

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Producing books as we
respond to workers' resistance
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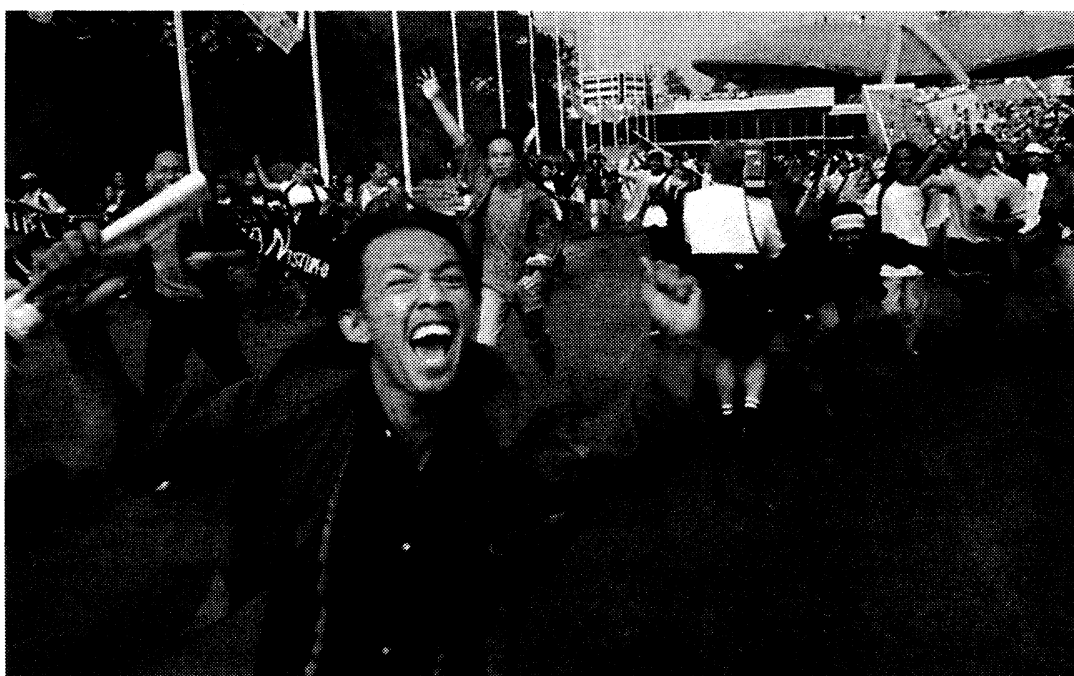
VOL. 62 NO. 21 JUNE 1, 1998

Indonesia: workers and students oust Suharto IMF austerity demands spur mass upsurge

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Indonesian president Suharto announced his resignation May 21 under the mounting pressure of tens of thousands of workers, students, and others who converged on the parliament the day before demanding his ouster. Hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated around the country May 20 to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the start of the country's independence struggle against Dutch colonial rule, as they stood up to the government's attempts to impose austerity measures to protect the profits of the domestic and foreign capitalists.

Suharto handed over his office to the vice president Jusuf Habibie, just hours after officials of the International Monetary Fund announced they were rescinding a \$43 billion "bailout" loan arrangement. Suharto said
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Students and workers who had been occupying parliament in Jakarta (in background) for three days celebrate Suharto's resignation May 21.

UAW strikes over wages, health plan at Tennessee truck plant

BY RICH STUART

NASHVILLE, Tennessee — The 1,230 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1832 at the Peterbilt truck plant here walked out May 3. The workers had rejected the company's "final offer" by a vote of 841 to 125.

The Nashville plant is one of two Peterbilt plants in the United States. The other, in Denton, Texas, is nonunion and continues to make trucks while the Nashville workers are on strike. The family that owns Peterbilt, the Piggott family of Washington state, also owns Kenworth Trucks, another maker of the big "18 wheelers" that sell for upwards of \$100,000 a piece.

The parent company of Peterbilt and Kenworth, PACCAR, offered the Tennessee truck workers a 70-cent-an-hour pay raise. But this would be immediately eaten

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Workers from across region rally to support Des Moines tire strikers

BY RAY PARSONS AND AMANDA ULMAN

DES MOINES, Iowa — Hundreds of workers turned out in support of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 at two actions here May 16. Since May 1, some 650 members of Local 164 have been on strike against Titan Tire over excessive overtime, job security, pension benefits and health care for retirees, and other issues. Titan Tire is a manufacturer of agricultural, industrial, and military tires.

About 175 strikers, family members, and

supporters from other unions gathered early May 16 at Labor Ready, an employment agency hired by Titan Tire bosses to recruit strikebreakers. The protesters leafleted job seekers, appealing for support for their strike. A few days before the rally, Titan owner Maurice Taylor Jr. held a press conference in Des Moines. He threatened to begin using replacement workers if strikers did not return to work while contract talks continued.

Capturing the common response of most Local 164 strikers, one unionist said, "We

voted not to do that and that's the way it's going to be."

Taylor also asserted that work would be transferred out of Des Moines to other Titan facilities if the union did not end its strike. Since May 10 ads have appeared in the *Des Moines Register* for replacement workers. Taylor said he expected 700 to 1,000 to apply. Unionists who rallied at Labor Ready estimated that only 30 people came for Titan applications in the four hours they were there May 16.

One worker who did apply came back out and spoke to the protesters. "I didn't realize how bad the conditions were in there. I'm not going to work like that and I'm not going to cross your picket line," he said.

Other potential line crossers decided not to apply after seeing the union supporters rallied around the Labor Ready office, winning cheers from the crowd. Titan personnel director Joyce Kane was present to oversee the hiring at Labor Ready. She was met with boos from strike supporters.

The Labor Ready office used by Titan for recruiting strikebreakers is located in the Black community of Des Moines. Ako Abdul-Samad, head of nearby community center Creative Visions, reported that Labor Ready sought to recruit out of his facility as well. "We told them we wouldn't participate because we thought it was a divisive move.... We want to find jobs, but not at the expense of others," Abdul-Samad explained.

"We will win!" was the theme of the rally held at the USWA Local 164 union hall later May 16. More than 400 workers participated, with a broad array of unions represented. The unionists marched to the main entrance of the Titan plant and ended the rally there.

At the Bridgestone/Firestone tire plant across town, members of USWA Local 310

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Strikers picket Peterbilt plant in Nashville May 16

Palestinians protest 50 years of Israeli occupation

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

"Long live Palestine!" chanted hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in demonstrations across the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip May 14. The protests were marking *al nakba* (the catastrophe) — the founding of the state of Israel 50 years earlier and the dispossession of the Palestinian people from their homeland. Israeli soldiers attacked the demonstrations, killing at least five Palestinians and injuring hundreds. Protests and confrontations continued for several days.

The 50-year anniversary was also a flashpoint for the growing polarization within the Israeli ruling class between those calling for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to withdraw from a portion of the occupied territories and others who are pushing to extend Israeli settlements deeper into the Palestinian region.

Israeli troops were put on high alert May
Continued on Page 13

Puerto Ricans denounce 1898 U.S. bombing of San Juan

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — On May 12, 1898, the residents of this city awoke to a fleet of 11 U.S. warships preparing to bombard the city.

When the shelling was over three hours later, six Puerto Ricans — four civilians and two soldiers — were dead and another 50 people had been wounded.

On May 12, 1998, 1,000 people marched through Old San Juan to mark the 100-year anniversary of this act of Yankee aggression and the fight for self-determination in Puerto Rico.

The "March of Silence and Reflection" was headed by 100 youth carrying Puerto Rican flags.

It began at the Plaza Colón and ended with a rally at the Plaza del Quinto Centenario, where independence leader Juan Mari Bras addressed the crowd. All of the buildings surrounding the Plaza de Quinto Centenario had been damaged during the U.S. naval bombardment, which marked the first major fighting of the Spanish-American war

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March of 1,000 in San Juan May 12

Thousands strike in Russia

More than 1,000 miners blocked the Trans-Siberian railway May 15, and similar actions took place in the northern cities of Inta and Vorkuta, bringing freight traffic to a halt in parts of Siberia and northern Russia. Dozens of mines in Russia and neighboring Ukraine have been shut since early May by strikes over unpaid wages. Some of the \$600 million in back pay has been due to workers for six months. The miners blocking the Trans-Siberian railway were joined by several hundred teachers, doctors, municipal and government workers who have also gone months without pay. In Vorkuta, angry miners have barricaded their bosses inside their offices and say they will not be allowed out until workers are paid. Meanwhile, a city-wide strike of teachers, also over back wages, suspended school in Kurchatov, Russia, May 13.

Lebed elected Siberia governor

With his eyes on the presidential elections in 2000, rightist politician Aleksandr Lebed, a former commander in the Russian army, was elected governor of Krasnoyarsk May 17 with nearly 60 percent of the vote. Using populist demagoguery, he promised to end corruption and restore "order," appealing to workers in the mineral-rich Siberian region where many have gone unpaid for months and public services are in shambles.

A former head of Russia's National Security Council, Lebed placed third in the first round of the 1996 presidential elections. An opponent of the gains of the Russian workers state, the procapitalist politician said, "The worst thing that has ever happened to Russia is that for 70 years the sense of private property was beaten out of our people."

UN to cut food aid to Korea

Catherine Bertini, director of the United Nations World Food Program, announced that food aid to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) will be reduced, claiming that the government reneged on its promise to let the agency's personnel inspect the whole country. The DPRK has been requesting international assistance in the face of severe food shortages due to natural disasters, including two years of flooding fol-

lowed by a drought. This has devastated the agriculture in the north. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization said in early March that DPRK's food reserves are almost exhausted, and international aid would be needed until this fall's harvest.

Tel Aviv bombs Lebanon

Tel Aviv launched a midnight bombing assault in Lebanon May 13 on a camp of the Palestinian group Fatah Uprising near the Syrian border, killing up to 10 people and wounding 22. It was one of the deadliest bombings in Lebanon since the 16-day aerial and ground blitz by Israeli troops that killed 175 people in 1996. Beirut radio reported that Israeli troops used cluster bombs, which explode above target and spray shrapnel for maximum casualties. Israeli troops have occupied southern Lebanon since 1978.

Postal workers strike in Zimbabwe

The postal workers union in Zimbabwe called a nationwide strike after 600 Post and Telecommunications Corporation workers were locked out May 15 in the capital city of Harare. "When the workers asked why they had been locked out... [the company] told them to apply for their vacant posts," said Gift Chimankire, the postal workers union secretary general. Telephone technicians have been demanding a wage increase, and said they would only return on the condition that the bosses ceased victimizing employees and propose an immediate offer of genuine salary increases.

S. African unionists demand equal education for blacks

Members of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) joined

other affiliates of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in a May 12 action in Cape Town demanding equal education for blacks. SADTU threatened to call for Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu's resignation if he did not allocated funds for black working-class schools. COSATU's Western Cape secretary Tony Ehrenreich wrote in a memorandum that the National Party-led government in that province lacked a "satisfactory programme to transform the inequalities which exist in this province." The message also demanded that the provincial government accept federal funding earmarked for bridging the wide gap between schools. Ehrenreich noted that the teacher-student ratio in predominately white schools is 1 to 25, with up to 60 students to one teacher in the mostly black classrooms. COSATU said that if their demands were not met by May 31, further mass action could be expected.

U.S. 'aid' package aimed against Cuban revolution

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jesse Helms and 21 other legislators introduced a bill May 14 touted as providing \$25 million in annual "aid" to the Cuban people. The measure, which is ex-

PLICITLY portrayed as a political move against the revolutionary government in Havana, would offer food, medical equipment, and cash to the Catholic church and other "nongovernment organizations" in Cuba. One provision in the bill would require an increase in U.S. government backing to opponents of the revolution in Cuba, dubbed "democratic opposition groups." Another would provide aid for Radio and TV Marti, which broadcast Washington's propaganda, to transmit from the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay. The base occupies a piece of Cuban territory that Washington refuses to return to the Cuban people. Helms asserted that if Havana rejects this supposed assistance "then 11 million Cubans will know exactly who is responsible for their daily suffering."

Speaking to a meeting of the Swiss-Cuban Friendship Association in Geneva May 16, Cuban president Fidel Castro denounced the proposal, saying, "They want to ignore the government, to distribute [aid] in a humiliating and absolutely unacceptable way."

Honduran unionist killed

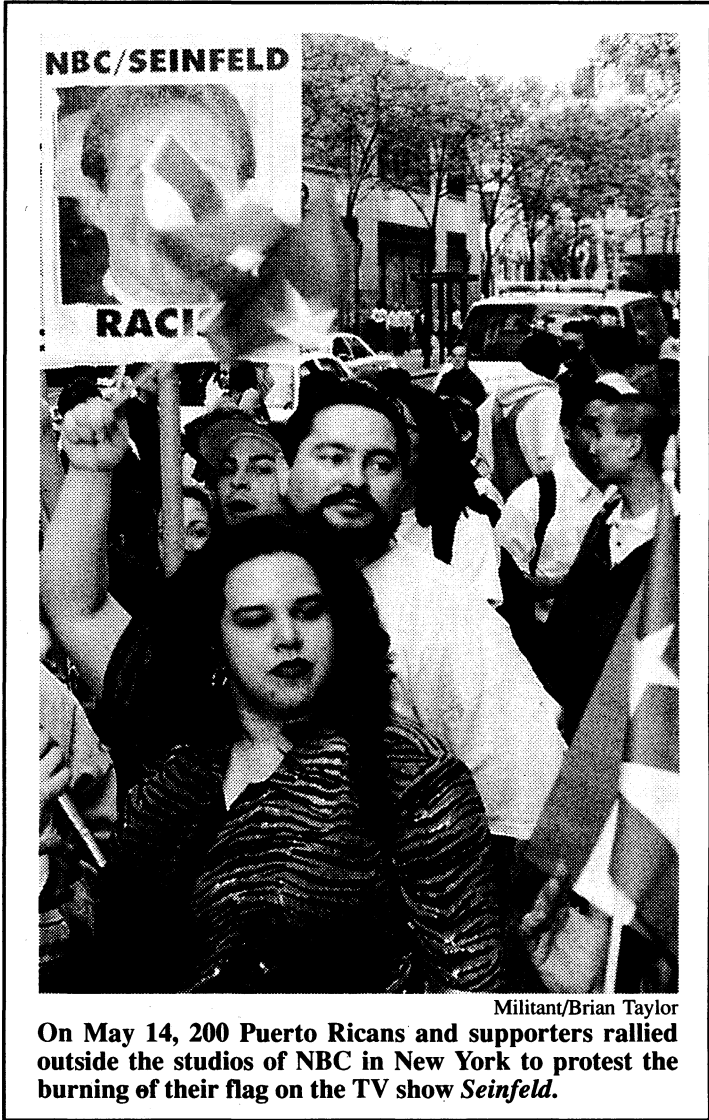
Honduran banana workers leader Medardo Varela was shot to death May 10 by two unidentified attackers. Local cops claim they had no further details. Varela was a leader in a fight against the

U.S. companies Chiquita Brands and Standard Fruit, demanding compensation for 5,000 Honduran peasants who were blinded, sterilized, or developed cancer from the toxic DBCP pesticide used on Honduras plantations between 1968 and 1980. As a result of the struggle, seven U.S. companies agreed to pay \$41.5 million to 14,000 plantation workers in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa. Of this, 3,000 Honduran workers received just \$100 each.

Jury rules to execute insane man

A jury in Marin County, California, voted 9 to 3 May 14 that inmate Horace Kelly, a 38-year-old Black man, was mentally fit to be executed for murder. It is supposedly unlawful to execute the insane, so before a prisoner is put to death psychiatrists examine them. If their sanity is in question, the state convenes a hearing to decide. Six of the seven behavioral scientists who testified during Kelly's hearing agreed that he is "schizophrenic," talks in gibberish, and in general has no concept of his surroundings. Very few people have ever been taken off death row for insanity. Kelly's execution date is set for this summer.

— BRIAN TAYLOR AND MEGAN ARNEY



On May 14, 200 Puerto Ricans and supporters rallied outside the studios of NBC in New York to protest the burning of their flag on the TV show Seinfeld.

THE MILITANT

Self-determination for Palestine

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Indonesia struggle

Continued from front page

Habibie, a longtime friend and associate, would serve the remainder of the presidential term, but some protesters on the streets declared this was unacceptable and they would continue to demonstrate if that occurred.

Meanwhile, some 15,000 students had occupied Indonesia's parliament for three days, intensifying their demands for Suharto to step down. The occupation of the legislative building took place despite the deployment of some 150,000 troops around Jakarta. Helicopters whirled overhead and tanks lined up beside coiled wire and wooden barricades to block other protesters from entering the capital. "Hang, hang, hang Suharto," the students chanted on the first day of the occupation. "Hang Suharto and all his family!"

In an attempt to defuse the crisis, Suharto hinted that he would have "no problem" resigning — after organizing new elections — and promised a cabinet shuffle. But he also threatened military action. "What we have to think about is whether with my withdrawal the current situation can be resolved," Suharto said on national television May 19. He implied that his ouster could provoke "sharper confrontations, perhaps leading to bloodshed, or perhaps even ... civil war." A few days earlier, the former Indonesian president was forced to cancel price increases in fuel and electricity that had triggered an explosion of protests throughout the country.

