported *The Dispatch*. Another headline in the same paper read: "This time, the union is right. Case big shots should give workers a fair deal."

Solidarity among the unionists in East Moline is strong, and easy to see. Many workers sport union buttons on their jackets, including one that reads, "I will serve my picket duty with UAW pride." Another states, "CASE pulls a CAT," referring to the failed attempt by Caterpillar — the world's largest maker of earth moving and construction equipment — to destroy the UAW in a bitter contract fight that began in 1991. Last month, UAW members at Caterpillar narrowly approved a contract after forcing the

company to recall all 160 unionists fired for union activity over the last six and a half years. While the return of the fired workers was a key issue in the 1994-95 strike — and an important setback to Caterpillar — the contract itself contains numerous concessions, including two-tier wages and a six-year duration.

Solidarity meetings for the Local 1304 membership have been organized every Thursday since early March. Inside the plant, unionists have organized "hammers down for justice." On the hour, workers pound hammers and other tools in protest.

Support is also evident from unionists, as well as those not in unions, in the factories surrounding the plant. Many jobs in the Quad Cities (Moline, East Moline, Rock Island, and Davenport) area are tied to Case, one of the largest employers in this region. John Deere, a major competitor of Case, also has several plants in the area.

On March 6 and again on March 20, members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 310 who work at Bridgestone/Firestone rallied in downtown Des Moines to support UAW workers at Case. The actions were called to protest the Strom Engineering hiring of strike breakers for Case. Local 310 member Joan Robinson told the *Militant*, "We went through what they are going through. I support the Auto Workers 100 percent."

Over the years, Case has won concessions from the union. But in this round, UAW members are standing their ground. Case is demanding that workers and retirees pay more of their monthly health insurance costs. Solidarity between Case workers and pensioners is much in evidence. On March 19, 100 Case retirees held a picket line in front of the East Moline plant to protest proposed pension cuts, as well as to show solidarity for the union. Similar actions have been organized at the Burlington, Iowa, and Racine, Wisconsin, facilities.

In addition, Case is seeking lower piecework wage rates resulting in lower pay for UAW workers and increased mandatory overtime. They plan to weaken seniority rights. A 75-month contract is being proposed, almost twice the length of the previous contract of 38 months. Both Caterpillar and John Deere have six-year agreements.

"That's way too long," said one unionist outside the Local 1304 hall. He added that the contract signed earlier this year between the UAW and John Deere, "really sets us back." At John Deere the agreement imposes a deep two-tier wage set up for new hires, whose pay never rises to the top level of existing employees.

Case's proposals are not popular. "We're mad. We've got kicked in the teeth," said UAW member John Kinney. Other workers compared Case's offer to "slavery," accord-

ing to one local newspaper.

The Case Corporation is an international producer of construction and agricultural equipment. The Burlington, Iowa, plant is billed as the "back hoe capital of the world," and in East Moline combines and cotton pickers are made.

According to corporate financial reports for 1997, the company has seen increased sales, especially in Latin America and Europe. Large sales of agricultural equipment were made in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine, republics that were formerly part of the Soviet Union. In 1997 Case made a record \$403 million profit on revenues of \$6 billion.

In a related development, 1,500 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union at Oscar Meyer Foods Corp. in Davenport, Iowa, across the Mississippi River from East Moline, rejected a proposed contract April 7. The agreement offered increased wages of only 75 cents per hour over the life of the 42-month pact.

The union membership voted 96 percent in favor of authorizing a strike April 9, but the company and union have agreed to resume negotiations for the time being. In 1979 the union waged a six-month strike against the meatpacking company.

Ray Parsons is a member of USWA Local 310 in Iowa.



Labor's Giant Step

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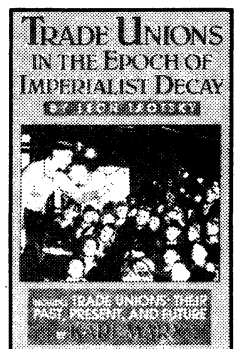
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from Pathfinder

A lifelong worker-bolshevik

Continued from Page 8

pointed out the party's approach "was that the best interests of the union would be served by staying in the CIO. The CIO encompassed the mainstream of the organized American working class and a union could better organize and fight to protect its members and make advances and gains by being in the CIO...." Helen was a leading activist in the campaign for representation by the IUE and in fighting to prevent it from becoming a red-baiting campaign.

In 1947 Helen married Charles Scheer, a party member in the Twin Cities and a switchmen for the Milwaukee Road Railroad. They remained life-long companions and comrades and raised two sons, Bill and Hank, who were born in the early '50s.

Reenergizing impact of Cuban victory

During the 1950s, primarily under the pressure of the long post-war economic expansion, the labor movement as a whole retreated, as did its vanguard, including the SWP. This also affected Helen, who began to settle into the rhythm of family life. Helen repeatedly insisted that the victory of workers and peasants in Cuba in 1959 politically reenergized her, and others of her generation in the party. The Cuban revolution made it possible to recruit a layer of youth to an example of genuine mass communist politics, many of whom became party leaders later, she would point out. At the same time it also re-recruited an older layer of party members for the long haul. Helen became active in defense of the Cuban revolution, an activist and organizer of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in the Twin Cities, and continued to participate in many actions in support of Cuba for the rest of her life.

The new rise of the struggle for Black freedom and the powerful and growing example of Malcolm X as a revolutionary leader of the Black nationality and the working class, simultaneously reinforced the re-energizing impact of the Cuban revolution.

Twenty years later, when the example of the Cuban revolution was extended by Grenada and Nicaragua, Helen was active in the solidarity actions in defense of the working people in those countries. In 1983 she and Charles visited Nicaragua on a tour sponsored by the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. On their return she spoke about the trip at a Militant Labor Forum in the Twin Cities. This was one of the few times that Helen agreed to speak at a public event.

During the first year of the Cuban revolution, Helen had another experience that helped deepen her political understanding and confidence. She was nominated by the Minneapolis branch to be a student for six months in 1959-60 at the ninth session of the party's national school, then called the Trotsky School. Charles attended the tenth session one year later. Fred Halstead led the school Helen attended and much of the course of study was based on reading and discussing together *Capital*, by Karl Marx.

As an experienced activist in the Minneapolis branch, Helen was often elected to the branch executive committee and assumed many responsibilities — including organizing branch finances, election campaigns, sales drives, fund campaigns, forums, defense and security, and more. During these years she worked in various nursing and administrative jobs in health care.