Amien Rais, leader of Muhammadiyah, an "Islamic" social and education group with more than 25 million members, called Suharto's plan "unrealistic," while vowing to push for more protests. Rais, one of the most prominent bourgeois opposition politicians, went on television at the last minute to call off the May 20 rally in Jakarta that had been projected to attract 1 million people. Referring to the 1989 massacre of hundreds of students by Chinese troops in Beijing, Rais stated, "An army general [told me] he doesn't care at all if a 'Tiananmen accident' occurred in Jakarta."

Rais did address the students occupying

parliament May 20, while up to 500,000 people demonstrated in Yogyakarta. Protests also took place in at least half a dozen other cities that day.

Workers respond to economic crisis

The social crisis choking Indonesia was triggered by the wave of currency devaluations in the region that unfolded last July. The Indonesian rupiah has plummeted 80 percent since then and inflation has soared. The cheapened currency has crippled most businesses, while capitalists attempt to compensate for sagging profits by doubling and tripling prices of goods across the country.

Indonesia, the world's fourth-largest country with more than 200 million people, faces a massive default in loans, with enterprises owing a foreign debt totaling \$137 billion. Foreign banks have minimized relations with Indonesian banks, local lending has nearly halted, and business transactions are paralyzed.

Washington engineered the \$43 billion "bailout" program of loans through the International Monetary Fund to guarantee profits for international capitalist investors. The agreement with Jakarta mandates spending cuts on social programs, closing down insolvent banks, and allowing foreign investors to take over financial institutions. Other measures include industrial "restructuring" that shuts down unprofitable corporations, eliminating jobs.

More than 8 million workers have lost their jobs and millions more may also be on the streets. Peasants and farm workers are being driven off the land, with nearly 500,000 expected to enter Jakarta.

Although information on workers' struggles is extremely scant in the big-business press, it's clear the political ferment is not limited to students. An article in the *Washington Post*, for instance, mentions in passing a May 12 march to the IMF office in Jakarta called by an "illegal" trade union to demand the delay of scheduled loan installments under the so-called bailout scheme. And according to a local journalist, when troops assaulted student protesters in Medan, workers came to the univer-



Indonesian students confront the police at a university in Bandung in early May.

sity to support them.

Students have organized daily protests in response to the economic crisis. When the regime imposed a 70 percent increase in fuel and electricity prices, as demanded by the IMF, that move exacerbated workers' discontent into widespread anger. Mass protests erupted into rioting May 13, after six student protesters were killed by troops the day before. More than 500 people died in the unrest.

The bourgeois press has played up an element of scapegoating of those of Chinese decent, a disproportionate number of whom are part of the ruling class. Banks and shops owned by Chinese merchants were destroyed, including the home of Chinese billionaire Liem Sioe Liong, one of Suharto's closest associates.

The rebellion, which the capitalist media attempted to smear as "looting," targeted the regime, as thousands of people trashed properties of Suharto's relatives and associates. On May 14, for example, protesters broke into the showroom of a car company owned by Suharto's son, dragged out office furniture and tires, created a huge bonfire in the middle of the street, and then rolled out new Cakra cars and torched them. They also gutted the office of the government Social Af-

fairs department headed by the president's daughter, Siti Hardijanti Rukmana.

"They're attacking the businesses of the children of the president," an office clerk told the *Washington Post*. "We can't go directly to the headquarters, so we're attacking his branches."

The next day Suharto canceled the price hikes "to alleviate the burden on the people at this time of crisis," Mines and Energy Minister Kuntoro Mangkusubroto announced.

Divisions have developed in the military over how to contain the turmoil. In some cases, protesters mingle with rank-and-file soldiers. During the May 14 actions, teenagers were hitching rides on military vehicles, according to the *New York Times*. That same day a group of marines marched with the demonstrators and at one point shoving and shouting broke out between the cops and soldiers who tried to protect the protesters.

As this unfolded several ruling figures in Indonesia, including once-loyal supporters, broke with Suharto. Legislators belonging to Suharto's ruling Golkar party suggested he step down by June 8. "For the unity of the nation, the president should wisely take

Continued on Page 14

Hundreds welcome Irish leaders visiting the U.S.

BY CATHLEEN GUTKANST

SAN FRANCISCO — Pat Treanor, a leading member of Sinn Fein from County Monaghan, Ireland, addressed a meeting of around 60 activists and members of the San Francisco chapter of Irish Northern Aid May 15. The meeting, held at the Irish Cultural Center, was called to explain to activists the current course of Sinn Fein in the fight for a united Ireland, free of British rule. In addition to Treanor, Sinn Fein leaders Martin Ferris and Joe Cahill took part in a week-long U.S. tour immediately following the party's May 10 *Ard Fheis* (national conference).

"Have we advanced over the last three to four years? Absolutely. The numbers of people attending Sinn Fein meetings and events is up, we've won an end to censorship and can get our ideas out in the press, we're gaining strength and advancing towards our goal of a united Ireland. The loyalists are more divided now and have less of an alternative," Treanor said.

He went on to explain that Sinn Fein's call for a 'Yes' vote on the so-called Good Friday document — which was negotiated in talks that included the British and Irish governments, the main Unionist (pro-British) parties in Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein, and other parties — must be viewed in that context. "The document itself is not worthwhile, but we're looking at how to move forward from here."

During the lively discussion period, a member of the audience pointed out that the Loyalist Volunteer Force, a pro-British paramilitary outfit, had called a cease-fire that same day. Treanor stated, "That's a good sign. It indicates pressure from their own community. There will still need to be a big campaign to win the release of the prisoners. Since 1994 Lee Clegg has been the only prisoner released before time." Clegg, a British soldier who was convicted of killing Karen Reilly, a Belfast teenager, in 1992, was released after serving only two years of his sentence.

Treanor explained that the fight will con-

tinue in nationalist communities against triumphalist loyalist parades as the "marching season" begins. These actions are aimed at reinforcing the second-class status of Catholics in British-occupied Northern Ireland, a pillar of London's rule there. A debate broke out during the discussion period, with two members of the audience defending the stance of Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, who had spoken in San Francisco on April 25 attacking Sinn Fein for supporting the agreement. McAliskey is a longtime figure in the Irish freedom struggle. Other participants at the Treanor meeting vigorously disagreed with McAliskey's stance and defended the course of Sinn Fein. Treanor reported on his meeting, also held on May 15, with the remaining three republican prisoners of the H-Block Four, currently being held in a Federal Detention Center in California. The three men — Terry Kirby, Pol Brennan, and Kevin Barry Artt — are awaiting extradition back to the H-Blocks of Long Kesh Prison in Northern Ireland, where they escaped in 1983. A fourth, Jimmy Smyth, was extradited last year. In answer to a question about what supporters of the Irish struggle can do to help in the U.S., Treanor replied, "You can get behind the campaign to free the H-Block Three here. You can pool your resources, have coordinated campaigns to publicize their case."

H. B. O'Keady, the president of the East Bay chapter of the Irish American Unity Conference, reported in the discussion that he had spoken with Terry Kirby from prison after his meeting with Treanor. "Terry told me that the men don't want to be used as pawns by any government. Terry said that he totally supports the leadership of Sinn Fein and appreciated very much the meeting with Pat."

O'Keady also reported on an upcoming public forum on the results of the May 22 Irish elections, to be held in San Francisco June 6, sponsored by the Irish American Unity Conference.

Hundreds of supporters of the Irish freedom struggle in other cities also attended

meetings with the Sinn Fein leaders during their tour. In the New York City area, Martin Ferris spoke and answered questions at three meetings that were free and open to the public. He pointed to the growing confidence of ordinary people in Ireland in their ability to resist British domination and the increased mobilization of Irish nationalism. Ferris also joined the platform at a debate in Carlstadt, New Jersey, between supporters and opponents of the agreement.

Joe Cahill answered questions from about 50 people in Chicago May 14. In answer to a question whether the British government

would try to chip away at the agreement, he replied "We don't trust them. They are still our enemy." Sinn Fein "will work with the agreement, but will work to change it," Cahill added. In Detroit, Treanor addressed a meeting of 60 people hosted by Irish Northern Aid. He ended that gathering by urging "supporters of Irish freedom to stay alert and keep the pressure up."

Nancy Boyasko in New York, Jane Harris in New Jersey, Sarah Katz in Chicago, and John Sarge in Detroit contributed to this article.

McDonald's workers give boss deadline for better pay

BY TONY PRINCE

CLEVELAND — A group of workers at the McDonald's restaurant in Macedonia, Ohio, near here who went on strike in April have given the boss there until June 1 to comply with the agreement that ended the strike, or they will join the Teamsters union.

One of the workers, Bryan Drapp, told the *Militant*, "The basic issue is pay equity. Management didn't adjust the wages to close the wage gap like they had agreed to; they had wage reviews instead."

Jamal Nickens said, "To give one example, one worker who has been there 14 years, is available 7 days a week, opens and closes the store, and works 45 hours a week got a 10 cent raise. I've been there four months and am available fewer hours, and I got a 20 cent raise. That's not right."

Drapp added, "They're picking on the former strikers, Jamal and me especially. They're right on us if we do something wrong."

"Bryan and I have both been suspended," said Nickens. "They can't fire us outright because they'd get too much bad publicity, but they're trying to keep the money out of our pockets." Drapp and Nickens are both

back to work now. Another worker who was active in the strike, Josh Jones, is on indefinite suspension.

Nickens gave other examples of what McDonald's is doing. "We caught them red-handed changing the policy for the penalty for 'no call, no show' from a warning for the first occurrence to termination for the first occurrence. They also dropped the hiring rate from \$5.50 an hour to \$5.25 an hour," he said.

Drapp explained that the workers' notice of intent to unionize the restaurant if the company did not comply with the conditions had been faxed to the company that day, May 20, and workers had not yet received a response.

Nickens pointed out, however, that the bosses have been telling the workers that "If we get a union they're going to close the store."

Drapp said that currently "about 20 of the workers have signed union cards out of a workforce of no more than 35, and more people want to sign."

Tony Prince is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 188.

YS to place making fund drive at center of political activity

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

BY JOSHUA CARROLL

CHICAGO — On May 16 the Des Moines, Iowa, chapter of the Young Socialists hosted a forum on "Growing international working-class resistance." Tom Alter, who is the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Iowa, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, and a leader of the Young Socialists, gave the main presentation.

Those attending the forum had traveled from St. Paul, Minnesota, Chicago, and Boston, and had earlier in the day participated in a rally of hundreds in support of workers on strike against Titan Tire Corp. in Des Moines.

Participants at the forum pledged more than \$100 toward the Des Moines YS chapter's goal of \$200 in the YS national fund drive. In addition, \$115 was collected toward the goal for St. Paul. Contributions were also made toward the local goals in Chicago and Boston.

"Although we're behind, in every city we are in a position to step up our work and make our goals," explained Verónica Poses, the fund drive's national director. Over the next two weeks, Poses stressed, chapters will "need to place making their goals at the center of all activity."

The drive ends on May 31. The money raised will be used to pay for the basic operating expenses of the Young Socialists National Office.

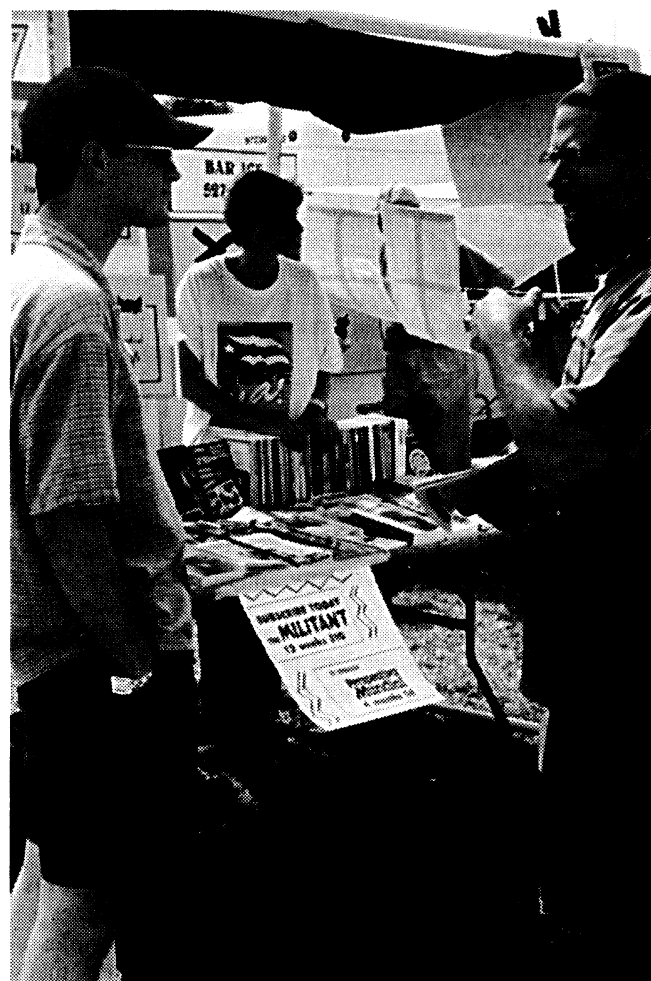
"A large effort will be necessary to make our goal of \$800 in the remaining two weeks of the fund drive, but we are confident that it is within our grasp," reported Ryan Lewis, the local fund director for the YS chapter in New York.

The chapter in New York has recently discussed the need to broaden

its efforts in seeking contributions for the fund. "We plan to ask for contributions from new contacts of the YS, as well as from other fighters with whom we have worked," Lewis explained.

The New York YS will be hosting a forum on May 22 titled: "Ours is the Epoch of World Revolution: linking labor battles, national liberation struggles, and fights for social justice to build an international anti-imperialist youth movement."

Speakers will include Andy Terranova, an activist in the Irish freedom struggle and a recent participant in a Sinn Fein Youth delegation to Basque Country; Stacey Toro, a member of Latinos Unidos who recently participated in the International Women's conference held in Havana, Cuba, and is active in the fight for Puerto Rican independence; and Joshua Carroll, a national leader of the YS. Other speakers have been invited. The New York chapter will be holding a



Militant/Angel Lariscy
YS member Chad Reese (left) sells *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Pathfinder* literature in Tampa, Florida.

raffle at the forum, for which tickets are already being sold.

Young Socialists Fund Drive April 17 - May 31			
CITY	GOAL	PAID	%
Seattle *	400	350	88%
Birmingham	200	114	57%
Twin Cities, MN	250	115	46%
Des Moines	200	85	43%
Philadelphia	200	76	38%
New York	800	196	24%
Chicago *	1,000	216	22%
Boston	150	5	3%
Houston	300		0%
Los Angeles	350		0%
Miami	200		0%
Newark	350		0%
Pittsburgh	550		0%
San Francisco/ Santa Cruz	150		0%
Washington, D.C.	250		0%
Other		23	
U.S. total	5,350	1,180	22%
Goal/Should be	5,200	3,484	67%

* Raised goal

'Militant' sales get great response

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"During the last morning of the campaign to win new readers to the socialist press we sold six *Militant* subscriptions to co-workers," wrote Gale Shangold from Los Angeles. Three workers at the ARCO oil refinery bought subscriptions, as did two workers at United Airlines. "On May 15 we sold 60 more issues of the *Militant* to longshoremen, and since the drive has been over, we sold four

more *Perspectiva Mundial* subs in our bookstore."

Militant supporters around the world continue to get a great response to the socialist press, especially at factory gates and picket lines.

"We sold a copy of *New International* no. 7 and some 40 copies of the *Militant* to participants at a May 17 rally of 1,000 people in New York who were protesting 50 years of Israeli occupation of Palestinian land," said supporter Nell Wheeler from Newark,

New Jersey. Mary Nell Bockman, also from Newark, reports, "On May 16 we sold 17 copies of the *Militant*, a subscription, and one copy of *Malcolm X talks to Young People* to members of the Service Employees International Union, who were coming out of their meeting that discussed a contract proposal from the Newark School Board. We also went to Port Newark where we sold eight *Militants* near the union hiring hall where longshore workers are dispatched to load and unload ships."

"Over the past three weeks we have sold a total of 95 papers" to workers at Northwest Airlines, reports Tom Fiske from Minnesota. This includes papers sold by socialist workers at the airport, a regular sales team at the credit union, and roadside sales near the employee parking lot.

Chris Remple from Pittsburgh wrote: "A team of three steelworkers from Pittsburgh and two from Cleveland traveled through southern West Virginia May 14-16 to sell the *Militant* and *Pathfinder* books to coal miners and other workers in the region. The team sold 10 copies of the *Militant* at four different mine portals. We sold five *Militants* at a Norfolk Southern rail yard in Williamson, West Virginia and seven at Century Aluminum (formerly Ravenswood Aluminum) in Ravenswood, West Virginia. At one of the mine portals, the nonunion Pontiki mine in eastern Kentucky, we sold six copies of the *Militant*."