In seven elections at national SWP conventions between 1969 and 1979, delegates judged that Helen's seriousness and maturity were sound credentials for electing her to the party's Control Commission. One of the challenges of serving on that national leadership body at the time was addressing questions posed by the rise of the women's liberation movement. This movement was forcing massive changes among working people on how to view many social questions, including family violence and abuse against women. It was essential that the party, to safeguard its security and integrity among other things, clarify and assert that if an action in public was incompatible with membership so was the same action behind closed family doors.

During the late 1980s and early '90s, taking advantage of their retirement, Helen and Charles accepted the assignment to several long stints helping to take care of the facilities for the national party leadership school in upstate New York. True to working-class traditions in which they had been trained in Minnesota, they never left their stint without personally purchasing and installing a

new piece of equipment for the school.

Helen tended to shy away from public responsibilities such as being a candidate for public office or speaking at forums. However, she wasn't shy, and one of her notable characteristics was that she could easily make conversation with customers that walked into the Pathfinder Bookstore, participants in Militant Labor Forums, or people she was asking to sign election petitions or buy a *Militant* subscription. For many years she was one of the top petitioners and *Militant* sellers in the branch. Into her 70s she was sometimes still among the top five sub sellers. Helen always assumed that workers, students, and others would be interested in the party's ideas; at the same time she engaged them in discussion about what they were politically interested in.

Never tired of talking socialism

Helen was a bedrock of hundreds, maybe thousands, of literature tables and petitioning teams during her years in the SWP. She never grew bored with this activity. To the contrary, she had so internalized the importance of this kind of work for meeting new people and winning them to the communist movement that she received satisfaction each time she did it. Each time out selling or petitioning, Helen would bring back stories about new people that she met. Each experience was a fresh one, because each person Helen met she met as an individual.

Helen also set an outstanding example to scores of young people who met and joined the Young Socialist Alliance, and later the Young Socialists, and the Socialist Workers Party simply by her habits of work. She

worked hard, she didn't waste time, she paid attention to detail, and she would follow through on suggestions that she made rather than leaving it to someone else. A few weeks before she died she did her final stint staffing the Pathfinder Bookstore. After her shift she wrote a brief note to the bookstore director explaining that she had cleaned the shelves under the counter. She fastened to the note several items that she didn't want to throw out without broader consultation. One item was a damaged book that she suggested be returned to Pathfinder, and she volunteered to do it. She made extra time during her two-hour shift to help improve the bookstore.

Helen was diagnosed with colon cancer in January 1997 and had two operations and six series of chemotherapy treatments. But she remained an activist up until a couple of weeks before she died. She attended the SWP convention last June, and participated in many Militant Labor Forums and SWP branch meetings. And this old farm girl simultaneously carried out a long-postponed project—planting a big garden, which all who saw it admired.

Since November 1997, when it became clear that the cancer was spreading rapidly and the chemotherapy was stopped, Helen participated in three actions to protest U.S. war threats against Iraq, two protests against



Helen and Charles Scheer on 1983 tour of Nicaragua

Militant

police brutality, and a prochoice picket line initiated by the Young Socialists. Just two weeks before she went into a hospice, she made the rounds to bookstores to place the *Militant*.

Helen was truly a working-class soldier of the Continental line. She remained confident in the enormous capacities of her class and dedicated her entire adult life to helping to build the only instrument that can lead the working class to power. She lived this reality, even more than she preached it, and drew pleasure out of seeing so many young workers and students she touched, including both her sons, become active revolutionaries in the communist movement. And no single individual touched more of those who did take this course than Helen Scheer.

Doug Jenness is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 9198.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ALABAMA

Birmingham

A New Stage in the Irish Freedom Struggle. Speaker: Rich Stuart, Socialist Workers Party; member, United Steelworkers of America. Fri., April 24, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

From Iraq to the Caspian Sea — U.S., NATO Moves Against Russian Workers State. Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani, National Committee, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., April 26, 4:00 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

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oners! Defend Noel Cassidy. Speaker, Noel Cassidy. Fri., April 24, 7:30 p.m. 1832 Euclid. Donation: \$4. Tel: (216) 861-6150

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Militant Fund Rally. "Eyewitness Report from the Resistance in Kosovo and Albania." Talk by Jack Willey, organizer of National Executive Committee of Young Socialists. Willey was part of a recent *Militant* reporting team to Egypt and the Balkans. Fri., April 24, 6:30 p.m., includes reception. Garfield Community Center, 2323 East Cherry. Donation: \$6. (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Vancouver

Special Appeal for the 1998 Militant Fund Drive. "Building an Internationalist, Anti-imperialist Youth Movement," talk by Jack Willey, organizer of the YS National Executive Com-

mittee. Willey was part of a recent *Militant* reporting team to Egypt and the Balkans. Sun., April 26, 3:00 p.m. Lunch followed by presentation. 3967 Main St. (between 23rd and 24th). Tel: (604) 872-8343.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Workers in Australia Resist Union-Busting — An Eyewitness report from the Watersiders' Picket Lines. Speaker: Terry Carson. Fri., April 24, 7:00 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch

Support the Aboriginal Land Rights Struggle. Featuring the Video "Jabiluka — the Struggle of the Mirrar People Against the Jabiluka Uranium Mine." Fri., April 24, 7:00 p.m. **Resistance in Indonesia.** Fri., May 1, 7:00 p.m. Both events held at 199 High Street. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

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Safety second — Fire chiefs in England charge that privatized water companies are increasingly hindering their efforts to fight blazes. To cut down the loss of water



Harry Ring

caused by leaks in the mains, the companies reduce the pressure rather than repair the mains.

'Just get out' — The Pentagon disclosed that the number of GIs being forced out of the military as homosexuals has jumped 67 per-

cent, since Clinton's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy was adopted in 1993. An edit in the *New York Times* sighed that Clinton had erred in letting Gen. Colin Powell and others "bully" him into junking his campaign promise to ban antigay discrimination in the military.

What's half a stone? — "We don't do anything halfhearted," said Sunbeam CEO Al "Chainsaw" Dunlop, indicating that acquisition of three more companies would mean more job-slashing.

One for our side — "Johannesburg — South African courts may no longer assume that a woman who says she has been raped is lying, after a landmark decision by the Appeal Court. The [apartheid] rape

rule said women are 'habitually inclined to lie about being raped.' The Appeal Court judgment means that women's evidence in rape cases will be given as much weight as men's." — The *Times*, London, March 23.

Fresh air? Who needs it? — The British aviation authority may require more air for flight passengers. Airlines deny they endanger passengers by reducing the flow of fresh air as a cost-cutting measure.

A truly great society — Henry Aldridge, a member of the North Carolina legislature, scoffs at data showing that the state's Black infant mortality rate is double that of whites. He said the Black people he

knows are "bigger, and tougher, and stronger" than whites, pointing to a Black legislator as an example. Aldridge is co-chair of a committee on welfare, children's health, and day care.

Slurp — Ralph Baldwin, a Los Angeles area judge, resigned and apologized for a "misguided sense of congeniality." While a jury was deliberating, he got a 12-pack of beer and invited jurors to have a "cold one" with him. He also called the court administrator a "wimp" when she declined to have one. He was presiding in a drunk-driving case.

Rest assured — In a three-year period, seven inmates of prisons in England and Wales died while be-

ing "restrained" by prison cops. Of the seven, six were Afro-Caribbeans. Richard Tilt, head of the Prison Service, suggested this was because Afro-Caribbeans have physical differences that make them more prone to being choked. With the ensuing public outcry, he assured, "I am not a racist."

Walk on air — Failure to maintain Moscow's aging underground steam pipes has led to casualties from leaks that saturate the ground, creating veritable sink holes. Likening the city to a "minefield," an official said: "People will, I'm afraid, continue falling in such pits in the future.... But for now we're helpless and can only recommend that people be more careful about where they walk."

Why did the 'Japanese miracle' crumble?

The selection below is excerpted from the article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" by Jack Barnes. It is based on talks given between February and April 1994, and was discussed and adopted by the Socialist Workers Party national convention in August of that year. The entire article appears in issue no. 10 of *New International*, copyright © 1994 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., and reprinted by permission. Subtitles are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

There is not and will not be a substitute for the dollar as the predominant currency of world trade, investment, banking, accounting, payment, and reserves. At the same

BOOK OF THE WEEK

time, the deepening crisis of world capitalism means that the dollar itself is a less and less stable and reliable unit for the owning classes of the world. It will never again be the world currency it was from the time of Washington's victory in World War II until Nixon was forced to end its convertibility into gold in 1971. The almighty dollar was humbled forever by the weakening of U.S. imperialism coming out of the Vietnam War, the related war-fueled inflation, and the relative advance of capitalist Japan and Germany as manufacturing and trading powers.

Since the closing years of the 1980s, however, U.S. imperialism has scored substantial further gains over the capitalist powers it defeated in World War II.... Competition and conflict is rising among all the imperialist powers, but the contest revolves above all around the United States, Germany, and Japan. The losers in World War II, just like the losers in the first interimperialist slaughter a quarter century earlier, are once again having to fight the enormous pressures of the victor.

This is the opposite of how the world has often been portrayed by bourgeois politicians, press commentators, and the labor officialdom in the 1970s, '80s, and even into the '90s. Novels, movies, and docudramas (the self-serving soap operas of the TV intellectual) have all sounded the alarm against the rising economic power of Japan. Soon no one was going to be able to buy a car, a

television, or a laptop computer that wasn't made in Japan. Japanese capital was buying up U.S. real estate and factories at a dangerous rate, we were told. They bought Rockefeller Center, a national landmark! Would there be any "American-owned" land left in Los Angeles? They were even taking over Hollywood movie studios and recording companies! The hype reached the point where if you took it seriously, you would have thought the United States was on the verge of being turned into a semicolony of Nippon.

With regard to German capitalism, the hype has had less of an openly racist and chauvinist edge, although the specter of the Hun, the kaiser, and the Third Reich has not been far beneath the surface in some bourgeois commentary—especially in the *New York Times* and in initially Thatcherite and now broadening ruling-class circles in Britain. If the propaganda never reached the point of predicting a German buyout of U.S. land and factories, at least the deutsche mark was allegedly destined to establish unbridled dominance over Europe, west and east.

End of the 'Japanese miracle'

As recently as the 1992 U.S. presidential elections, Clinton and some in his economic "brain trust" were still pointing to the post-war miracle of German and Japanese capitalism as a fount of practical lessons to help U.S. employers pull out of their malaise. This became a common theme among U.S. liberals in particular during the 1980s: emulate the German and Japanese capitalists, while bashing them with protectionist bludgeons to hold off their exports of commodities and capital.

Underneath these self-serving rationalizations for U.S. nationalism there is, of course, a partial truth—the relative decline of the domination of U.S. imperialism since the end of World War II. That is a glorious fact....

U.S. capitalists have so far been much more successful than their German or Japanese competitors in driving down the price of labor power. Reversing the trend over the previous several decades, unit labor costs in the United States were driven down by the employers in the 1980s, while they continued rising in Japan and most countries of capitalist Europe. Fewer than ten years ago, in 1985, hourly wage rates in the United States were higher than in any of its major imperialist rivals: Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy, or Canada. Of these countries, only in Britain today are hourly wages still lower than in the United States, and that gap has narrowed. U.S. exports have grown at three times the pace of those of Japan and Germany since the mid-1980s, and since 1991 U.S. capitalists for the first time are exporting a higher percentage of their domestic output than their Japanese competitors.

Only in New Zealand have the capitalists perhaps achieved more than in the United States, in relative terms, in pushing back the wages, conditions, and union rights of the working class....

The capitalists in Germany and a number of other countries in Europe suffer from the fact that they have not yet been able to smash the system of social insurance and related gains—health care, unemployment compensation, pensions, vacations—that the

working class and labor movement won through struggles in the decades following World War II.

Workers in the United States can say to our sisters and brothers in Germany, France, Sweden, and elsewhere in capitalist Europe: "What has happened to us is now going to happen to you. And it's going to be rougher in some ways, because the capitalists have to chop more since the social conquests you won in struggles over the past half century were greater." As we approach the 150th anniversary of *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* in 1844, written by Engels to alert the democratic movement in Germany to what capitalism held in store for their future, communists in Europe today can point to the United States for similar lessons.

In fact, the employers and their governments from Bonn to Stockholm, from London to Rome have already begun to make headway in the past year or so in going after prior gains. But they need to take much, much more and are pressing to do so. As working-class resistance to these attacks develops, so too will the hunger of vanguard fighters to link up across national borders to engage in common discussion and action.