The team also met with three longtime *Militant* supporters who bought a one-year *Militant* subscription, a 12-week renewal to the socialist newsweekly and two *Pathfinder* books on Ernesto Che Guevara and the Cuban revolution.

"Workers at the Anheuser-Busch plant in Cartersville, Georgia, bought 12 copies of the *Militant*," said James Harris from Atlanta. These unionists along with Teamsters at 11 other breweries rejected the company's so-called final offer and have taken a strike vote. "Our sales team was invited to participate in their weekly rally held from 6:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m. at the shift change."

Finally, a note of apology. Last week's sales chart incorrectly listed the final sales results for some supporters. Atlanta supporters sold 37 *Militant* subscriptions, 105 percent of their goal. Supporters in Los Angeles sold 92 copies of *New International*, supporters in Detroit made their goals for sales of *New International*, and in Australia socialists in the Amalgamated Manufacturers union and the Textile, Clothing, and Footwear union each sold a *Militant* subscription.

Rally condemns 1898 attack on Puerto Rico

Continued from front page in Puerto Rico.

The attacking fleet included three U.S. battleships — the *New York*, *Iowa*, and *Indiana*. After the attack, the commanding officer of the U.S. fleet, Admiral William

Sampson, defended the decision to shell the city without prior warning. Writing in *Century Magazine*, Sampson argued, "Even if modern war practices demand previous advice to noncombatants, this refers only to undefended cities, and not where said de-

fenses are situated so that they cannot be attacked without hurting the population."

Cuba and Puerto Rico were the only remaining Spanish colonies in the Americas when the rising imperialist power in Washington declared war on its Spanish rival in 1898.

Thirty years earlier revolutionaries in both countries had staged coordinated revolts against Spanish colonial rule. These revolts were called Grito de Yara in Cuba and Grito de Lares in Puerto Rico. Grito de Yara touched off the first Cuban war of independence. The second Cuban war of independence began in 1895.

The U.S. intervention came about just as the Cuban people were near a revolutionary victory against Spain. Although the anticolonial forces were weaker in Puerto Rico than Cuba, the news from Cuba was closely followed in Puerto Rico as everyone assumed that the two colonies would have the same fate. Puerto Rican revolutionaries in the United States joined the Cuban Revolutionary Party founded by José Martí, which had as its first principle the struggle for "absolute independence for Cuba" and support to the independence fight in Puerto Rico.

Washington went to war to steal the colonies of Spain and assert itself as a global power for the first time. As a result of its victory over Spain, the United States received four island archipelagos; Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and Guam. A fifth group of islands, Hawaii, was annexed at the same time.

On July 25, 1898, the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico with a landing of 12,000 soldiers in Guánica. The anniversary of that invasion will be marked with protests both in Puerto Rico and in the United States.

Ron Richards is a member of the American Federation of Government Employees in San Juan.

Auto workers at Case ratify contract

BY TOM MAILER

EAST MOLINE, Illinois — Members of United Auto Workers Local 1304 at Case Corporation's East Moline plant voted by a 60 percent margin on May 14 to ratify a new six-year contract. The same central agreement, which covers 3,300 workers in five cities throughout the Midwest, had been rejected in a company-wide vote April 30 by a 58 percent margin.

Members in East Moline had strongly rejected the contract in the first vote, with 81 percent against. Many cited the lower wages and benefits for new hires as their reason for rejecting the contract then. Local 1304 was the only one to reject the pact on April 30, and was the only one made to vote on it a second time.

Dan Baker, a Local 1304 member, told the *Burlington Hawkeye* that he still doesn't like the contract. Prior to the second vote he said he'd vote "No" again.

"We told them no for a reason. The terms under this agreement are unacceptable," he said. "That's why we said no."

Both the company and UAW International officials were pleased with the results. Jean-Pierre Rosso, chairman and chief executive officer of Case, said, "The new long-term contract is consistent with our operating strategy of simultaneous revenue growth and cost reduc-

tion." Revenues for the first quarter of 1998 were \$1.4 billion, up 12 percent over 1997, and net income was up 8 percent to \$69 million. Case manufactures farm and construction equipment sold in 150 countries.

Stephen Yokich, UAW president, stated, "This new agreement represents significant progress in job and income security for UAW-Case workers."

There is no general wage increase for the six years covered by the contract, except for skilled trades workers. The cost-of-living allowance (COLA) formula will continue and the accumulated COLA of \$3.16 will continue to be paid. Workers will also get annual lump sum bonuses each year, based on 3 percent of the prior year's eligible earnings. A new incentive-based production bonus system will replace the previous system based on set standards. The new Case Continuous Improvement Compensation System (CCICS) is patterned after a similar plan at John Deere. It is based on a team rather than individual concept and continuous "improvement" of production standards — in other words speedup. There were also provisions for personal job security for those who qualify and a moratorium on plant closings of UAW-represented facilities during the term of the agreement.

Transforming Pathfinder book production as we respond to growing workers' resistance

Report to international socialist conference in Toronto, Canada

The following report by Mary-Alice Waters was presented on behalf of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the second session of the fifth constitutional convention of the Communist League in Canada, which took place in Toronto April 10-12. Waters is the editor of the *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, and president of Pathfinder Press.

The convention session at which Waters gave this presentation, on April 11, had been preceded by a regional conference that featured an "Eyewitness Report to Resistance in Kosova and Albania" by *Militant* staff writer Argiris Malapanis and a talk on "Rebuilding an Anti-imperialist Youth Movement Worldwide" by Jack Willey, organizer of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists. Malapanis and Willey had recently returned from a three-week reporting trip for the *Militant* to Cairo, Egypt, and the Balkans. Michel Prairie, organizer of the Political Committee of the Communist League in Canada, opened the convention with a report on behalf of the Central Committee.

After discussion, the report and summary by Waters were adopted by convention delegates. Conference participants who were guests at the convention also had an opportunity to discuss the report during a special session on April 12. The report is copyright © 408 Printing and Publishing and is printed by permission.

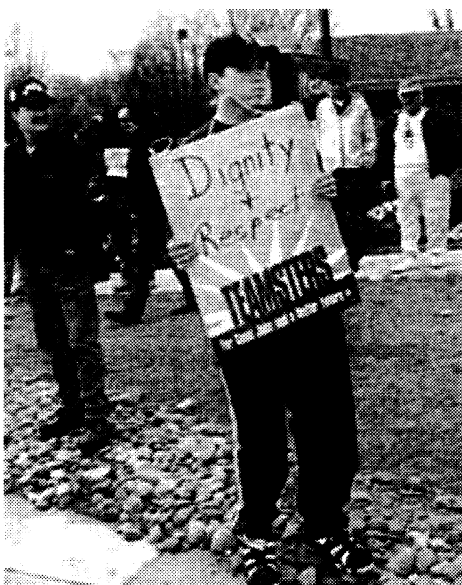
BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

This point is on the schedule under the title "Special Report" because as we started working on a name it got longer and longer. Even by our sometimes overwordy standards, it became unwieldy. So I will begin by stating what this special report is about.

First, it is about strengthening the proletarian character of our branches and industrial trade union fractions as we respond to the accelerating resistance by working people around the world to the conditions the capitalist owners in crisis are driving to impose on us. We've already had several hours of discussion today about the expanded propaganda openings before us: from picket lines and factory gates — from Caterpillar to McDonald's! — to young feminist conferences; to actions for Puerto Rico's independence; to book fairs from Tabriz, Iran, to Guadalajara, Mexico; to conferences on Cuba, and protests against cop brutality.

The expansion of these opportunities confirms the shift in world politics that we placed at the center of the last Socialist Workers Party convention in June 1997. Even then the evidence was in that the seven-year political retreat of the working class in the United States was behind us. The evidence indicated the same was true in every other imperialist country as well, with the possible exception of Japan.

We underscored the growing possibilities to win a hearing for revolutionary ideas among workers and youth. We didn't predict big political shifts and changes or new offensive struggles by workers leading toward major victories. We simply said the retreat had ended. We pointed to many small examples of resistance. But even more, we noted that when faced with a standoff or a lost battle, the



Militant/Hilda Cuzco (above); Linda Joyce (right)

Young workers strike McDonald's in Macedonia, Ohio, April 12 (top). Revolutionary literature finds a greater audience among fighting workers and others. Pathfinder titles in demand at Mexico City book fair, March 1 (right). Printing *Perspectiva Mundial* on sheetfed press at Pathfinder's print shop, May 20 (above).

response of workers — and those who offered them solidarity — was not always a sense of defeat or demoralization but of continued combativity. (That's what happened at Caterpillar, isn't it?) And that meant increased openings for political work such as we had not seen in a number of years. It meant increased responsibility — in every locale where our movement exists — to get a feel for the concrete

resistance and its direction. But now something else is happening. The resistance itself seems to be broadening and accelerating. And that's new.

Secondly, this report is about the sharp shift that's both possible and necessary in the way we organize through our branches to work with supporters of the communist movement. I'm not talking only about the work we do with members of national organizations of active supporters in different countries. I'm also talking about the contributions made by dozens and dozens of friends and comrades who may not belong to the party's auxiliary organization of active supporters today — because they don't want that degree of commitment or responsibility or activity — but who are genuine supporters of the party and its political course and want to be led to contribute in a way that will advance the work of the party. They want to help us respond to these openings, to maximize the striking power of the communist movement.

The increased leverage we can obtain today from the organized work of our supporters is greater than anything we have had before, except perhaps for a brief period in the mid-to late 1930s, when mounting war pressures had

not yet begun to take their full toll.

Thirdly, this report is about *acting* on our recognition of the increasing political leverage the communist movement internationally derives from the existence of Pathfinder Press. Acting in this way means organizing and leading the human resources, first of all. But it also means deploying financial resources effectively to assure that we do not lose that leverage — above all today, as the openings and possibilities of using it increase.

We must meet the very considerable challenge before us to rapidly prepare every single title Pathfinder publishes, or is responsible for keeping in print and distributing, in an electronic format that will make it possible to use new computer-to-plate technology. We must do this now in order to reduce the size of the print shop by drawing more heavily on volunteers, cutting the labor time necessary to produce Pathfinder books, increasing the productivity of that labor, lowering the skill levels needed to work in the print shop, and driving down the production costs while sacrificing nothing on Pathfinder's standards of quality. Only that course will enable us to sustain Pathfinder production and to keep our political arsenal in print.

We must act on this understanding of the importance of Pathfinder by politically leading the effort — which we sometimes refer to in shorthand as the digitization project — in a centralized way. It must be a top priority campaign of our movement internationally. Up to now we have not done this. We launched this effort to prepare all Pathfinder titles in digital format at a West Coast regional socialist conference in Seattle at the end of January. As we started rolling, however, we slid away from what was initially outlined in Seattle and instead presented this effort as a project for the active supporters groups to focus their energies on. That was an error. First of all, this is not a "project"; it is a *course of action*. And it is not a course of action just for supporters, but for the communist movement internationally as a centralized force. It has consequences for *all* comrades — party members, Young Socialists, organized supporter groups, and friends. It can only be accomplished by transforming ourselves as we transform party branches, industrial union fractions, and our production apparatus on all levels to function in a more proletarian way. And that transformation is only possible by turning outward to take maximum advantage of the accelerating resistance to expand propaganda work and recruit. It is only possible by *turning to* the new resistance in the fullest way, by *turning away* from the patterns of the retreat.

If we advance along this course of action, our success in doing so will deepen the crisis we face in every single unit of the party, on every level of the leadership structure, and within the apparatus. And that is what we are trying to do, because only by accelerating the crisis will we begin to resolve it. We will be forced to confront the nonproletarian habits we have adopted during the retreat of the last years, habits we have become comfortable with. We will be forced to confront the erosion of centralized, disciplined, timely execution of democratically arrived at



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Militant/John Sarge



Ilana Storace

Machinists picket Eastern Airlines in Detroit, August 1989 (left). UMWA members occupy tippie at Moss no. 3 mine, Carbo, Virginia, September 1989 (right). Those working-class battles and the party the SWP became during them prepared its cadres to confront challenge of imperialist assault on Iraq in 1990-91.

decisions; to confront the avoidance of leadership initiative and abdication of responsibility in following through to closure on every assignment.

The fact is, our units are not battle ready, beginning with the National Committee. If we don't shape up, starting with the discipline of the officer corps, the troops will disintegrate under the first test of fire.

So all that is the title. That's why we adopted the shorthand form — "special report."

The Central Committee of the Communist League in Canada asked the Political Committee of the SWP to present this report here today because, as we began discussing these points in our respective leadership bodies and collectively, it became obvious to all of us that it would be impossible to come out of this convention with political clarity on a centralized course and priorities of our work without taking up and deciding these questions. That includes correcting the initial errors and misdirection that we — the Socialist Workers Party — have given our movement internationally on how to organize this effort and carry it through to the end.

We also knew that at this conference and convention not only would there be a significant cross-section of members and supporters from North America present, but also a good number of comrades from the leaderships of most of the sections of our movement internationally. This makes it possible to address and discuss these questions in a centralized way, which we have not yet had an opportunity to do.

Through the regional conferences that began last October in Chicago and then rolled through Birmingham, Toronto, and on to Seattle at the end of January, we were able to bring into focus the political challenge we face and initiate the course of action we're discussing. But we've covered a lot of ground since then. We're better able now to pull together the lessons, to redirect and refocus our energies.

Growing political openings for propaganda work

We've already spent most of today discussing the scope of the openings we have in front of us. Right now, any branch that is responding to the opportunities — not just in the U.S. Midwest, but all over the continent! — is selling more copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, week after week, and more Pathfinder books than at any time since the period of the Pittston and the Eastern strikes in 1989-90, and during Washington's war preparations and assault on Iraq in late 1990 and early 1991. And most of these publications are being bought by workers on picket lines, at plant gates, and at protest meetings and by young people attracted to a communist perspective and a fighting working-class movement.

New International no. 11, which will be published in July, features, along with other articles, the political resolution adopted by the SWP convention in August 1990, "U.S. Imperialism Lost the Cold War." The first section of the resolution deals with what workers were accomplishing through the intertwined labor battles against Eastern Airlines and the Pittston coal company in 1989-90, and the lessons the party was learning from our participation in those struggles. The Eastern strike came to an end literally within hours of when the bombing of Iraq began in January 1991. The strikers proved their capacity to stay out "one day longer" than the hated owner Frank Lorenzo, and Eastern folded.

When you read, or reread, the resolution you will be struck by the fact that it was those working-class battles, and the party we became in the course of them, that prepared us for the Iraq war — a preparation we had no way

of knowing we were making. That's what enabled the SWP to confront the challenge of the imperialist assault on Iraq in the way we did and to come out of it on a foundation that made possible everything we've done in the last decade.

During the Eastern and Pittston strikes and then in the run-up to the Iraq war we carried out a massive propaganda campaign. We sold hundreds of copies of the *Militant* at plant gates and mine portals across the country every week. In the months before and during the war, we sold some 15,000 copies of the book *U.S. Hands Off the*

"We rapidly need every Pathfinder title in an electronic format in order to use new computer-to-plate technology."

Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations. Since then, except for some short spikes around important moments like upsurges in Peoria and Decatur, Illinois, or the UPS strike last August, we've seen nothing like the sales we're having right now.

You have heard some of the examples here today: 300 *Militants* at plant gates to Case Corporation workers in Illinois, in the last six weeks. Sales to striking pulp and paper workers at Fletcher-Challenge here in Canada. The response to the *Militant* among Caterpillar workers, captured by the message six of them sent to the *Militant* fund-raising rally in Chicago two weeks ago. And comrades have been giving other examples: the response to our literature and ideas that party and YS members got at the Young Feminist Summit in Boston at the end of February; the welcome we received at the Black farmers' conference that comrades from Washington, D.C., and other

areas organized to get to; sales of our literature to students protesting the anti-immigrant, anti-bilingual education Proposition 227 in California.

The party's response to these opportunities, however, is extremely uneven. And here I'll speak just for the SWP. Comrades in other communist leagues can think about and discuss their own experiences. But I know how uneven it is in the SWP. This is not because the opportunities and openings are that uneven. It is because only a minority of branches have transformed their functioning enough in the course of the last months to be ready to see these openings, much less rapidly respond and be fully part of them.

The example being set by the branches of the "Iron Triangle" in the Midwest — from Des Moines, to Twin Cities, to Chicago, and down through Peoria — shows what is possible in every single branch of the party today. The resistance at Case and Caterpillar is not going against the stream! But we have to want to get out and be part of it. We have to confront, and change, the habits we've developed during a period of retreat, habits reinforced by the pressures of rising average age among the cadres of the party.

In a few branches we have made enough progress, and they are setting the example. Often, these are branches where a new generation is beginning to take political leadership in a way we have not seen in the party for years. There is a small layer of comrades in their 20s who are becoming, for instance, branch organizers, real political organizers, helping lead the branches as a whole outward in responding to the openings. They are starting to lead the union fractions. Their inclination is to do all work — in the unions and industry, as well as in the working class and public more generally — as *mass work*. They want the forms and norms to facilitate this, not block it. Of course, this can seem exhausting if not disruptive. But in fact it is another step to broad communist political work.

The impact of this on all areas of work is visible, as is the mutual impact that branches moving forward have on each other. That's the real meaning of the Iron Triangle.

It is only as we do this that we will be able to build a growing number of chapters of the Young Socialists. We were wrong in thinking earlier that the YS could be built as a solid national organization with strong local chapters before we had begun to make progress in transforming the party's functioning with the help of a new generation of young party leaders.

The potential for recruitment is real. This was very evident last weekend at the West Coast educational conference and California state convention in Los Angeles that nominated the Socialist Workers Party slate for the November elections. The meeting was marked by the participation of Young Socialists and contacts they brought with them from all three cities where the party has branches on the West Coast — Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Seattle. They even did their own fund-raising to get to the meeting and bring others with them. It transformed the conference and convention. By the end there was palpable excitement over the possibilities to reach out and recruit through the kind of election campaign we haven't really run in a number of years. Politics was bubbling in that gathering.

It is not only in the United States that we see evidence of growing resistance and widening opportunities. Stop and think about what Jack Willey noted in his report earlier today. Comrades from the Young Socialists and the party participating in the conference of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI) in Puerto Rico were able to sell *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions to 10 percent of the participants. For a number of years FUPI almost disappeared. There was a sharp downturn in the independence movement, which retreated like other social struggles. But now we are witnessing a new upsurge, with a new generation of young people taking up the battle and linking up with the traditions and example of uncompromising veterans. What a magnificent perspective. And we are there as we have always been to fight side by side with them against Washington for Puerto Rican independence.

Comrades sold 53 copies of *Nueva Internacional* at the Mexico City book fair last month — 53 copies!

At the Havana book fair in February, the Pathfinder booth was one of the political focal points of the event. The most sought after title was *La última lucha de Lenin* (Lenin's final fight). There was also a greater interest than ever before in books like *El rostro cambiante de la política en Estados Unidos* (the book that is the Spanish translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*), which explain what communists do in the United States to build a party of worker-bolsheviks. And there was increased interest in all the issues of *Nueva Internacional*. Several Western Saharan students organized a kind of sit-in at the booth until we promised them a copy of "the book on Iraq" — that is, *The Opening Guns of World War III* — at the end of the book fair. The sit-in was successful. And the examples could go on and on.



Militant/Marc Lichtman

Selling *Militant* and Pathfinder books in New York City, April 1991. Leading up to and during the U.S.-led slaughter of the Iraqi people, socialists sold thousands of *Militants* and books as part of working-class campaign against imperialism and war.

Just today I learned that we have now secured a distributor for Pathfinder books in Spain — a commercial distributor that will take and process orders from bookstores, libraries, and individuals in Spain. This is something we've been trying to get for years; most buyers simply refuse to order if they have to deal with currency conversion and customs and so on. And the hassle won't be diminished by the manufacture of euros! Now we have a chance to increase distribution especially of our Spanish-language titles in Europe.

Think about what Argiris Malapanis reported earlier today concerning the interest in Pathfinder and the *Militant* in the Balkans. Compare that to 10 years ago and think about the implications!

Iran is another example that captures everything we're talking about. A few days ago we received a report from supporters of Pathfinder in Iran who get Pathfinder literature to book fairs and other events there. In February they went to the seventh foreign publishers book fair in the city of Mashad, in northeast Iran, hosted by the University of Ferdosi. They reported that relatively few students participated because the event coincided with a holiday to commemorate the 1979 revolution. But many university librarians and professors took part.

Among others, the head librarian of the central library of Isfahan University, one of the large universities of Iran,

"The resistance by unionists at Case Corp. and Caterpillar is not going against the stream."

came by the Pathfinder stall together with one of his deputies, got a catalog, and looked over the books on display. They came back another day and purchased 43 different titles — everything from *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and *The History of the Russian Revolution*; to books by Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, George Novack, and Rosa Luxemburg; to copies of *New International* on the "The Opening Guns of World War III," "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution," and "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War."

A group of students came by with their professor, picked up a catalog, and came back later to buy 12 different titles, including *America's Revolutionary Heritage*; *Fighting Racism in World War II*; *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*; *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*; and *New International* no. 7 on "The Opening Guns of World War III."

Malcolm X's *February 1965: The Final Speeches* was the single best seller at the Mashad book fair. In all, Pathfinder supporters sold 88 copies of different titles for around \$800.

They have also received clearance to publish "The Opening Guns of World War III" by Jack Barnes in Farsi. It will be available at the Tehran international book fair in May.

Each one of these examples alone opens a window on what is changing in the world and the opportunities for building the communist movement.

Word and deed

At the June 1997 SWP convention, we discussed and adopted a report that concluded that the retreat of the working class that had marked everything in the years following the Iraq war had bottomed out. The vote was unanimous. But the party as a whole did not come out of the convention acting in a manner consistent with that vote. Just days after the convention, in Detroit, tens of thousands of workers marched in a national demonstration of solidarity with the struggle of newspaper workers against the *Detroit News* and *Free Press*. But relatively few party members — or Young Socialists members — were there. What we said about what was happening and what we did about it were not yet in harmony. And we continued to miss other opportunities as well.

The convention report we adopted was accurate. In fact, we now know it was a little belated. But after the convention we were still lagging behind the pace of events. Not a happy situation for those who seek to be a working-class vanguard. We had to change what we did and how we acted.

Even last November, during Washington's buildup to another assault on Iraq, we failed to respond like a communist vanguard must, with initiatives for *action*, in the streets. We started tail-ending various liberal and centrist groups. And we started adapting to the imperialist campaigns on "free trade" and "human rights" that are part of the march toward fascism and war. Those were the questions we confronted in a substantial way at the national and international conferences in Chicago, Birmingham, Toronto, and Seattle between October and January, and that the Communist League in Canada took up at the first session of your convention New Year's weekend. And we began to make progress, however unevenly.

In a similar way, eight years ago, in 1990, an SWP convention adopted a political resolution in which we drew the historical balance sheet that U.S. imperialism had lost

the Cold War. Despite the vote, it took time for the real meaning of that fact to register. The truth is, we still react with surprise at changes that are nothing but the practical unfolding of that historic development. We had to go through several years of experience to absorb the consequences, for consciousness to catch up with reality. The reports we got earlier today from the *Militant's* reporting trip to Kosovo, Albania, Yugoslavia, and Cairo help bring home what we meant when we explained that the Stalinist roadblock had crumbled, that it would now be easier for revolutionary-minded fighters to find each other and to rebuild a communist vanguard internationally as the class struggle deepened.

Think about it: a team of *Militant* reporters, with a suitcase of communist literature, fly to Belgrade, get on a bus that takes them to Pristina, go to the heart of the region where barely a week earlier Serb police forces had carried out a massacre of Albanian residents of Kosovo. The comrades visit factories, farms, homes, and schools; large cities and small towns. They are welcomed by fighters to whom they explain they are reporting for a revolutionary socialist newspaper published in New York. One of the young people they meet already knows the *Militant* and the party because she read the paper and came to meetings sponsored by the *Militant* Labor Forum when she lived and studied in the United States.

Then the reporters get on another bus and go south to Macedonia, and follow up the next week with a repeat in Albania. You have to have a sense of history to understand what has changed. Our reporters didn't end up in a hospital or a morgue. They are here telling us about the deepening resistance of workers, farmers, and youth throughout the region to imperialism's efforts to impose capitalist production and rebuild bourgeois social relations. A decade ago it would have been unthinkable to even consider such a reporting trip.

We're still lagging behind reality. The Stalinist bureaucratic castes, regimes, and parties of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are gone. Unless we were to have a revolution as powerful as the October revolution all over again, with all the historical conditions that created that revolution, and then its long degeneration, the world Stalinist murder machine can never be put together again. That period of history — when Stalinism was an enormous force within the working-class movement, and overwhelmingly the weightiest obstacle to building a communist leadership on a world scale — is over. That powerful counter-revolutionary current within the working-class movement — one that for decades held its position of dominance through terror, corruption, and worship of the existing fact — has shattered. The speed with which it dis-



Militant/Hilda Cuzco (top); Tim Mailhot (right) **Selling *Militant* outside Case Corp. plant in East Moline, Illinois, April 9 (right). Socialists sold 300 copies of paper to Case workers at factory gates in previous six weeks. Response to revolutionary literature and ideas was similar at Young Feminist Summit in Boston, Feb. 28-March 1. Participants at Boston gathering protest against bombings of abortion clinics (top). Black farmers and supporters picket Economic Club of Detroit meeting May 8, addressed by U.S. vice-president Albert Gore, demanding a living income and an end to foreclosures and discrimination (bottom).**



Militant/Jay Ressler

integrated was striking confirmation of the fact that it was a caste, not a new social class as so many had argued. It never had a necessary, historically progressive role to fulfill. It finally crumbled like a dead leaf.

The world in which that current had such destructive weight — which is the world most of us in this room have known for our entire political lives — is gone. This is the political reality we are all trying to catch up with and absorb, so we can act in a way consistent with that understanding.

For fighters around the world who now want to reknit the continuity to communism, who want to discover the real history of the modern working-class movement, who want to educate themselves to be prepared for the coming struggles — the only place they can readily turn to find that historical record distilled is the books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press.

That is the objective place of Pathfinder in the world today. There is nowhere else to find the history of the dynamics of the 20th century and the course of communists acting to try to affect it; nowhere else to find the materials necessary to study this political continuity from the point of view of the working class. That's why I think it's accurate to say that Pathfinder has an *objective* weight in the world today.

I'm not saying that our movement yet has objective weight in the broad working-class movement. We don't.

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We know that all too well. We can't affect the course of the outcome of a strike, or of the historic battle for affirmative action, for example. We're too small, and the objective conditions that would allow something different do not yet exist.

But our *program*, the program of the communist movement, the history and the lessons of 150 years of the modern working-class movement — embodied in the 350 titles Pathfinder publishes and keeps in print — do have an objective weight in the world today. Not only are those books needed, desperately needed, but they can be found nowhere else.

So what we're addressing here is how to respond to the historic new openings that flow from these world-shaking changes that we are beginning to absorb.

I want to say a few more things about the enhanced leverage we have due to the party's organized active supporters groups and the broader circles of party friends and supporters.

In the early 1960s, when I joined the party, we would often discuss the fact that the Communist Party, the Stalinist movement, was vastly reduced in size and influence from 20 or 30 years earlier. While the CP in the 1960s was still considerably larger than we were at that time, the obstacle they posed was smaller than it had been in the 1930s, and that change was an important one politically. At the same time, we were very conscious that one of the realities the Communist Party drew on to enhance its political weight was the size of its periphery. There were thousands of former members and long-time fellow travelers who had joined in the heat of the tumultuous battles of the '30s or the high point of class collaboration during World War II, and then dropped their membership in the late '40s and '50s.

For those who remained even marginally active politically, "the party" was still the Communist Party. The CP counted on them for financial and political support in many ways. This periphery was qualitatively larger than what our movement had at the time, and we felt its weight. It defined the channels through which "the left" — both the "old left" and the "new left" (which had little new about it) — traversed its twisting course.

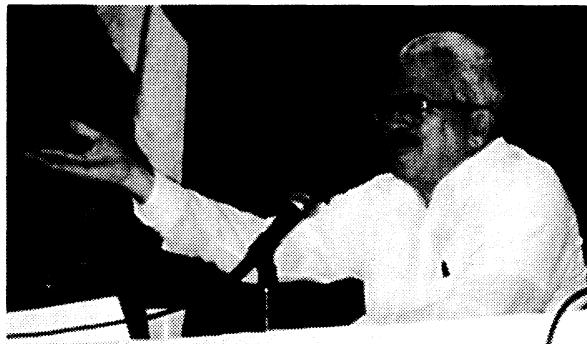
Party supporters: powerful leverage for movement

That balance of forces has shifted. The size and political character of the supporters of our movement today, both organized and unorganized, add to our striking power in a way we have not previously had for any extended period in our history. They expand the effective size of our forces, which are never sufficient to do what is necessary. And it will probably be a while longer before the pace of recruitment is great enough to reverse the net decline in party membership.

We have a substantial layer of capable and political comrades around us who were won to our movement on the basis of program and class-struggle experience — not like the periphery of Stalinist parties in the past. The Stalinist movement was never built on program. It was built among those attracted to worship of the existing fact, and to defense of the interests and privileges of the Soviet caste, so long as they could get a piece of the action. Some tried for a similar relationship with Beijing, or the caricature of it, with Albania for instance.

Now that the Moscow host is gone, they have no *raison d'être*. Attempts of the parasite colony to find a new host in Havana have failed, since there is no caste on which to attach themselves. Revolutionaries are not a good substitute. Nostalgia for what is no more, and what shall never be again, does not a Stalinist party make. And the leadership of revolutionary Cuba, no longer encased in a "community of socialist countries," has to be dealt with directly.

One objective test of the accuracy of what we're saying about the world is that a significant number of party



Militant/Ron Richards (left); Jacob Perasso (top, left); Joshua Carroll (above) Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda speaking at Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI) congress in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, March 28 (top, left). FUPI members welcoming Puerto Rican political prisoner Antonio Camacho back to Puerto Rico, February 15, after a 10-year incarceration in U.S. jails (left). Youth are at forefront of resurgence of struggle to end U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico. Interest in revolutionary ideas and literature is increasing worldwide. Pathfinder booth at February 4-10 international book fair in Havana (above) was a center of political discussion.

supporters and friends who we haven't seen a lot of in recent years are coming around to activities again. They sense big changes are bubbling. They want to get oriented by their party, so they can find a way to contribute. We noticed this during the regional socialist conferences that began in Chicago last October and have continued through the West Coast meeting that took place in Los Angeles last week.

Every single one of those gatherings drew a larger than expected layer of supporters and friends of the party, some of whom we hadn't seen in a number of years. They brought their enthusiasm with them and helped to infuse the conferences with it.

Joe Swanson, an SWP leader from Des Moines, Iowa,

"It's now easier for revolutionary-minded fighters to find each other and rebuild communist vanguard internationally."

made the remark after the Seattle conference that he felt like he had been lifted up on the shoulders of a hundred party supporters. And there could have been another couple dozen supporters there had the conference steering committee been more confident, less blind to the importance of what was happening. We had to apologize to some of our supporters afterward for not enthusiastically welcoming their participation in that conference.

The reaction of these comrades is purely political; they see what is opening up and start pressing the party to respond to it. We began to feel the nudges from some of them who said, "Isn't there something more we can do to help make the party's response to the political opportunities even more effective?" One reason for this, I think, may be that party supporters don't have the same pressures as party members do to meet the demands of the

weekly rhythm of party-building work. They keep a different pace by choice — or possibly by necessity.

And of course our supporters, especially those comrades who are members of organized active supporters groups, know the party well. A large number are former members with years of experience as party cadres. They know our weaknesses — along with our strengths — almost as well as we do. They know that not every branch executive committee rises equally to the political challenge of leading the active supporters groups to maximize what they can do to advance the work we share as a common goal and perspective.

So this is the first thing we're posing here. Branches need to respond to the initiatives and help we're being offered, by organizing comrades who belong to our active supporters group to take on additional tasks and responsibilities that release time and energy of party members to get out on more plant-gate sales, more regional teams, more campus tables; to use our election campaigns more effectively; to organize better forums; to spend more time on recruitment and education.

There are many things comrades who are active supporters can do to help us get out of the headquarters to meet and talk politics with new people. They can staff Pathfinder bookstores for a larger number of hours. They can help get out Militant Labor Forum mailings, make forum and campaign leaflets, and translate them into Spanish. They can do the financial accounting for the bookstores. They can help make pre-forum dinners possible, as well as receptions at special events. You can all draw up a longer list of your own. Together with the expanded fund-raising work they want to do, these are the first things we should work with local active supporters groups to take on, because they free up party members to get out and do politics, do mass work. (By the way, talking to a couple McDonald's employees within a few miles of your workplace, headquarters, or home can be a meaningful form of mass work today.)

This takes leadership effort by the party, however. It's not something that will organize itself. It also — and most importantly — takes a real desire by party members to do more plant-gate sales, more regional teams, more campus tables; to build and participate in more conferences and other political activities; to insistently nose around small pockets of working-class unrest in the city; to have more time to prepare classes and better forums; and to organize social events and relaxed evenings of political discussion with contacts and new members.

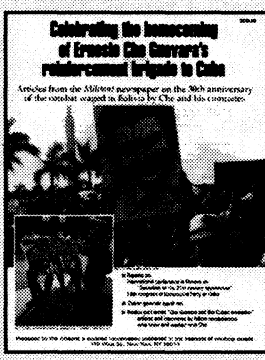
We know there is resistance to this — sometimes unconscious, sometimes conscious. We have to drive a stake through the heart of the perpetual clubhouse meetings and ways of carrying out necessary administrative tasks that turn into their opposite — that become substitutes for effective action, instead of facilitating and expediting it. We must have organization and administration designed to get us out where the resistance is accelerating, and to do so consistently, not in the surge-and-collapse mode.

When we set in motion the work that has become known as the "digitization project," the work to revolutionize the production of Pathfinder books, we got off on a wrong track. In a number of cities, active supporters groups were asked to take on the work of scanning, proofreading, and formatting the Pathfinder arsenal as a project. They were told that this is what the party wanted active supporters groups to do, and they diligently set to work organizing the members to do it.