Impact of high land prices in Japan

Japanese imperialism is paying a price for its relatively recent feudal past and the U.S. military occupation following World War II. This is part of the reason land prices are so

astronomically high in Japan compared to other advanced capitalist countries. Among other effects, the monopolization of land ownership means the rent workers have to pay to keep a roof over the head of their families is also disproportionately high. The big majority of the value workers produce with our labor is taken by the employing class—that's what Marx called surplus value, out of which they derive their profits and their lavish personal wealth and incomes. But out of the value workers produce, the bosses also have to pay us enough to be able to live and work and to reproduce the next generation of workers. Marx called that the value of labor power, and it varies from one country to the next depending on a combination of historical factors, including the class struggle between labor and capital. So when housing rents are very high, as they are in Japan for historical reasons, that's not only bad for workers who have to pay those rents; it's also bad for the capitalists, who end up having to apportion a larger share of the value workers produce to making it possible for them to pay those rents. And that puts Japanese employers at a disadvantage to their rivals in other imperialist countries, where rents are relatively cheaper. Similar considerations apply to the very high food prices in Japan, which are another result of sky-high land prices, as well as of protectionist policies to benefit the big capitalist farming interests, landowners, and rice and meat traders in Japan.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



April 27, 1973

APRIL 5 — In response to new anti-abortion bills in the New York State legislature, the Woman's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) testified at hearings in Albany today.

The hearings centered on a package of bills submitted by State Senator James Donovan, who cosponsored a bill last year to repeal the state's liberalized abortion law. Donovan's new bills call for funding of counseling centers for pregnant women, aid to victims of birth defects, and grants to those who adopt children, as well as other measures. The intent of the bills, as the April 6 *New York Times* put it, is to "discourage elective abortions" through bills that "encourage women to carry their pregnancy to full term."

Speaking for WONAAC, Karen Stamm explained, "Because we do not advocate abortion for women, but rather advocate choice, we fully support all efforts to inform and aid women in making and carrying out whichever course each individual woman chooses." However, Stamm noted that "of all the choices open to women, that of an abortion is still the most shrouded in prejudice and most restricted...." The most pressing task of the state legislature at this time, she said, is to enforce the Supreme Court abortion ruling, provide more funds for abortion clinics, and oppose cutbacks for abortion facilities. She also called on the legislature to pass Bill 842, which would remove age restrictions on the use of contraceptives.



April 26, 1948

APRIL 22 — Enraged and vindictive, the capitalist government has framed up the United Mine Workers and John L. Lewis on trumped-up charges of criminal and civil "contempt."

Federal Judge T. Alan Goldsborough, a faithful Democratic wheelhorse, for the second time has levied an extortionate fine on the miners for their defiance of federal strike-breaking injunctions.

On the recommendations of Truman's Attorney General, Judge Goldsborough on April 20 exacted the punitive fine of \$1,400,000 from the UMW and \$20,000 from Lewis, the union's president, on the criminal contempt conviction.

The judge is still holding over the miners' heads the threat of further reprisals if they do not end their protest strike against the convictions by Friday, April 23.

If the contempt prosecution was intended to crush the fighting spirit of the miners, it has proved a miserable failure. When Goldsborough handed down his contempt conviction on April 19, the miners began pouring out of the pits once more.

Confronted by more than 250,000 miners still on strike and the certainty of a total shutdown if Lewis were railroaded to prison, the most the government dared to do at the moment was rob the miners of some of their hard-earned dollars. But the union remains solid as granite, determined and unyielding as ever.

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War
Jack Barnes

How the working class and its allies respond to the accelerated capitalist disorder will determine whether or not imperialism's march toward fascism and war can be stopped. In *New International* no. 10. Also available in Spanish, French, Icelandic, and Swedish. \$14

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Struggle will win Irish freedom

The Militant is making available our editorial space this week to publish the following statement by the Communist League candidates in the upcoming local council elections in London. The statement was issued April 15 by Celia Pugh, standing for Coningham ward, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Pete Clifford for Angell ward, Lambeth.

Immediately withdrawing its troops and ending its bloody rule in Ireland — that is the real agreement the British government of Anthony Blair should have concluded on April 10. While Blair babbles about “lifting the burden of history,” it is the “men of violence” under his command — the occupying British army and heavily armed police in the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) — who remain the source of the conflict in Ireland. Blair, however, is not interested in peace but in maintaining the oppression of the Irish people while his government strives to shore up the declining world role of Britain’s ruling rich.

The British proposal to dilute Articles 2 and 3 of the constitution of the Irish Republic, which lay claim to Northern Ireland, is also typical imperial arrogance that should be condemned by class-conscious workers and young fighters. The constitution of another sovereign country is none of London’s business.

In the actual agreement, London did make some concessions. As Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams has pointed out, the agreement — which is neither a “settlement” nor a “peace” deal — showed that “the struggle has been advanced.” As Britain’s rulers get weaker they confront the growing confidence and determination of ordinary men and women fighting to end 30 years of military occupation. Unable to rule the Irish in the old way, London was forced to allow Sinn Fein, the party leading the struggle for Irish freedom, into the negotiations.

The crisis of the pro-British “Unionist” parties in Northern Ireland — once the mainstay of Britain’s rule — has also deepened and the true face of British rule has come under the spotlight. The recent report by the United Nations Commission for Human Rights confirming the existence of organized links between British government forces and right-wing loyalist death squads is the latest example.

After a revolutionary struggle to end British colonial rule, the Irish people were forced to accept the partition of their country in 1921. Northern Ireland remained under British rule, administered by the Unionists through systematic discrimination and violent repression against Catholics. Today Catholics remain second-class citizens in their own country; they are at least twice as likely to be unemployed as Protestants, for example. In the late 1960s tens of thousands rebelled in the streets, endangering the continuation of British rule and forcing London to send troops and impose direct rule. The introduction of repressive legislation, including the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), was an attack on all working people.

The unbroken resistance since then brought about the historic U.S. speaking tour of Gerry Adams in 1995. Silenced on the international stage for decades, the leadership of the Irish struggle was able to speak to millions on television. London was forced to end its ban of Sinn Fein voices in broadcasting. Over the past three years, following this historic breakthrough, working people in Catholic areas have waged the fight to reroute annual parades by pro-British loyalist organizations through their neighborhoods. They had been forced to accept these provocative rightist displays for decades.