But this was wrong on a number of counts. We have to start with the range of tasks and responsibilities that can be taken on by individual active supporters to help free up party members to turn outward to take advantage of the

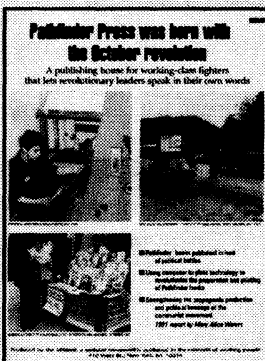
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political openings to step up propaganda work and recruitment. Then we can look at how to get the Pathfinder work done by drawing on ever broader layers of friends and supporters. The last thing we are suggesting is that the active supporters group as a group take on the Pathfinder electronic formatting work, as if they should go off by themselves and form a digitizers group.

I'm making a caricature here, but we all know that branches sometimes run away from the political challenge of leading the active supporters to help meet the party's needs.

Revolutionizing book production

To the extent we qualitatively transform the timeliness and consistency of our propaganda work, responding to the political opportunities, we're going to have to reprint Pathfinder titles more frequently. The more we sell, the more titles will go out of stock if the print shop can't keep up. This is what is happening now, since production is not organized to make it possible to reprint many titles frequently and quickly in small quantities.

This is not something we have just discovered. We have known for several years that we must transform our production methods, transform the print shop, transform Pathfinder's functioning, or sooner rather than later lose our ability to maintain the political arsenal. But the challenge of responding to new opportunities had to be sharply posed, I think, to force us to resolve the growing crisis rather than hide from it by pretending it could be postponed.

The course we would have to take was in fact already clear a year and a half ago when we decided to end the practice of storing tens of thousands of copies of books — wasting resources on warehousing costs, and misallocating precious production footage for dead storage. Rather than piling up large inventories of deteriorating books, we decided we had no choice but to keep the expanding arsenal of Pathfinder titles available for use through just-in-time printing with methods that would lower production costs. Technological changes have made this a feasible goal without sacrificing Pathfinder's quality standards. But the challenge was enormous. As we said at the time, we are getting rid of the safety nets.

Most of you here today have had a chance to read the talk "Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution" that was presented to a conference in Havana, Cuba, on Social and Political Publishing in the '90s. The conference was sponsored by Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, and

"The period in history when Stalinism was the weightiest obstacle to building world communist leadership is over."

took place just before the opening of the Havana book fair in February of this year. It wasn't a large conference, but it involved some of those most centrally involved in publishing in Cuba, especially the kind of publishing we do — the political kind. The response to the presentation was interesting. Many compañeras and compañeros came up to us afterward to say, "Well, now I understand where you come from and how you can do what you do. It was a mystery before. We couldn't understand how you managed to produce and keep in print so many communist books with such high quality. How was it possible?"

They are political people. They know the communist movement in the United States is not large, that support within the working class in the United States for a communist perspective is not massive. Yet we have more titles in print than most of the publishing houses in Cuba.

Once they understood the role of volunteers not only in producing the books, but in translating, selling, staffing bookstores, organizing street sales, taking the literature to book fairs all over the world — then it all made sense.

One thing that impressed them the most was something I did not expect. One person asked, "Do you have your own print shop?" When we answered, "Yes," her response was, "Well, that explains a lot. It would be hard to do this without your own shop." Many publishers in Cuba share the same presses. When acute paper shortages and equipment breakdowns are added to the equation, they have to make many painful decisions on who gets priority press time for which titles.

A number of people commented on the speed with which we get out new publications. We laughed because we know the other side — how long it takes us sometimes to get out many books. But they saw the opposite. They saw the booklet published by the *Militant*, distributed by Pathfinder Press, and produced by the print shop on "Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che

Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba." They knew the last of the articles collected in that bulletin was published in the *Militant* in January. Two weeks later the entire series of articles was available in two 88-page bulletins, in English and Spanish, and in a relatively inexpensive format that made it possible to use the publication broadly. Many people at the conference and the book fair were impressed.

"After we finish editorial work it takes us months to get similar publications through a print shop and into circulation," they told us.

Comrades also liked what we said about quality standards and accuracy — that the care with which we edit, prepare, and produce every single book or pamphlet is a class question for us. The quality of cover designs and of the print job; the high standards for copyediting and low tolerance for proofreading errors; the readability of type fonts and sizes; the accuracy and smoothness of translations; the care that goes into preparing all the auxiliary features, such as pictures, maps, glossaries, chronologies, and indexes that make a book attractive and more accessible to new readers — all these are elements of producing the political weapons the working class deserves and must have in order to win.

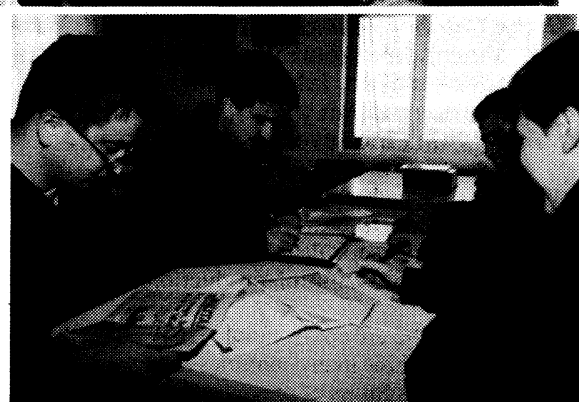
The fact that Pathfinder's backlist is our important list — the crystallized work of more than seven decades, the presentation of which we upgrade and improve when possible — was just put to another test. A comrade who works in the Sparrows Point steel mill in Baltimore recently gave a copy of the Pathfinder catalog to some co-workers. One of them took it home and looked it over for a couple days, then came back with a couple of titles marked that he was particularly interested in getting. One was the pamphlet *Workers' Rights versus the Secret Police* by Larry Seigle, originally published in 1981. It deals with the long history of how the bosses and their governments have used police spies and provocateurs and frame-ups against the workers movement since the earliest days of the modern revolutionary movement, 150 years ago.

"That looks interesting. Could we get that one?"

It's a wonderful example. That's not a title we sell huge quantities of right now. But it deals with an extremely important question, and what's in that little pamphlet is not easily available anywhere else in the world! It's an issue workers will confront again in a big way — and in a more and more complex manner, with larger stakes — as resistance accelerates. One or more of the co-workers who wanted to read the pamphlet had some experiences on this question, or had friends and family members with experiences, going back to the Black Panthers in the 1960s. He had reason to want to get it, and it will lead him to further reading!



Militant photos by Argriris Malapanis
Demonstration of nearly 100,000 in Pristina, Kosova, March 13, demanding self-determination for Albanian nationality (top) was covered by *Militant* reporters. Albanian students in Tetovo, Macedonia, talk with Young Socialists National Executive Committee organizer Jack Willey, on right, and read the *Militant* (right). Such a reporting trip would not have been possible a decade ago.



During the Havana book fair I overheard two friends who were looking at books at our booth talking with each other about things happening in Yugoslavia and Iraq. One of them pointed to titles on display and said, "Any place things are happening in the world, Pathfinder has a book that will help you understand what's going on. You can find it here."

It's a slight exaggeration. But not much. The political point they were getting at is accurate. If you want to know something about an issue in world politics, you'll find a book or pamphlet at the Pathfinder table that will help you figure out what's happening and why. And, most importantly, it is something you can share and that will better arm you to act effectively.

As our opportunities to intensify our propaganda work expand, we either revolutionize our production methods or we die. That is what capitalism is all about, and none of us have any illusions but that we live in a capitalist world. There is a wonderful passage of *The Communist Manifesto* where Marx and Engels write:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society.... Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face, with sober senses, his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind.

**Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky:
'Revolutionary movement needs its own print shop'**

The following is an excerpt from a June 1936 letter by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky to the Central Committee of the International Workers Party (POI) in France. Writing during the most powerful rise of factory occupations and workers mobilizations in France in the 20th century, Trotsky made a series of proposals urging the POI to begin functioning as a proletarian party and break from the petty-bourgeois methods and factionalism of leaders such as Raymond Molinier and Pierre Naville. The POI, Trotsky insisted, needed to make a radical turn in response to the mass upsurge in order to pose a revolutionary alternative to the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties and their class-collaborationist support to the new People's Front government formed in coalition with the bourgeois Radical Party. The letter is published in *The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36)* by Leon Trotsky, published by Pathfinder Press. It is copyright © 1977 by Pathfinder and is reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

For several years I have insisted upon the necessity of the French section's having its own printshop, which could be of inestimable value for the revolutionary period. Unfortunately, in this question, as in all others, I was unable to convince the leadership. Why? Because even the meaning of a revolution-

ary organization is not understood. Naville unfortunately has not the slightest interest in these things. Molinier considers the revolutionary organization from the point of view of a "promoter": colored posters, kiosks, phony publicity — in short, bluff, which costs a great deal but produces nothing. The revolutionary organization must base itself not on quasicapitalist methods but on the devotion of its members, on untiring work, intensive and at the same time systematic; on its own printshop, with two printers entirely devoted to the organization; on a fast and efficient mailing system; on energetic and tireless salespeople; on perfect bookkeeping. There is no other way for a revolutionary organization.

*La Vérité*¹ devoured enormous sums, enough for two printshops. The American comrades, with more modest means, have created a printshop which does magnificent work. Besides the weekly and monthly, it issues 400-page books. And the Americans were neither richer nor more numerous than the French.

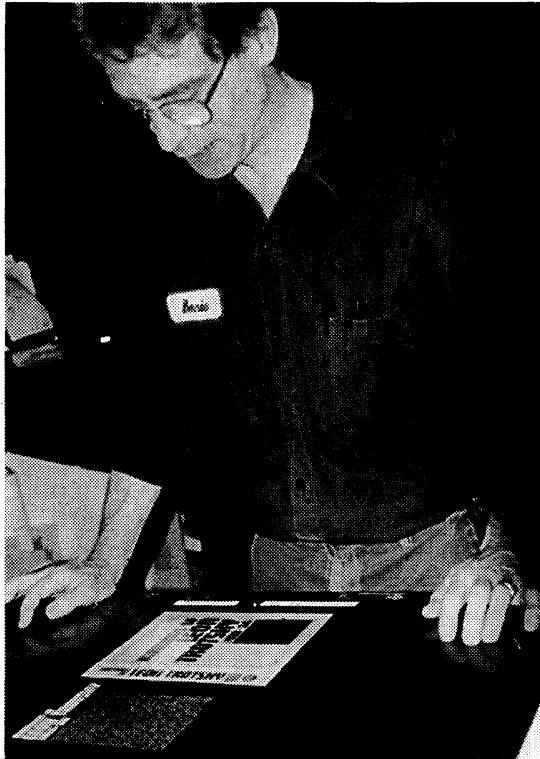
You are now suffering repression, which should win you sympathy. Couldn't you start a special collection for the printshop? Better late than never!

1. The newspaper of one of the two groups that fused in 1936 to form the POI.



Militant Joshua Carroll (above); Hilda Cuzco (right)

Stitching signatures of booklet *Pathfinder Press Was Born with the October Revolution* in Pathfinder's print shop, March 1998 (above). Reorganization of book production will bypass a number of skilled, labor-intensive, and costly processes, such as stripping film (right), eliminating much of the labor time now going into every Pathfinder title.



"Everlasting uncertainty and agitation" — isn't that precisely what dominates every worker's conditions of life and labor under capitalism? Uninterrupted disturbance. Constant revolutionizing of production. Never-ending change.

This is what we are confronting. Think about the printing industry. For how many centuries did type, set by hand for use by various forms of presses, dominate the printing industry? Literally, it was centuries. Despite the development of photography, electricity, and greater mechanization in the 19th century, the fact is that "if Gutenberg or his contemporaries had stepped into the average printing plant in 1950, they could have stood at a typeset and set type by hand almost exactly as they did over 500 years earlier," according to the *Pocket Pal* booklet used as part of the training of all comrades in the shop.

The revolution in both typesetting and printing presses came only in the second half of the 20th century, with the combination of mechanization, photography, and the computer. The prevailing use of metal type set in blocks and solidified by molten lead began to be displaced by cheaper and more versatile photo-offset techniques only in the 1960s.

The *Militant* went photo-offset in 1965. I still remember the old hot-lead print shop in Greenwich Village run largely by some Italian anarchist workers where the *Militant* was printed when I first came to New York. The *New York Times* didn't go to photo-offset until 1978! Now, long before we get to the year 2000, digital technology has revolutionized both typesetting and printing again. A few short decades. It's a wonderful illustration of what Marx and Engels described 150 years ago.

This is what we face. Pathfinder still reprints and distributes some books and pamphlets that were originally set using the methods Gutenberg would have been comfortable with. Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution* is a really fine example of old-school design and composition in which — as a recent *New York Times* article on "Mourning the End of a Printing Era" put it — "Seamless printing jobs, with neat, carefully spaced letters and with layout so pleasing to the eye that it is not even noticed, are what is important." Our current edition of *The History of the Russian Revolution* is done by photographing printed pages and reproducing them using the photo-offset process.

The majority of our books produced in the last three

decades, however, were composed using one or another generation of photographic techniques to produce pages and then film that was painstakingly, manually stripped up into big sheets from which plates were burned for the presses.

But computers and digital technology have again revolutionized typesetting and design and are increasingly displacing photo-offset printing technology as well. Digital technology is displacing the old methods for the same reason photo-offset technology drove out hot-type composition and presses based on that a half century ago. It lowers production costs and can be run by workers with less skill.

We can no longer continue using production methods that are more and more antiquated, because doing so demands too much labor power to produce the books. It takes too many hours. It requires a shop that is larger than we can sustain. It requires more expensive raw materials that make frequent, short runs of books prohibitively expensive.

We need a revolution.

But this is just the flip side of meeting the openings we discussed. There would be no reason for us to join in, and even worse, this "uninterrupted disturbance" if growing opportunities weren't already outpacing our ability to respond. If there were no need for us to have more books to sell, if we didn't go out to sell them, then the small quantities we now have sitting on shelves would be sufficient. And having only a small percentage of our backlist in print at any one time would be a bearable weakness. But that's not what is happening.

The effort to transform how Pathfinder books are reprinted, and how new ones are produced, does not start with "digitizing" and using computers. It starts with the class struggle — with the world unfolding before our eyes. It starts with our place in the ranks, in the formation of proletarian fighters. It's about expanding the cadre of a proletarian party.

As we started organizing this work, the Political Committee made the decision that no party member in any branch would be directly involved in the project of scan-

ning, correcting, proofreading, and formatting the backlist of Pathfinder books, or redesigning the covers and other graphics. There are plenty of competent, disciplined volunteers to be organized to carry out that work, and members of the party must be stepping up other activities to expand our sales and use of the books being produced as we reach out to recruit.

Secondly, we decided that the Pathfinder backlist effort is not a task for active supporters groups. A number of individual active supporters of the party will be involved in this work. Many of them want very much to be. And they are encouraged to do so. But as an auxiliary organization of the party, active supporters groups have a much broader scope and different overall objectives. The party prioritizes for our active supporters a course of action that maximizes the use of as close as possible to 100 percent of the energies of every member to increase the party's centralized participation in mass work.

Moreover, as rapidly became clear, not all active supporters want to work on the Pathfinder digitizing project. Many prefer making themselves available to do other things to meet the needs of the party. But since we've given most active supporters the impression the last month or so that participating in this project is what the party wants them to do, many have volunteered anyway. "I don't have a computer, but maybe I can proofread." Or "I don't have a scanner, but I'd like to get a scanner anyway, so I'll buy one. And maybe you can teach me how to use it."

It's not surprising that members of active supporters groups would overwhelmingly respond that way, if that's what the party needs. But that's *not* what we need. That's not what we want. This is work that should be taken on by comrades who really want to do it, who are reasonably comfortable with the computers and technology involved, and who are willing to be disciplined in working to deadlines and meeting Pathfinder standards for quality and accuracy. Ruth Cheney and the other comrades on the steering committee in the Bay Area will make sure of that.

We also quickly discovered one of the biggest flaws with how far off course we had gone in initially presenting this project to meetings of active supporters groups in some cities. Comrades enthusiastically said, "Okay, we'll

take it on." Then reality came down. "But we don't know how to do any of these things ourselves — scanning, massaging, proofreading, formatting. So first we'll all have to learn each of the steps so we can help each other. In the meantime, we'll have to tell others who would like to be involved to wait because we can't train them."

Not infrequently, however, comrades who were not members of the active supporters group happened to be more qualified and more comfortable with computers and the technology. They should have been training the active supporters who wanted to help, not the other way around. In many cities there was a lengthening list of volunteers who were being told, "Thanks for the offer, but we'll have to wait to get back to you once we learn how to do this."

Don't think geographically, use the net

Among the mistakes we made was to project organizing the work on a city-by-city basis instead of allowing the technology we are using to free us from such physical, geographical constraints. The mistaken idea — consciously in some cases, less clearly in others — was to create in every single city a mini-production apparatus to prepare Pathfinder books in an electronic format. A group of volunteers in each area would find and train people they could count on to scan, correct, do first and second proofreads, and eventually format the book digitally in finished page layouts. Those books would then be ready for the shop to print, using new computer-to-plate technology.