In the course of these battles — such as on the Garvaghy Road in Portadown — Irish fighters have faced up to the brutality of the RUC and British army and strengthened their confidence and determination. On the Garvaghy Road in early July this year and in other places Britain’s rulers will face this continuing resistance. As Gerry Adams explains, the recent talks and the agreement represent “a phase in our struggle. That struggle must continue until it reaches its final goal.”

For workers, young fighters, and all supporters of Irish freedom the April 10 agreement presents an opportunity to renew our efforts to tell the truth about Britain’s role in Ireland and to campaign for the immediate withdrawal of troops.

British troops out now!
Release all political prisoners!
Reroute the sectarian marches!
Repeal the PTA!
Disband the RUC!

U.S. troops out of Korea

Below we reprint a message sent to the Workers Party of Korea by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, on the occasion of the April 15 national holiday of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

On behalf of the Socialist Workers Party I send revolutionary greetings on this occasion of the national holiday of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Our party reaffirms its support for the struggle of the Korean people for national reunification and for the removal of all foreign troops from the Korean peninsula.

We join you in condemning the recent steps by Washington to reinforce the command structure of its 37,000-strong force in the south of Korea, to conduct military exercises there, and to further arm the regime in Seoul. We solidarize with your demand for an end to the criminal economic embargo against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and with your call for needed supplies of food and fertilizer.

Showing the U.S. rulers’ imperial disregard for the lives of hundreds of millions, Washington’s central banker, Alan Greenspan, recently made the arrogant pronouncement that the financial crisis convulsing Asia is an “important milestone” in the “seemingly inexorable trend toward market capitalism.” The unfolding economic catastrophe is indeed a “milestone” — in the inexorable trend of world capitalism toward social devastation, fascism, and war. It reveals the face of imperialism’s inevitable future for the peoples not only of the south of Korea and the rest of Asia, but the world over.

Washington’s unrelenting aggressive moves on the Korean peninsula are of a piece with its steps to tighten the encirclement of Russia — from the imperialist occupation in Yugoslavia, to the eastward expansion of NATO, to the U.S. efforts to strengthen its military presence and sphere of influence from the Arab-Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and all along the Silk Road. The U.S. rulers’ ultimate aim is to reimpose the dominance of capitalism everywhere the toilers have overturned it.

But America’s ruling families face a tremendous obstacle along this road — the resistance of the exploited and oppressed the world over, from Korea, to the workers and farmers of Cuba, to working people in the imperialist countries who will not accept the horrors the capitalist system in its decline has in store for our class and the world. Trade unionists in the midwestern United States battling the Case Corporation for dignity and better working conditions, a new generation of Puerto Rican youth revitalizing the struggle for independence, workers and students saying “no” to the austerity dictates of the imperialist banks and national bourgeoisie in Indonesia — these are but a few examples. Among such fighters the Korean people will find some of their best allies.

The Socialist Workers Party welcomes the opportunity to fight shoulder to shoulder with you against the enemy of humanity, Yankee imperialism, in the battles of today and tomorrow.

s/Jack Barnes
National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party

Kosovo: daily protests press independence

Continued from Page 9

forces have also continued to raid and loot homes of Albanians in the area. Authorities are not permitting some 20,000 of the 65,000 inhabitants of the mountainous region who fled after assaults in early March to return to their homes. The police have ordered bakeries, flour factories, and other small businesses by Albanians to shut down in a number of villages and have been preventing many Albanian farmers from working in the fields. Heavy shooting by pro-Belgrade Serbs, as well as army and police forces, has been reported at the Babilloq village in the Drecan region near the Albanian border April 13 and other areas.

Serbian authorities are claiming their forces are trying to protect Serb civilians and police who are under assault by Albanian “terrorists.” State media in Belgrade pound on the recent evacuation of a handful of Serb families from the Drenica region, the yet unresolved killings of six Albanians in Klina who were presumably loyal to Belgrade, and the alleged rape of a girl by “masked Albanians.” The state-controlled media reported April 14 that a Serb policeman was wounded in a grenade attack on a police station at the Stanovic I Ulët village on the Pristina-Mitrovica road.

Serb police in Pristina have blocked demonstrators but have refrained from attacking the protests. The situation is different in towns other than the capital. Cops reportedly beat several protesters after a march by Albanians in Mitrovica on April 9.

On the eve of that day’s marches, Belgrade state TV called the demonstrators “clowns” and “parrots” who are “blindly loyal to their foreign sponsors.”

The Serbian regime has been trying to capitalize on calls that amount to direct imperialist military intervention by pro-capitalist forces among Albanians. In an article in the March 14 *New York Times*, for example, Veton Surroi, publisher and editor-in-chief of *Koha Ditore*, one of the main Albanian-language dailies in Kosovo, said: “Only the credible force of military action will force Mr. Milosevic to listen. In the weeks to come, Mr. Milosevic needs to be surrounded by soldiers, NATO troops must be positioned along the ‘Yugoslav’ borders with Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria. Naval carriers should be stationed along the Montenegrin coast.”

Many student leaders and working people among Albanians fighting for independence do not share these views.

Bosnia: U.S. troops deepen intervention

Meanwhile, Washington has taken further steps to deepen its intervention in neighboring Bosnia, where 8,500 U.S. troops dominate the 34,000-strong NATO force that has been occupying that republic since late 1995.

Special forces teams from the United States, the Netherlands, and Britain have been training for weeks to seize Karadzic, reported the April 12 *New York Times*.

On April 2, hundreds of NATO soldiers and 50 armored personnel vehicles swept into Pale, a stronghold of pro-Belgrade Serbs near the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, and surrounded Karadzic’s house and former offices for several hours. In the raid, troops burst into the Famos carpentry factory, which Karadzic has used as his headquarters, and confiscated 10 rifles and 1,500 rounds of ammunition. Six days later, NATO troops arrested two other Bosnian Serbs associated with Karadzic who have also been indicted by the imperialist “war crimes” tribunal in The Hague.

NATO commanders have estimated that they would need 800 troops backed by helicopter gunships and armor to seize Karadzic, whose whereabouts are not known. NATO officials say the assault force would take between 20 and 40 casualties. It is a figure some of the imperialist powers with troops there, particularly Paris, say is unacceptable.

Carlos Westerndorp, who was foreign minister in Madrid under the former administration of Socialist Party premier Felipe González in Spain, said he expects Karadzic to be in The Hague “within a month, either because he goes voluntarily or because he is arrested.” Westerndorp is the so-called international civilian administrator for Bosnia charged with overseeing the implementation of the Dayton accord — the treaty Washington forced the warring regimes in Yugoslavia to sign in 1995 paving the way for the NATO occupation.

At Washington’s urging, Westerndorp and his aides have recently taken over the administration of the republic, firing local officials who do not abide by NATO’s “rules” and issuing a host of regulations on currency, license plates, and passports. “Mr. Westerndorp, the High Representative, has transformed the post, once largely ceremonial, into that of a governor general who runs a protectorate,” said an article in the April 10 *New York Times*.

Croatian president Franjo Tudjman said recently that history will place Westerndorp alongside Spain’s deceased dictator Francisco Franco as “a savior of Western civilization.”

Indiana steelworkers force company to pay deferred wages

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your

as part of the fight leading up to negotiations for a new contract at the basic steel companies in 1999.

Unionists back strike at W. Virginia rubber plant

SPENCER, West Virginia — More than 250 union members and supporters rallied here April 4 to mark the one-year anniversary of the strike by Laborer's Local 1353

just a month apart in 1997. "We help each other," said Whytsell. "We go to their events, they come to ours. We're in the struggle together. They're trying to get what we've got, which is to be recognized as a union."

A strong contingent of USWA Local 5668 members who were locked out at Ravenswood Aluminum Corp. in 1990 attended the rally. "They've been our lifeblood," said Whytsell. "They went through it and now they're helping us." The Ravenswood steelworkers pooled their resources at the rally and bid over \$700 for a cake celebrating the one-year strike anniversary auctioned off at the end of the rally.

"The government tells us we're worth \$5.00 an hour," said UMWA Local 5396 president Tom Finch. "They don't want us to be organized. We have to keep our guard up." Finch's local, just two years old, organizes power plant workers in Ravenswood.

Jeff Hill, from a steelworker organized Chevron refinery, told the rally, "We're the reinforcements! They're here every day fighting the scabs. They're fighting for all of us."

UNITE locals from Huntington, West Virginia and Ashland, Kentucky, donated \$1,500 to the strike.

Negotiations between the union and the company resumed on April 9 for the first time since May 1997. Whytsell said the three-and-a-half-hour meeting "went better than expected," and that negotiations will resume early next week. "They're seeing that we're not going away and that we're not going back without a contract," he said.

Communication workers rally for pensions, rights

ATLANTA — Some 150 members of the Communication Work-

Free U.S. political prisoners!



Militant/Margrethe Siem

Some 3,000 people, many of whom were young, marched on the White House in Washington, D.C., March 27 in Jericho '98. Protesters demanded freedom for more than 100 political prisoners in the United States. These include 14 Puerto Rican independence fighters, Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, and framed-up Native American leader Leonard Peltier.

ON THE PICKET LINE

union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

GARY, Indiana — Hundreds of members of Locals 1014 and 2695 of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) demonstrated in front of U.S. Steels' Gary works April 3, demanding the company pay wages deferred from 1997.

These wages, which the company calls "profit sharing," are due in April. The company was refusing to pay, claiming they would keep the money until a union demand for an accounting of how much workers were entitled to was taken before an arbiter at union expense. On April 7 the company caved in and agreed to hand out the checks this month.

Even though the microphone at the rally broke down, workers continued to rally, chanting "We want our money."

After that action, workers decided to go to Pittsburgh to demonstrate outside the home of USX chairman Thomas Usher. Chuck Dale, an executive board member of USWA Local 1014, said four busses were full to take workers to the demonstration and the local had to turn more people away who wanted to go. The trip was canceled after the company gave in.

Most basic steel companies make "profit sharing" payments to workers if the company had been profitable the previous year. In fact, this money is created solely by the labor of the workers, and is part of the wages steel workers have won in struggle over the years. The deferred pay won by the unionists totals more than \$2,000 each, to be paid in three installments.

Many unionists see this skirmish

against the Monarch Rubber Company.

"Fifty-four of us went out, and only one crossed the picket line," strike president Randy Whytsell told the *Militant* in a telephone interview. The strike is not over wages, but conditions in the plant. "They're trying to take away things that we had," said Whytsell. "The company wants to cut vacations, raise the premiums workers pay for health insurance, and is trying to get extra work out of some departments."

A fact sheet passed out by the union details acts of violence and intimidation carried out by scabs against the strikers. The latest incident was March 12, when an explosive device went off near the picket shack outside the plant.

The number of union locals represented at the rally showed the support the strikers have in northern West Virginia. There were speakers representing locals of the USWA; the United Mine Workers; Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE); Communications Workers of America; and the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers.

Mike Holland, representing steelworkers on strike against MSI in Marietta, Ohio, told the rally, "All of us need to stick together. When you get your contract, we'll come down and watch you go back in!" A delegation of MSI strikers attended the rally and brought a donation of \$1,000 for the Monarch strikers.

Many at the action here had attended a rally for MSI strikers in Marietta on March 15. That event brought together fighters from throughout the Ohio Valley. The strikes at Monarch and MSI began

ers of America (CWA) in the Atlanta area rallied at noon time at the main office of the telecommunications giant AT&T here April 6. The national contract between the CWA and AT&T expires May 30. Most of the unionists were AT&T employees, but a good number were CWA members at Lucent Technologies, a major employer in Atlanta where workers are also represented by the CWA.

Norma Powell, a staffer for the CWA, told the rally that the pension increase the union is fighting for is the number one issue. Speaking to this correspondent, Eddie Christian, a member of CWA Local 3263 at Lucent, confirmed, "If you work for AT&T or Lucent you can't afford to retire."

Chris Hill, an AT&T worker and member of CWA Local 3250, and Bunny Mitchell with Local 3263 at Lucent, said card-check recognition is a big issue. This refers to the way the union signs up new members and wins a new contract at joint ventures involving AT&T. Hill, who has been involved in union organizing efforts, said, "In the past AT&T would allow us to have access to workers on the property to sign them up for the union. If we collected cards from more than 50 percent of the workers, we went directly to negotiations with the company for a union contract without the NLRB getting involved. AT&T now wants to keep us off the property to limit our access to organize the workers."