But this was a pipe dream. We still haven't reached the point of being able to do this in *one* city, much less several dozen. And it's unnecessary.

Even the comrades most comfortable with using computers were thinking in terms of geographical units, instead of taking advantage of what technology and the internet enable us to do. There's no reason why the person scanning a book in Greensboro, North Carolina, has to pass the scanned text along to somebody in the same city to proofread as opposed to posting it electronically and having the San Francisco center arrange for someone in Manchester, England, or Auckland, New Zealand, to take the next step. Using various methods of sharing and transmitting electronically, Auckland is just as close as Atlanta.

Comrades organizing this work were bumping into unnecessary and frustrating bottlenecks. There would be a volunteer in San Diego to scan, but no proofreaders. There would be three proofreaders in Seattle but nobody to scan. With dozens of enthusiastic volunteers waiting for work to do, we have yet to finish our first book!

Another problem became evident, too. In many cities, volunteers began meeting to make their own local decisions on how to allocate the work to prepare a book assigned by the Bay Area steering committee. Training and qualifying people became the responsibility of a multi-

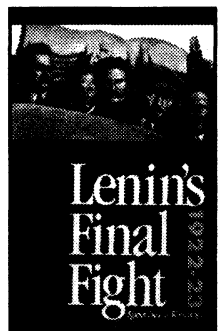
"Example set by 'Iron Triangle' party branches in Midwest shows what's possible everywhere in turning to mass work."

PATHFINDER

February 1965: The Final Speeches

By Malcolm X

Speeches from the last three weeks of the life of this outstanding leader of the oppressed Black nationality and working class in the United States. A large part is material previously unavailable, with some in print for the first time. \$17.95



Lenin's Final Fight

By V.I. Lenin

In the early 1920s Lenin waged a political battle in the leadership of the Communist Party of the USSR to maintain the course that had enabled the workers and peasants to overthrow the old tsarist empire, carry out the first successful socialist revolution, and begin building a world communist movement. The issues posed in his political fight remain at the heart of world politics today. Several items appear in English for the first time. Also available in Spanish. \$19.95

Workers' Rights vs. the Secret Police

By Larry Seigle

How, since the inception of the modern revolutionary workers movement in 1848, the ruling classes have responded with police spies, agent provocateurs, and political frame-ups. \$3.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 13, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.



plying collection of groups, with very uneven rates of success. The steering committee quickly lost control over vital decisions and standards that have to be determined in a centralized way. They didn't know who were the best scanners, the most exacting proofreaders, or the most competent formatters in each area. Too often comrades wasted time — or made decisions that had to be reversed later, resolving problems that had already been confronted and settled elsewhere.

Before we even got started, the centralization on which the success of the project hinges was being dissipated. Without realizing it, we were creating little bureaucracies in cities all over the world. Party units and active supporters groups with varied levels of understanding and/or technical competence were acting as intermediaries. Instead of maintaining centralized leadership and control of the project — without which we cannot succeed — we were headed toward whatever the sum of branch-led active supporters groups could lead and produce, with all the inevitable unevenness.

We weren't making the best use of the labor time of all the volunteers, and that's important. If we don't value the time of every comrade and use it well, volunteer labor dries up real fast.

So we're changing course. The Political Committee assigned Argiris Malapanis, Jack Willey, and myself to meet with the steering committee and Norton Sandler last week in the Bay Area. After some discussion, we clarified how we will proceed.

A steering committee of four supporters of the communist movement in the San Francisco Bay Area, headed by Ruth Cheney, is centralizing the work of the international project to put some 350 Pathfinder books into electronic format. The other members of the steering committee are Jerry Gardner, Bob Roberts, and Tom Tomasko. Norton Sandler is assigned by the SWP Political Committee to be the sole liaison with the volunteer organizers in the Bay Area in all communications from the Pathfinder Building. Argiris Malapanis is assigned by the Political Committee to centralize the work of all departments of the apparatus related to this effort.

All communications go through Argiris to Norton and then to Ruth and back. There's no freelancing. And there are no exceptions. All technical questions of how best to do the work will be resolved by the steering committee in collaboration with the volunteers, not referred back to the print shop or Pathfinder. By proceeding in this way, comrades in the Bay Area are already tapping into a reservoir of talent among the international volunteers. All political questions that need more discussion to resolve will be under the supervision of the Political Committee.

The best analogy here is outsourcing. The work of digitizing the Pathfinder backlist has been outsourced. Pathfinder's only relationship to this is to approve the templates and prepare the formatting instructions — those are political questions having to do with how the finished product looks. The shop's only interest is that the job meets specifications when it comes back.

The steering committee has made clear from the beginning that only those who demonstrate the ability to sustain the exacting standards for quality work that Pathfinder is known for will be allowed to participate.

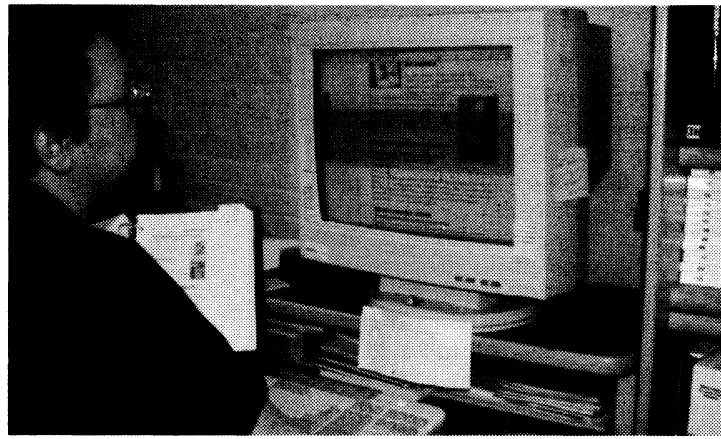
All volunteers will be organized directly by the steering committee in the Bay Area, not through local groups. They will be under the direct supervision of the committee headed by Ruth. If a volunteer needs training to get started, or needs help working out equipment, software, or other problems, the steering committee will find someone to work with them — perhaps from the same city, perhaps from elsewhere. And like the members of the young tank corps of the Rebel Army getting ready to meet the invasion at Playa Girón in 1961, those who learn in the morning will teach in the afternoon.

When a volunteer in one city finishes scanning a book, the Bay Area steering committee will determine which of the qualified proofreaders is available and who should take the book for the first read, then the second read. It could be someone in the same city or someone thousands of miles away. When the proofreading and corrections are done, the electronic manuscript will be posted for someone who has been qualified to do formatting — the final stage of preparation before the book is sent to the shop in its finished form.

Quality control at each stage remains in the hands of the comrades in the Bay Area who are centralizing the work. They will collaborate with the volunteers on the methods and techniques used. The only criteria are that deadlines are met, that quality is assured, that text and formatting approved by Pathfinder have not been corrupted, and that the final product sent to the shop meets the required standards it has set.

Reorganizing the battle plan along these lines took a little time. We had to work our way through all our false starts and misconceptions. The initial response to the new battle plan from the comrades responsible for organizing the work in the Bay Area was terror. Ruth told me earlier today that she estimates roughly a hundred comrades have already volunteered to work on this project. So the idea that the steering committee would organize each one of those volunteers directly from the Bay Area initially seemed like an impossible task.

But the more we talked it out along these lines, the more it became clear that this is the only conceivable way we



can ever reach our objective. This is a production process. We have to have an assembly line, not an electronic bookmakers guild. We have to meet *quality* standards of Pathfinder production. This can't be done in a uniform way unless each step of production is under the control and supervision of the committee designated to organize the volunteers around the world.

The steering committee will be getting special help from a few particularly qualified comrades who live outside the Bay Area. Toni Gorton is an example. Toni, now an auto worker in Detroit, has decades of experience designing books, covers, and everything else. She is the most experienced graphic designer in our movement. Many of us know Toni through the artistic quality of the covers she has prepared for dozens of Pathfinder books the last decade. But she knows a great deal about every aspect of the printing process, having run a print shop in Britain and worked in Pathfinder's print shop for many years as well.

Working directly with the Pathfinder staff and comrades in the shop, Toni is designing the book templates that will be used for formatting. This is a crucial piece of the project, essential for the quality and the artistic standards we must maintain. We will also draw on her to help oversee other work such as digitizing graphics and redesigning and adjusting covers. This is not just a task for those selected titles that Pathfinder's editorial leadership decides each year should have new covers; design adjustments must be made for the cover of virtually every book as it is digitized, since the number of pages often changes, altering the width of the spine.

Robbie Scherr, a supporter in Seattle who works in desktop publishing, has helped solve many of the technical problems encountered by comrades learning to format. We need — and around the world we will find — more and more volunteers with these kinds of talents and training as the work expands.

Like both Robbie and Toni, many of the volunteers have worked in the print shop in the past — including comrades with experience in the prepress department, as well as in the other departments whose functioning depends on quality prepress work. Ruth Cheney was part of the composition department in the shop for a period of time,

Militant/ Hilda Cuzco (inset); Argiris Malapanis (above)

Typesetting Pathfinder book ad in prepress department of Pathfinder print shop (inset). Prepress will soon be eliminated through work of volunteers and use of computer-to-plate technology. Ruth Cheney (above, right) and Eva Braiman review initial steps to train volunteers in formatting *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky, at a meeting in Cheney's house in Oakland, California, February 10. Cheney heads the Bay Area steering committee that organizes supporters of the communist movement around the world to put all Pathfinder books into electronic format. Braiman currently works in the shop's prepress department. *The Revolution Betrayed* is the first book to be produced in new digital manner. It is scheduled for delivery by the end of the first week of June.

for example. These comrades know the challenges from the inside, and their knowledge of what goes into Pathfinder book production is invaluable for the success of the project. It's one of the reasons we think we can make this audacious shift of an extremely important part of the production of our beloved and invaluable publications out from under the roof of the brick, mortar, and steel edifice located on the west side of lower Manhattan.

We need to stop and think about the scope of what we are undertaking. Comrades on the Bay Area steering committee have been thinking about it very much. Comrades from Seattle to London to Santa Cruz are thinking about it. There are 350 titles that must be put into electronic format ready to press a button and have plates come out the other end of a machine. Even if the volunteers completed one book a week, it would take about seven years to finish the project — allowing for a generous two-week vacation each year! Of course, we're nowhere close to that rate yet, but once we get the worldwide multiline assembly plant set up, we'll start cooking. That will be Pathfinder's version of globalization.

The problem is that a seven-year framework is unacceptable. We must complete this transformation rapidly. We have to think in terms of months, not years, because the objective is to reduce the size of the shop, *starting now*, not at some undetermined point in the future. Anything else will fail. Even before the shop has on line the equipment necessary for computer-to-plate production, everything will be going to press using digital files.

So we need an efficient and productive assembly line to produce the electronic book files. And that is possible. Not everybody has to conquer all the skills — any more

from Pathfinder

The Communist Manifesto

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

The founding document of the modern working-class movement, published in 1848. Explains why communists act on the basis not of preconceived principles but of facts springing from the actual class struggle, and why communism, to the degree it is a theory, is the generalization of the historical line of march of the working class and of the political conditions for its liberation. **\$3.95** Also available in Spanish. **\$5.00**

The Truth about Yugoslavia

Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention

George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis, and Jonathan Silberman

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Puerto Rico: U.S. Colony in the Caribbean

José G. Pérez

A concise history of the struggle of the Puerto Rican people to end the national oppression they face, defend themselves against the ravages of the capitalist economic crisis, and gain control of their own destiny. **\$2.50**

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 13 or write Pathfinder.

than they do in the largest, most technically proficient printing companies in the imperialist world. Individual volunteers will become proficient at different pieces of it. We will have world class scanners, proofreaders, formatters, and designers. We will draw on and learn from comrades working in the trade. We will adapt our methods and tools as we learn how the best in the industry do these things. Our productivity can go up very rapidly. And we'll have regular progress reports in the *Militant*, so we all can follow how we're doing.

While party members will not be directly working on this assembly line, and active supporters groups will not be organizing the volunteers in city-by-city work brigades, party branches, with the help of active supporters, do have the central political task to carry out of lining up volunteers — both active supporters and other friends of the movement — who are interested and want to participate. We want to get them hooked up directly with the steering committee in the Bay Area. Even more important, of course, is the political support and encouragement of party members in each city. The successful realization of the effort we're undertaking means the expansion of our effective forces in a dramatic way.

Centralizing the work internationally

The need to centralize our work internationally was posed here in Canada. As comrades on the Political Committee and Central Committee of the Communist League in Canada were discussing the project, the question came up, "Shouldn't we propose that supporters of our movement in Canada take on a piece of this?" Their initial suggestion was that comrades in Canada take responsibility for putting in electronic format Pathfinder's French-language titles. "That could be our contribution to the project," comrades proposed.

But after discussion, we all rejected this course. If we started along that road, the work would become decentralized again. There would be differing priorities for different groups of comrades, rather than a single centralized effort.

After what has already been presented, it should be obvious why our international movement must take this on in a centralized way. To carry out the project and bring it home quickly, we must do it as an international political priority. Whatever title is up next for reprint because it is going out of stock within a few months (our ability to plan is not perfect: sometimes the pleasant surprise of an unexpectedly large sale of a particular title can pose the sudden need for a reprint in a few weeks) has to go to the top of the list to be prepared in digital format. If it is a French-language title, odds are strong the steering committee would ask comrades in France or in Canada — where not only in Quebec but across the country there are a large number of comrades and supporters fluent in French — to work on it, especially the proofreading. But if the top priorities are English-language titles or Spanish, the steering committee won't hesitate to ask comrades in Canada to work on them ahead of French-language titles that are further out on the reprint schedule.

Only by acting in a centralized way can we have an assembly line capable of producing with the necessary quantity, speed, and quality.

Acknowledging that we must rapidly carry through this transformation of our production or lose the capacity to maintain our political arsenal will of course affect production of new books in the immediate few months. This holds true for the editorial work priorities of the Pathfinder staff in New York. And it will postpone some new *Cahiers de formation communiste* in French that comrades here in Canada have been discussing.

Before the year is out, we plan to publish not only issue no. 11 of *New Internationalist* — as I reported earlier, built around the 1990 SWP resolution, "U.S. Imperialism Lost the Cold War," — but also the corresponding editions of *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional*, and the Swedish-language *Ny International*. The lead article, "Ours is the Epoch of World Revolution," will take a look at how well that 1990 resolution stands up eight years later and deal with the deepening class conflict that is now accelerating. The issue will also contain the article, "Socialism: a Viable Option," by José Ramón Balaguer, head of the Central Committee Department of International Relations and member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba. Balaguer presented this article at an international workshop on Socialism as the 21st Century Approaches, that took place in Havana last October. The issues he deals with complement the other pieces in the magazine.

The comrades representing the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party who participated in the Havana conference Balaguer's talk inaugurated also had a major hand in drafting, presenting, and editing our 1990 resolution.

This year we will also publish the new book, *Capitalism's Growing World Disorder: Working-Class Politics in the 21st Century*, a collection of reports and talks by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes, spanning

the period between the end of the Iraq War and the explosion of the so-called peso crisis in Mexico at the end of 1994. It will add substantially to what is outlined in *New Internationalist* no. 11 and make available in an attractive, publicly useable form some of the main documents and reports we have adopted to guide our work that show the line we have marched along to get where we are today. By the end of the year or early next year we will publish that book in French and Spanish as well. That's seven new books in less than a year, which is no small feat. But it is the seven we need the most if we are to extend our mass work and use our magnificent backlist of titles taking us from 1848 to today.

We're working on other new titles as well, some of which we will be able to publish this year. They will not take priority, however, over whatever needs to be done to maximize the pace of the digital revolution.

We have three powerful interviews with generals of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba that we plan to publish first in the *Militant*, then as a small book. Pathfinder is preparing a new two-volume collection of speeches by Fidel Castro from the early years of the revolution, 1959–1970 — some of the richest materials ever on the line of march of the proletariat and the consolidation of the socialist revolution in Cuba. New editions of *Che Guevara Speaks* and of *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution* are in the works, as well as *The Assault on Moncada* by Cuban historian Mario Menéndez.

We want to do a new edition of *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention*. And a new pamphlet on the Puerto Rican independence struggle — which to me will be a high point, whatever its size, of our progress, as well as an arrow directly into the 21st century.

How fast we can print new books and pamphlets, however, depends on our capacity to move ahead rapidly on transforming the basic political arsenal of Pathfinder into electronic form.

The leadership challenge in the apparatus

We've concentrated in this report on the challenge of leading our international volunteer minibrigade — one destined to be transformed into a permanent, professional division of the rebel army.

The fact remains, however, that our biggest challenges lie not there but in the shop and Pathfinder, in the leadership of the party apparatus. Once the volunteer brigade gets rolling, it will rapidly bring real pressure to bear on the apparatus, which is what we count on. It is in the party leadership and the apparatus that the dead hand of the retreat weighs heaviest — as it always has at turning points such as this in the history of the communist movement. Breaking through the resistance to change will require a sustained leadership effort. It's easier to pretend that all we are talking about is a project for active supporters, who will organize and lead themselves, supposedly, and not bug us to do things differently, even if it might be better. We're tired and working insupportably long hours, but even that familiar habit remains more comfortable than the terror of the unknown.