Seattle workers rally to back Jet Tools strikers

AUBURN, Washington — About 100 workers rallied in defense of 20 Teamsters on strike against Jet Equipment and Tools here April 3. Unionists from the International Association of Machinists at Hexcel and Boeing, longshoremen, railroad workers, and other Teamsters joined the strikers.

The rally came as the unionists were starting their 10th week on the picket line. Their battle began in July 1997, when they voted 20-3 to join Teamsters Local 117 based in Seattle.

After fruitless negotiations for more than six months the strikers voted down Jet's final offer and went on strike January 28. On the first day of the strike, Jet boss Robert Scummer sent each striker a letter telling them they were "permanently replaced." Fourteen scabs now work their jobs.

In an interview April 8 on the picket line, Hank Curran, a member of the negotiating team, and Lloyd Fields explained the issues in the strike. Jet refuses to standardize wage rates or pay raises. They insist that wages remain based on "performance" and that rates be given or taken away when management decides.

The strikers want a union shop and "amnesty" — that is, all strikers must come back to work. Jet insists on deciding who works and who doesn't.

Curran, 47, says that Scummer refused to join the negotiating meetings to discuss contract terms. He did tell Curran, who has worked at Jet for seven years, that if he wanted more money, he should get more education and work in the office. Fields, 43, has worked at Jet for two years after 21 years in the army. "It's about respect," Fields summed up. "We want respect."

Twenty of the 24 members of the bargaining unit went out on strike and have been staffing picket lines in two shifts from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. every workday. One striker has worked 22 years at Jet, while others are in their early 20s.

Jet Equipment and Tools expects to do \$101 million in business in 1998, importing and exporting machinery and tools. They service hardware stores in the Seattle area like Eagle's Hardware, Tool Town, and Loews.

John Studer, member of USWA Local 1011 in Chicago; Keith Davis from Cleveland; Dan Fein, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1996 in Atlanta; and Chris Rayson, member United Transportation Union Local 845 in Seattle, contributed to this column.

Cuban officials, Puerto Rican independence fighter to speak at Minneapolis conference

BY GAETAN WHISTON

MINNEAPOLIS — A public conference entitled "One Hundred Years since the Spanish-American War: The Struggle for National Sovereignty in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines" will take place here at the University of Minnesota with broad academic sponsorship April 17 and 18.

Félix Wilson, second secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., and Gustavo Machín, third secretary of the Cuban Interests Section, are among the featured speakers who will be at the event. Juan Mari Bras, a longtime leader of the Puerto Rican independence movement and professor at the Eugenio María de Hostos School of Law, will also participate. Other invited speakers include Addi Batata, a veteran Filipino activist in Minnesota; Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press; and

Kathryn Sikkink, Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota.

The conference will open April 17 at 3:00 p.m. with an exchange with Juan Mari Bras. That evening will feature a panel discussion, "Origins and Development of Resistance," with David Roediger, chairperson of the American Studies Department; Dennis Valdés, associate professor of Chicano Studies; and Gary Prevost, professor of Political Science at St. John's University. Following the panel discussion there will be a cultural event with the band Proyecto la Plena.

The conference will resume April 18 at 10:00 a.m. with 11 workshops on a wide range of topics. They include: "The U.S. Embargo Against Cuba" with Gustavo Machín, "Youth Activism in the Struggle for Self-Determination," and "Imperialism in the Public School Class-

room in Puerto Rico: 1898-1903" with Ramón López, director of the Escuela Antonia Pantoja in Chicago.

The main session of the conference, "The Struggle for National Sovereignty Today," will take place April 18 at 2:00 p.m. and will feature all the invited speakers. Félix Wilson will take the place of Camilo Guevara and Orlando Borrego, both lecturers at the University of Havana in Cuba, who could not attend this conference.

The conference is sponsored by the Institute of International Studies, Chicano Studies, American Studies Department, Political Science Department, MacArthur Interdisciplinary Program on Peace and Cooperation, History Department, and Spanish/Portuguese Department, and the Women Studies Department. Other sponsoring organizations include La Raza Student

Cultural Center, Africana Student Cultural Center, Asian-American Student Cultural Center, American Indian Learning Resource Center, Minnesota Cuba Committee, and Students for Cuba.

Leading up to the weekend conference La Raza Student Cultural Center is sponsoring classes, discussions, and cultural events on Puerto Rico. On April 18 at 7:30 p.m. following the conference, Daniel Correia, a representative of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) of Brazil, will speak.

Conference organizers have received inquiries from as far away as Toronto, Seattle, and Chicago. For more information on the conference call Institute of International Studies at (612) 624-9007.

Gaetan Whiston is a member of the United Steelworkers in Roseville, Minnesota.

Australian dockers resist government, company attempts to break union

BY LINDA HARRIS
AND RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia — "Wharf war sweeps nation," blared Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* April 9. Across the country major newspaper headlines chorused the same theme, directed against the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). This is the Australian capitalist rulers' response to the government-backed mass sacking of 1,400 wharfies (dockworkers) on April 7 and the use of scab labor.

This showdown is the latest round of a long-running union-busting campaign orchestrated by the conservative Liberal-National coalition government of Prime Minister John Howard. The assault has been spearheaded by Christopher Corrigan, chief executive officer of Patrick, one of the two big stevedoring companies on the waterfront. Corrigan took over its parent company, Lang Corp., in 1991.

Late in the afternoon of April 7, Patrick's subsidiaries were put into voluntary receivership by Corrigan to legally justify the sacking of the entire wharf workforce at all 14 terminals. That evening, a special meeting of the federal cabinet was held in Canberra to back Patrick's moves.

At 11:00 p.m. that night, in a nationally coordinated surprise move, hundreds of private security thugs entered the terminals with dogs, ordering workers off the docks. In some cases drivers were ejected from cranes with heavy containers still swinging in midair, recklessly disregarding safety. The next morning, Workplace Relations Minister Peter Reith announced government backing in the form of a A\$250 million (US\$165 million) scheme to fund redundancies (lay-offs) being offered to divide the sacked workers.

In Melbourne, 27 workers locked themselves into a compound on the East Swanson Dock for 20 hours before leaving under police escort. They came out chanting "MUA! Here to stay!"

The sacked wharfies rapidly set up round-the-clock picket lines at all Patrick docks. As news of the midnight "ambush" broke on the morning of April 8, thousands of unionists around Australia walked off the job and marched to join the MUA picket lines. Some 5,000 marched in Sydney alone.

Workers and others have joined the pickets in ones and twos. Colin Marshall, a Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) member from Port Hedland, Western Australia, who was in Sydney on vacation, came straight to the picket line. "I disagree with what's hap-



Unionists protest at Darling Harbour dock in Sydney, Australia, April 8 against firings.

pened to these guys. If the MUA goes down, it will affect all the unions like dominoes," he said.

Tony Papaconstantinos, the national deputy secretary of the MUA, said, "While we are obliged to pursue our fight using the legal system, I don't believe this dispute will be won in the courts.... Unless there is national unity and a show of strength the government will get the upper hand."

On April 9 the Victorian Trades Hall Council called a statewide strike for May 6, along with protest rallies. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has called for member unions to take up collections for the MUA strike fund.

More than 200 Filipino unionists picketed the Australian embassy in Manila April 8 to protest the sackings. In another solidarity protest, seven unionists were arrested in San Francisco April 9, after blocking the Australian consulate entrance.

David Cockcroft, general secretary of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), to which the MUA is affiliated, said, "The waterside unions around the world are going to back 100 percent the efforts of the MUA." He explained they know "that the future of unionization on the docks around the world is at stake."

Ignoring a federal court injunction for a

week's freeze on the sackings, Patrick rapidly moved to bring scabs in. At Port Botany in Sydney, Patrick was forced to fly in non-union labor by helicopter on April 9, following an unsuccessful attempt to land them by boat.

For the first time in half a century docks in Sydney are being worked with nonunion labor. Ships have also been worked in Fremantle and Brisbane, but have been short loaded and delayed.

In Sydney on April 12 the first ship with an MUA-organized crew to try to dock at Port Botany, the *Australian Endeavour*, was delayed for eight hours. At the Port Botany picket line the next day, Kevin Clifford and John MacKay, who were on the MUA-crewed tugs that brought the ship in, said they resisted berthing for safety reasons, "because of the dogs and guards on the wharves."

The crews received notice from their employer that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) had threatened to charge them with "preventing international trade," which they said carries a fine of A\$10 million against the union and up to A\$500,000 against each individual. Under advice from the union they reluctantly brought the ship in. MacKay described this as "the blackest day in Sydney Harbour. Our hearts said no don't do it, but in the end we had no choice." They explained that the MUA-organized crew on the *Australian Endeavour* also faced mutiny charges if they refused orders.

As the vessel began unloading with scab labor, Reith called it "an historic moment." Standing reality on its head, Corrigan proclaimed it the "final nail in the coffin of the MUA's campaign to destroy my company."

The national secretary of the MUA, John Coombs, noted that Patrick still had to get cargo in and out of the terminals through MUA picket lines. He pointed out that in Melbourne pickets had prevented cargo movements at East Swanson.

As Peter Francis, an MUA delegate (shop steward) at Port Botany, explained to *Militant* reporters April 10, Patrick is a long way from full operations and this is "just part of the propaganda war." Echoing the common view on the picket lines that the wharfies are in for a long and bitter struggle, he said that he "[didn't] care how long it takes," that he and the other sacked unionists would be "here to the end."

Yoon Young Moo, international secretary of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, visited the Port Botany picket April 8, saying, "We need a new global solidarity." A solidarity message from sacked

Liverpool dockworkers was read at the Darling Harbour picket line in Sydney, April 10.

Contrary to the heavy propaganda portraying the picketers as "MUA thugs," the source of violence on the picket lines is Patrick's security guards. At Darling Harbour, in the early morning of April 10, wharfies and others on the picket line were sprayed with mace by security guards. Earlier that night a van was driven out through the picket line, hitting two workers. Police on the scene made no arrests. Welcoming the mass sacking, Prime Minister Howard claimed that it was "a defining moment in Australia's industrial relations history."

Months of campaigning to break the MUA's closed shop followed, including a media propaganda blitz painting wharfies as "overpaid and underworked," and decrying the union's monopoly of labor supply as preventing "waterfront reform." During a TV interview on *A Current Affair*, Howard was asked why even the workers on the Adelaide docks, operating with the highest container loading rate, should be sacked. He explained, "Well, they're all part of the one union."

In preparing for the April 7 sackings, Patrick leased a wharf at its Webb Dock in Melbourne to Producers and Consumers Stevedoring (PCS), a company set up by the National Farmers Federation (NFF) on January 28. Strikebreakers, working under non-union short-term individual contracts, began training at the PCS dock February 23.

The NFF is dominated by capitalist farmers and has a history of union-busting operations backed by a multimillion dollar war chest. Ashley Clarke, a Queensland small farmer, joined the MUA picket line in Brisbane on April 10 and criticized the NFF's actions. He said, "At no time has any of these issues of the NFF been downloaded to the farmers and put to the vote."

Attacks on the MUA and the coal miners in the CFMEU, another key industrial union, have been central to a broader offensive on union rights carried out by the Howard government since it came to office in March 1996. This antiunion drive has been fueled by the deepening global economic crisis of capitalism with depressed and glutted markets worldwide, and especially in Asia, causing intensified competition from rivals of Australian-based big business. In response, capitalists like Corrigan have taken the lead in trying to prop up their declining profits at the expense of workers' pay and conditions.

Coinciding with the escalation of this antiunion assault and worsening economic prospects, the Howard government is preparing to call elections before its full term in office expires. Several pieces of government legislation have been blocked in the Senate, most notably Howard's bill to gut Aboriginal land rights. These are being described as possible triggers for early full elections to both houses of Parliament.

The political polarization reflected in the waterfront confrontation, the debate on Aboriginal land rights, and government attacks on the social wage are creating a volatile atmosphere for a national election.

Referring to the upcoming vote, one seaman and MUA member who joined the Darling Harbour picket told the *Militant* April 9, "Now's the chance for people who believe in social justice, who support unions, who support Aboriginal rights, to get together to bring this government down."

Linda Harris is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. Ron Poulsen is a member of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia in Sydney. Joanne Kuniansky contributed to this article.

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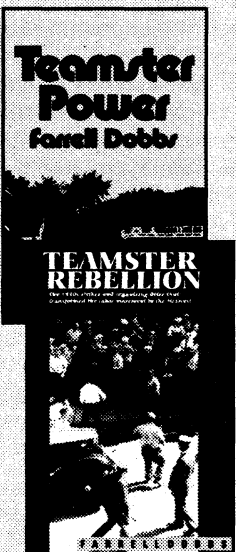
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