As we're clarifying and deciding here today, however, what's involved is the centralized and disciplined line of march of a proletarian movement internationally, through which we will transform ourselves as we transform the production of books. The banner the digitizing brigade will carry and pass on to the apparatus when earned is "sí se puede" — of course this can be done, and done rapidly.

This is where some of the youngest and newest members of our movement who are taking on more responsibility in the print shop as well as branches and fractions make the biggest difference. They respond to this challenge with the same elation we feel about increased sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* to Case and Caterpillar workers, to pro-independence Puerto Rican students, to Black youth demonstrating against police brutality, to young fighters in Kosova. They are not comfortable with the modes of survival in a retreat; they are impatient — a one-sided but lesser problem.

I hope you all have a chance to hear veteran Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda speak sometime this year. He's being invited to a lot of gatherings, addressing meetings on the theme of "100 years of struggle since the Spanish-Cuban-American War" and other events. It's a genuine pleasure to hear him, because



Militant/Harvey McArthur
Two models of computer-to-plate (CTP) equipment of kind Pathfinder shop will soon acquire. Pathfinder print shop director Chris Hoepfner (top, left) examines printing plate produced through CTP machine at Virginia print shop.



Militant/Nels J. Anthony

he is a proletarian fighter. He spent as many years in the prisons of the Yankee empire as Nelson Mandela spent in the dungeons of the apartheid regime. And he came out fighting with as strong a conviction as when he went in. As he puts it, "I was in prison for many years, but I was never a prisoner."

Cancel Miranda learned English in prison. One of the things that helped him do that was reading the *Militant*. He was also one of the *Militant's* prison correspondents. The *Militant* may have been the only newspaper in the United States of America that defended the Puerto Rican nationalists when they carried out their armed demonstration against Yankee colonialism — their imaginatively sweeping recall effort — in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1954. So when we see a resurgence in the Puerto Rican independence struggle with fighters like Cancel Miranda and other veterans playing a role, it gives us a big boost. A renewed determination to march under the banner of "sí se puede."

As we make progress along this course, we will launch — soon — a capital fund to be able to buy the equipment necessary to revolutionize our production. But first we need *political* clarity on what we're doing and why, and how we're going to act to transform the party and our entire movement to respond to the historic shifts in world politics of the last decade. Then we will be able to raise the funds. If we're clear on where we're going, comrades and friends who have access to resources will be the first to contribute.

The members of the SWP and other parties in our international movement are under pressure from three directions today.

One source of pressure is our class — the accelerating resistance to capitalist exploitation, imperialist oppression, and national domination — and the resulting expanded political openings to build communist parties. It is the pressure to respond in a proletarian way to those opportunities. That's a wonderful pressure to have.

We are also under pressure, to a degree, from the party's close periphery and long-time supporters, who feel the winds of change and want to do more to help. They're saying, "Come on, let's get going." That is what makes it possible to cut back the size of the print shop and use volunteer labor to transfer the entire Pathfinder arsenal into electronic format and save it rather than having to give up big hunks of it. We must recognize — and act on that recognition — that our own Territorial Troops Militias are forming. The war of all the people is the only possible road for revolutionists, not just the professional army at its core.

Finally, we're under pressure from the youngest and newest cadres of the party, as well as the members of the Young Socialists. They don't bear the same scars from the period of retreat. If they have picked up some of our bad habits, these habits are still relatively easily changed, if we move quickly. Such habits are not so deeply ingrained as those rationalized by age, which even communists sometimes succumb to or temporarily weaken in front of. The pressure to close the gap between word and deed comes most strongly from the young cadres who are gaining confidence and learning to lead.

This is what we want. These are the pressures that will help us rise to the challenges we face and respond to the opportunities. There are no guarantees, of course. But the odds are qualitatively changed by the accelerating resistance of the working class the world over to what capitalism is trying to impose on us, combined with the defeat of the Stalinist murder machine and the obstacle that has been eliminated as a result.

Our response can only be, "Hallelujah!"

"Supporters of the communist movement want to help respond to new openings, to maximize our striking power."

Rally for tire strikers in Iowa

Continued from front page
circulated flyers to build the rally. More than 25 workers turned out.

A team of Local 164 strikers distributed rally flyers outside the John Deere Des Moines Works May 13. "We need to build solidarity," said Frank Holland, a member of United Auto Workers Local 450. Holland and another UAW member invited the strikers to come to their workplace after learning about Titan's recruiting of strikebreakers. Ten members of UAW Local 450 joined the rally.

Ten members of USWA Local 307 who work at the Goodyear tire plant in Topeka, Kansas, drove up to show their support. Local 307 member Denny Coffee said, "We felt it's important to show unity or we're going to lose." The steelworkers in Topeka are fighting the imposition of the 12-hour shifts now common throughout the rubber industry.

Representatives of USWA Local 303L at the Fidelity tire plant in Natchez, Mississippi, also came. Fidelity is being bought by Titan owner Taylor.

Curt Neumann, a member of Teamsters Local 90 at United Parcel Service (UPS) in Des Moines, said, "Several of us came because we wanted to find out more about this fight. We had good support during our strike, and we want to return the favor." The Team-

sters won a major strike victory against UPS last year.

Tom Smith, a member of UAW 974 at Caterpillar in East Peoria, Illinois came to the rally with another UAW supporter. Smith was one of the 160 unionists fired by Caterpillar during the seven year contract struggle there. UAW members at Caterpillar forced the company to rehire the "illegally terminated" as part of the contract settlement reached this year.

Speakers at the rally included two Democratic Party politicians and a number of labor officials.

Jeff Doornenbal, president of USWA Local 310 at Bridgestone/Firestone, spoke to "reaffirm that 310 will be beside you all the way through this damned thing."

John Peno, president of Local 164, closed out the program. He restated the unionists' demands around job security; relief from forced, 60-hour workweeks; an end to the inequities of the two tier wage system; and a pension plan with medical benefits for future retirees.

Peno reported that more than 70 area businesses had placed placards supporting the strike in their store windows, and that 1,400 yard signs reading "We support Titan workers in their fight for justice" had been produced. The signs have started to sprout up on lawns around Des Moines. Peno encour-

aged rally participants to return to Labor Ready for strike breaker hiring scheduled the next day.

Rick Swin, a mechanic with 10 years at Titan said, "It's my third time on strike but this one is different."

Another striker said, "Taylor thought we'd roll over, but now he's worried."

Ray Parsons is a member of USWA Local 310 and is the Socialist Workers candidate for Iowa Secretary of Agriculture. Amanda Ulman is a member of UAW Local 450 and is the Socialist Workers candidate for Iowa State Representative District 70.



Militant/Ray Parsons
May 16 march from USWA hall to Titan plant

UAW strike in Tennessee

Continued from front page
up by a proposed 25 percent increase in workers' payments for medical insurance.

According to strikers the 70-cent raise wouldn't apply to new hires and workers with less than two years seniority, but the increased insurance costs would. "The company is trying to 'hoodoo' the new employees!" said striker Gary Mercier, who installs fuel filters in the new trucks. He has worked at the plant for three years.

"I've got a strong disagreement with separating people — it's not right. All it does is weaken us," added Gary Cox, a three-year employee who wires truck engines.

Pickets said the number one issue is getting health insurance for retirees. Peterbilt workers have no health coverage when they retire. Another objective is a 401K retirement plan, in addition to the current pension plan.

As these reporters talked with the pickets one car after another honked in support of

the strikers. One motorist hollered, "Stay out 'til they give you what you want!"

According to Mercier, Peterbilt has back orders for 25,300 trucks. Overtime work is voluntary at the Nashville plant. "I can get by without overtime if they'd give all these people driving by a job that don't have one," said Cox.

As of this writing, there are no negotiations taking place. Strikers said the company wanted a strike to occur now because Peterbilt is reconstructing the paint department and wouldn't be able to produce finished trucks anyway for several weeks.

When asked what they would do if the company doesn't come up with an acceptable contract offer after the construction is completed, striker Mike Crawford said, "Then they'll get farther behind on their back orders."

Rich Stuart is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 12014 in Birmingham, Alabama.

Palestinians protest occupation

Continued from front page

14, with tanks and armored personnel carriers deployed along the Gaza border. They opened fire on protesters with live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets, tear gas, concussion grenades, batons, and mounted cops.

The actions, called as a "million person march," drew residents from throughout West Bank and Gaza. Manara Square in Ramallah was the site of the day's largest event, where tens of thousands of Palestinians gathered for an address from Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) head Yasser Arafat. "50 Years of Steadfastness and Resistance" and "Freedom for prisoners in Israeli jails" were among the signs in the crowd there.

Some of the biggest face-offs took place in East Jerusalem, which Palestinians claim as their capital. Marchers there tried to pass through a main shopping strip, but were blocked by Israeli riot cops. Uniformed school girls chanted at the cops, "PLO! Israel No!" and "With soul, with blood we will redeem you, Palestine! Jerusalem is Arab! Freedom and national unity!" As a detachment of police moved against the crowd, they were pelted with stones. Police responded by firing a salvo of plastic bullets.

The same day on the steps of the National Palace Hotel, Israeli mounted police and other cops attacked Palestinians who were observing a moment of silence in memory of their fellow patriots killed by Zionist troops.

The Israeli army sealed off all Palestinian areas in Gaza and the West Bank during the demonstrations to prevent travel in either direction. One group of women tried to return to their home towns and villages, which are now within the Israeli borders, and held up placards listing 400 Palestinian villages demolished as part of the founding of Israel in 1948.

In the weeks leading up to the May 14, 1948, declaration of the state of Israel, 200,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes in what became Israeli territory. In the war that followed, more than half a million more were dispossessed. The 133,000 Palestinians who remained within the Israeli borders were reduced to second-class status. Eleven minutes after the declaration of the Zionist state, Washington recognized the government. Nearly two decades later, Tel Aviv made another land grab, seizing the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, as well as the Golan Heights from Syria in a six-day war in 1967.

Israeli aggression condemned

The Palestinian Authority (PA) immediately issued a statement condemning the government assault on the Palestinians' 50th anniversary protests. "Confronting our peaceful march with live ammunition and the awful crime of killing our people in cold blood will never prevent us of continuing our struggle to get the cancer of the occupation..."

out of our land."

The Israeli aggression also drew international attention. Iranian foreign minister Kaman Kharrazi spoke out against the killings, likening them to the measures used to establish the Israeli state.

The South African Foreign Affairs Department released a statement of condemnation.

Continued on page 14

MILITANT LABOR FORUM

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Building a Revolutionary Youth Movement Worldwide. Speakers: Olga Russi, Puerto Rican independence activist, student, California Institute of Technology; Omar Quijada, affirmative action activist, student, Valley College; Heather Martin, member, Young Socialists. Sponsored by the Young Socialists. Friday, May 29, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. (213) 380-9460.

IOWA

Des Moines

Uprising in Protests by Workers and Youth

Shakes Indonesian Regime. Fri., May 29, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. 2724 Douglas Avenue. Donation: \$4. Tel: (515) 277-4600.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

The Increasing Resistance of Workers to Bosses Attacks from Iowa to Australia. Speaker: Ted Leonard, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 29, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

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Detroit

150 Years of the Communist Manifesto. Speak-

ers: William Schmitt, Young Socialists; others. Sat., May 30, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Both events to be held at 7414 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$5. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Workers Step Up Resistance to Bosses Attacks. Speakers: Rose Ana Berbeo, Socialist Workers candidate for Governor of New York, also a member of International Association of Machinists at Northwest Airlines. Fri., May 29, 7:30 p.m. 59 4th Avenue (near Bergen) in Brooklyn. (near the Atlantic and Pacific subway stops). Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

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Indonesia workers break rules

The fall of the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia, a victory that working people are celebrating around the world, marks the opening of a deep-rooted process, not the end. Workers in Indonesia have lost their fear. Beginning to sense their power, they are entering the arena of politics by the millions. They are increasingly raising their demands in the streets, in the factories, in the countryside. This giant — our class — is a terrifying nightmare for the imperialist rulers, from Washington to Tokyo. It's what the big-business media reacts to every time they nervously repeat the fact that Indonesia is the world's fourth-most populous nation.

A few months ago, U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright — who offered parting words of praise for Suharto's blood-soaked regime hours before he resigned — proclaimed the United States "the indispensable nation" leading "those people around the world who follow the rules" and punishing those who don't. But to Washington's horror the Indonesian people *changed the rules*. They forced Suharto to revoke the price increases for fuel and basic services that the International Monetary Fund had demanded as a condition for a \$43 billion "bail-out," and then they brought down the regime.

Today's events are rooted in deep changes that have occurred in Indonesia over the last 30 years. The growth of industry and capitalist agriculture has produced a huge, potentially powerful working class. Responding to layoffs and brutal working conditions, groups of workers concentrated in big industrial areas began to organize in recent years, despite Suharto's ban on most unions. Now the working class is stepping onto the political stage and is not about to leave. Workers will press harder for their right to organize unions, for jobs, for social and political demands.

In 1965, when the capitalist rulers of Indonesia unleashed a bloody coup and put Suharto in power, slaughtering half a million people, the working class was dealt a

defeat that was felt worldwide. For three decades, the specter of 1965 instilled fear among many working people. But today, the new generation of workers in Indonesia is not marked by the scars of that defeat and is reacting with increasing boldness to the intolerable social conditions generated by capitalism. In addition, they are no longer blocked by the counterrevolutionary obstacle of Stalinism, which has disintegrated worldwide. It was the class-colaborationist role of the Indonesian Communist Party, a Stalinist organization claiming more than 3 million members at the time, that disarmed working people in face of the 1965 capitalist crackdown.

Students, defying the Suharto regime's repressive apparatus with mass protests, have served as a detonator for the current upsurge. When tens of thousands of working people exploded in revolt in Jakarta and other urban centers, venting their hatred at the property and symbols of the rich (described in the big-business press as "riots"), Suharto's days were over, and Washington quickly told him to step down to try to stave off deeper protests.

The imperialists' main concern now is how to force Indonesians to accept brutal economic austerity measures — and prevent the shock waves from accelerating the financial meltdown throughout Asia.

The main subversive force in Indonesia, however, is capitalism itself and the normal workings of its economic laws, which lead to crisis. While felt most sharply in Asia, this worldwide crisis is increasingly destabilizing the entire financial structure of imperialism, especially in Europe. These conditions fuel the resistance by workers and farmers.

As imperialists search for a stable replacement for Suharto to impose their dictates, working people worldwide should stand shoulder to shoulder with our fighting brothers and sisters in Indonesia. Above all, we should demand cancellation of Indonesia's \$137 billion foreign debt to imperialist banks.

Suharto is forced to resign

Continued from Page 3

the decision to resign," declared Speaker of the House Harmoko on state-prepared national television May 18. Harmoko, who is also chairman of Golkar, was a long-time Suharto loyalist and supporter.

According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Harmoko's move followed a meeting on May 17 involving senior military officials who voiced support for removing Suharto from power.

A layer of the U.S. ruling-class figures also joined the chorus for the ouster of Suharto. "President Suharto has got to go," said U.S. senator John Kerry during a May 18 meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The editors of the *New York Times* called for Suharto to "set in motion a fully democratic transition and then resign."

U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright implied a similar view in a May 20 speech at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. "President Suharto has given much to his coun-

try over the past 30 years," she said. Now he should act to "preserve his legacy."

Suharto came to power in 1965 after organizing a blood-bath of at least 500,000 workers and peasants.

Meanwhile, Washington is keeping military power at hand. Clinton administration officials said the U.S. military was prepared to use troops, helicopters, and Navy ships for a "rescue" mission for U.S. citizens if airports in Jakarta are shut down.

Three amphibious ships, helicopters, and 10,600 U.S. GIs have traveled to the region for military exercises with nearby Thailand. "They are prepared and they do have contingency plans," said Marine Corps commander Gen. Charles Krulak.

The Australian imperialists are also positioning for possible military intervention with three frigates, two patrol boats, eight C-130 Hercules planes, a Boeing 707 and 250 RAAF, and troops ready for action.

Palestinians protest occupation

Continued from Page 13

nation May 15, saying, "The existence of Israeli settlers with an accompanying military presence in Palestinian areas such as Gaza, Bethlehem, and Hebron can only serve to heighten the risk of confrontation.... This in turn emphasizes the need for a speedy Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian land as envisaged under the Oslo accords."

Under those accords signed in 1995 by Tel Aviv and the PLO, the Israeli government was supposed to make three pullouts from occupied territories within approximately two years of the agreement, leaving Palestinians with up to 91 percent of the land in the West Bank. But so far the PA fully controls less than 3 percent of those lands, in scattered patches. Another 24 percent is administratively run by the Palestinian Authority, but is subordinate to Israeli military command.

In Lebanon thousands of Palestinian refugees joined protest actions beginning May 14. In Baddawi and al Bared refugee camps located in the northern city Tripoli, people demonstrated inside the camps. Students also rallied, releasing helium balloons carrying names of many Palestinian towns and villages overrun by the Zionist government of Israel.

Recent "peace negotiations" between Israeli and Palestinian officials brokered by Washington have not resulted in any pullbacks of Israeli troops. A rumor was circulated and picked up in some big-business press that Netanyahu agreed to withdraw his forces from 13 per-

cent of the West Bank, provided it was agreed to be the final pullback. The Palestinian Authority rejected any agreement that excluded the further handover of land to Palestinian control. Netanyahu and James Rubin, spokesman for U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, both quickly held press conferences denying the rumor. U.S. officials had earlier proposed a 13 percent troop withdrawal at meeting in Washington, to be followed by another pullback. Tel Aviv rejected that offer, claiming that any withdrawal exceeding 9 percent posed "security risks."

In a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, U.S. vice president Albert Gore declared, "America stands by Israel, now and forever.... Our special relationship is indestructible.... It doesn't depend on the peace process. It transcends the peace process."

Gore lauded the establishment of the Zionists state as a "miracle... [that] grew democracy in the desert." Gore then announced plans to increase U.S. military aid to Israel, which now stands at \$1.8 billion a year.

Meanwhile, several opposition parties submitted no confidence motions against Netanyahu to the Israeli parliament. These include the Labor, Meretz, and Hadash parties, all of whom accuse the premier of botching up "peace" talks and not accepting the 13 percent pullout. At the same time, rightist politicians in Israel have threatened to topple the regime if any pullout beyond 9 percent is considered.

'Free Kosova' march in N.Y. reinforced imperialist war efforts

Michael Italie is correct in his letter, published in last week's issue, which pointed out that an April 24 "Freedom for Kosova" rally in New York was anticommunist and pro-imperialist. As he explains, the article "Youth in N.Y. say: 'Freedom for Kosova,'" in the May 11 *Militant* was wrong in presenting it as a progressive action.

The *Militant* supports the struggle by Albanians in Kosova for national self-determination, which strengthens working people and is an obstacle to attempts to restore capitalism in the region. The paper has consistently opposed NATO intervention against Yugoslavia, which big-business forces promote under the cover of aiding the peoples of Kosova and Bosnia against the Serb chauvinist onslaught by the regime of Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade.

The April 24 demonstration, however, as Italie notes,

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

did "not help working people in Kosova, Yugoslavia, or the United States." The facts reported in the article confirm his assessment. The rally was sponsored by a group, the Albanian American Student Organization, which calls for U.S. intervention against Yugoslavia. They issued an anticommunist leaflet decrying "serbo-slav communist hegemony in the Balkans," which was distributed at the rally and to passersby. The president of the sponsoring group called from the platform for a military assault by Washington on Serbia "like they did in Iraq." Other speakers, including a representative from the liberal Human Rights Watch, presented similar views. The demonstrators marched to the Yugoslav mission to the United Nations, playing into the imperialist war drive against the Yugoslav workers state.

The *Militant* article highlighted the youthful composition of the New York rally, as though that made it progressive regardless of its political content. But youth are not an independent force separate from the two major classes, the capitalists and the working class. *Militant* readers can probably think of a number of other examples of reactionary political actions involving young people. On the other hand, there are plenty of labor struggles and other political activities to go to that do advance the interests of working people, especially now that working-class resistance has picked up. Many young people are involved in these fights, like the teenagers who struck at McDonald's in Macedonia, Ohio.

In recent months the *Militant* has reported on how communist workers in North America discussed and confronted a problem of bending to the war pressures and economic nationalism of the imperialist rulers in their own country, a course that was rationalized by the argument of looking for youth and some "action." This had involved participation in a variety of protest actions that had a protectionist, nationalist character — directed against the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation trade group, and "sweatshops" owned by companies doing business in Asia and Latin America, among others.

As with those previous actions, it was impossible for communists participating in the April 24 New York demonstration on Kosova to differentiate themselves from the pro-intervention, pro-imperialist forces who organized it. It was not the kind of activity one would want to encourage co-workers, activists in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence, or other fellow working-class fighters to attend.

Other demonstrations of this character, with overwhelmingly Albanian participation, have taken place and will probably occur again in the United States and other countries. Class-conscious workers do not support them or encourage participation in such actions. We oppose them politically and explain that they are a blow to the struggle to end the national oppression of Albanians in Kosova, which we support unconditionally.

What can be pursued instead is the greater opportunities today to meet a number of individual Albanian immigrant workers in the United States who are interested in the communist perspective presented in the *Militant*. They can be found in factories, campuses, and working-class neighborhoods around the country. But as Italie correctly points out, supporting and participating in a demonstration that links freedom for Kosova with imperialist intervention can only disorient those who are open to a working-class course.

— MARTÍN KOPPEL

Ontario: 4,000 unionists rally against gov't cuts

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

tems Contract Association (ISCA). The drywallers are members of the Residential Alliance of Building Trades Unions (RABTU), which includes union locals representing plumbers, sheet metal, iron workers, siding installers, trim carpenters

fusals of shipping companies to negotiate. Numerous barge accidents have occurred in the course of the strike, which began April 4, as relatively inexperienced or overworked pilots replace strikers. One incident has triggered an FBI investigation resulting in a "finding" of sabotage.

"Pilots Agree Association invited 98 towing companies to meet with its elected officers to discuss issues of safety, dangerously downsized crews and inadequate payscales. No one replied," wrote Fred Hunter, secretary-treasurer of Pilots Agree, in a letter to the editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 2.

Pilots Agree, which has a membership of about 1,200 towboat pilots and captains, are among some 3,000 who work towing barges filled with coal, grain, and other bulk cargo. Crews also include a number of deck hands many of whom belong to the Seafarers International Union.

According to Pilots Agree spokespeople quoted in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, river pilots are under increased pressure because companies are requiring them to push longer strings of barges, making navigation more difficult. At the same time Coast Guard operating rules have become more strict thus jeopardizing the pilots' licenses and jobs in the event of an accident.

Pilots typically earn \$50,000 a year according to the union. But to reach that level of pay, a pilot often works 12-hour days for 30 days straight while the boat remains in continuous operation with a second pilot. After a 30-day stint on a boat, a pilot usually has 30 days off.

Pilots Agree is not recognized by any of the towing companies as a bargaining agent nor does the new organization have a strike fund. Strikers are living off their savings and some of the strikers have been summarily fired by the companies. The association has filed complaints for this practice with the National Labor Relations Board.

A string of barge accidents along the upper Mississippi River have occurred in the period since the strike began. The most extensive involved a chain-reaction April 24 dislodging of 137 barges moored just south of the Anheuser-Busch brewery in St. Louis. The barges careened down the Mississippi River for 11 miles doing about \$3 million in damage according to the

Meatpackers stay strong on pickets in Florida



Militant/Angel Lariscy

On May 9, some 200 workers from various unions joined the picket of the United Food and Commercial Workers who have been on strike against Lykes Meats for one month. The day before strikers voted unanimously to reject the company's new offer of a 21-month contract with a 20-cent raise. "This isn't about wages anymore," said striker Harry Gibson. "They're out to break the union."

ON THE PICKET LINE

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

ST. CATHARINES, Ontario — More than 4,000 unionists and others gathered here May 1 for the 10th in a series of Days of Action organized by Ontario unions protesting the continuing cuts to health, education, and social services by provincial premier Michael Harris.

Pickets shut down all three General Motors plants beginning with the night shift going in on April 30. "Union people went around and shut gates, chaining them so people couldn't get in or out," said Ivan Grant, a GM employee picketing the downtown post office. He told the *Militant* that the main GM plant in St. Catharines had over 8,900 employees at its peak in the 1980s, but that number has shrunk to around 4,000. GM plans to reduce it further to 2,500 by 1999, he said.

City transit and most municipal offices were also picketed out. While foremen at the GM plant had been threatening workers with disciplinary or other consequences for participation in the day, most employers did not confront the unions' actions with much resistance.

Speakers at the rally included representatives of union and community groups, as well as the brother of Dudley George, a native activist killed by the cops.

Toronto drywall and trim workers strike over wages

TORONTO — Flying picket squads of striking drywallers and trim carpenters have shut down work on more than 200 unionized residential construction sites in the Toronto area, including at 30 high rise apartment and condominium projects. *Militant* correspondents visited the picket line May 14 at a major apartment construction site in north Toronto. A few trim carpenters were on the line. No work was being done on the site. Earlier in the week 80 pickets had turned up to stop work on the project.

The strike began May 1, when 2,000 drywallers who are members of Drywall Local 675 downed their tools against the construction bosses and members of the Interior Sys-

ters, roofers, and painters. All the contracts in residential construction expired April 30.

For the first week of the strike there were no picket lines. To put more pressure on the ISCA bosses, 300 trim carpenters, members of Carpenters Local 27, went on strike and set up roving picket lines with the drywallers on May 11. The strikers aim to tie up residential construction throughout the area. All the union locals of the RABTU have agreed to honor picket lines.

The main issue in the escalating strike is wages. The construction bosses have labeled the strikers' demands as "outrageous and greedy," claiming the workers want a 41 percent raise over three years, and that this would raise the cost of a house by \$1,000. The bosses say they are offering a 7.5 percent raise.

"They are lying," said one picket who didn't want his name used. "You can't figure it like that. Drywallers work on a piece rate. We haven't had a raise in our rate for seven years. Right now we get 14 cents a square foot. We are demanding a rate raise to 17.5 cents. Our demands would only increase the cost of a house by \$150."

The average rate for the trim carpenters amounts to about \$24.50 an hour. They are demanding an increase that would bring the average to \$29 per hour over a three-year contract. Pickets say that housing designs have become more complex, with higher ceilings and other changes that slow down how much drywall can be put up in day by an individual worker. This cuts back on income. They also point out that they don't get a guaranteed 40 hours work each week. If they don't work because of the weather, they don't get paid. They can count on work about eight months out of the year.

It takes about five months to build a house. If the strike continues, at least 3,700 homes with closing dates around May 19 will not be finished. The stakes are high for the construction bosses since housing starts have increased by about 11 percent this year.

Companies refuse to talk with striking boat pilots

ST. LOUIS — A strike by towboat pilots — members of the Pilots Agree Association — on the Mississippi River and its tributaries, western rivers, and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway entered its fifth week May 9 with the continued re-

St. Louis Post-Dispatch report.

The FBI investigated this incident, claiming it found evidence of sabotage to the mooring line of one of the barges, according to press reports. The FBI said it is looking at suspects from either the union or company camps. Hunter, of Pilots Agree, was quoted in the local press on the FBI finding stating, "If a shore line had been cut a whole fleet of barges would drift downstream. This tells me that an inexperienced deck hand tied a single barge off improperly and it rocked loose."

Pittsburgh home care workers walk out

PITTSBURGH — Twenty-nine members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 23 are on strike against the St. Paul of the Cross Manor Personal Care Home here in Pittsburgh. The unionists — nurses aids, dietary and maintenance workers, and housekeepers — are on strike for a contract and because of unfair labor practices.

Most are classified as part-time but end up working at least 40-hour weeks. Part-timers do not receive health-care benefits for themselves or their families. One dietary worker explained that a full-time nurse's aid is married to a supervisor and they get full medical benefits for themselves and their families, while the company will not do the same for other full-timers. She added, "scheduling is based on favoritism and one woman who couldn't work second shift because of a child-care conflict was fired."

Another worker told *Militant* reporters that one of the strikers left her eye glasses in the facility and called to get them. She was fired over the phone and told that any personal property left on the premises belonged to the company.

Wages start at \$5.15 an hour, and one housekeeper told us that she was making that amount after four

years because her starting wage at that time was \$4.40 an hour. The strikers said they want to provide the home's residents, most of whom are elderly, with the best possible care, but feel that what they are fighting for is fair treatment and dignity as workers.

N.Y. taxi drivers protest new city regulations

NEW YORK — A yellow taxi was a rare sight on the streets here May 13. Reacting to new legislation proposed by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's administration, New York City taxi cab drivers conducted a one-day strike. Participation in the work stoppage was high. Only eight of the 215 cabs that are normally leased from Midtown Operating Corporation for a morning shift went out, for instance.

The drivers are protesting new rules that would increase their insurance liability, require drug testing for new drivers at their own expense, and increase fines to up to \$1,000 for various infractions.

Mayor Giuliani denounced the strike as "a demonstration for the purpose of being able to drive recklessly." Driver Javid Tariq told the *New York Times*, "These rules are not so much prosafety as antidriver. It is easy to be antidriver because people do not consider us human."

The United Yellow Cab Driver's Association has called for a demonstration May 21 to oppose the new regulations.

Kolya Ramirez-Hughes, a member of the Young Socialists in St. Catharines; John Steele, a member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in Toronto; Jim Garrison, a member of the United Auto Workers in St. Louis; Edwin Fruit, a member of the IAM in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania; and Nancy Rosenstock, a member of the IAM in New York, contributed to this column.

LETTERS

On the ramp at Northwest

Northwest Airlines (NWA) made \$71 million in the first quarter of 1998, an increase of 9.9 percent over the same period last year, continuing a trend since a concession contract was wrested from workers in 1993. John Dasburg, president and CEO of NWA, was awarded a pay increase of around 16-20 percent in 1997, bringing his salary to \$499,572 for that year.

Meanwhile, workers have been told to be patient for a new contract. The old one expired in October 1996. After 18 months that wears a bit thin.

Here in Chicago at O'Hare air-

port, we got our bonus: a round of layoffs. As of June 7, 22 ramp positions will be closed down, one-fifth of the ramp employees, and the flight attendants base will be cut by about 90 positions. The main talking points of a new contract are around a decent pay increase that is retroactive to October 1996 and an increase in pension.

In response to the slowness of negotiations, the work safe campaign continues. Workers on the ramp started to wear buttons that mark the number of days without a contract, strike graffiti is appearing on notice boards and airplanes. Hungry for news, articles from

newspapers and the internet about NWA are posted on the walls. The pilots are wearing "I voted" buttons, a reference to their strike ballot, and have stickers with SUMMER crossed out by a red line with a caption: Turn Up The Heat.

The May 11 *Militant* article was well received and widely read. It's good to make a connection with workers throughout the system and hear what they're up to.

One thing about the anti-Lorenzo buttons: Richard Anderson, a company lawyer with Eastern, helped to transfer assets from Eastern to Continental. Well, he now is John Dasburg's vice president of techni-

cal operations.

*Dave Lee
Chicago, Illinois*

Free Basque prisoner

We have been told that Basque political prisoner Ramón Aldasoro, being held at a detention center in Miami, is no longer in solitary confinement.

We take this opportunity to thank all the people in the letter campaign, and the U.S. grassroots groups and individuals who, together with The Basque Congress for Peace, are lobbying our members of Congress, as well as civic and religious leaders,

to express concern about Ramón's hard living conditions in jail.

We must keep up with the campaigns. Ramón faces imminent extradition to Spain, and we cannot let the Spanish government go unchallenged.

*Lagun Batzuen
The Basque Congress for Peace*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

'We're stronger because we stood up'

Workers and youth in Denmark assess two-week general strike

BY ANITA ÖSTLING,
AND GEORGE WHITE

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — After a two-week general strike involving more than a half million workers, many unionists and young people here are weighing what was accomplished. The workers struck for a sixth week of paid vacation. A government-imposed settlement on May 7 granted two additional days, plus three more for workers with children.

"This was a strike about freedom, not about money," explained Søren Haar, a baggage handler at Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS), as he and about 20 other workers ate lunch at the workers cafeteria at Copenhagen International Airport. Haar and his coworkers are members of the Specialarbejder Forbundet i Danmark (SID), the union of semiskilled and unskilled workers. "It was a matter of dignity. We have lives to live, not just be a slave for the boss. Sure we work, we work hard. But there's more to life than work."

Unemployment in Denmark stands at about 7 percent. The additional vacation time also would have forced Danish employers to hire more workers, Haar said.

While many workers expressed anger and frustration at the government's intervention to halt the strike, which involved industrial workers at privately-owned companies, an air of confidence and satisfaction pervades most of the workplaces these reporters visited. "When we stand together," said Glennie Tietze, a 25-year-old contract office cleaner at the Tuborg brewery, "we are much stronger than the bosses."

The strike came in the context of the drive by the European capitalists to patch together the European Union (EU) and the new currency, the Euro. This shaky alliance is designed to create a protective trade pact against Wall Street's dominance in Europe. In order to better compete with their imperialist rivals in the United States, the European employer classes seek to use this bloc to drive down the living standards and working conditions of workers throughout Europe. At every turn, however, this alliance has begun coming apart at the seams as a result of cutthroat rivalries between competing national capitalist interests in Europe and sharp resistance to austerity policies by workers and farmers.

Later this month a vote will be held here on whether or not Denmark should adopt the Amsterdam Treaty, the latest attempt to cobble together the European Union. Nearly all wings of the capitalist class and their parties have been campaigning for a "Yes" vote. So has the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD), a party funded and based upon the trade unions, but which loyally conducts the business of the capitalist state. The Danish general strike struck a body-blow to the EU campaign.

In a stronger position to fight

"We are stronger now to fight against austerity measures," said Steen Lundgren, a construction painter working at a site at



Militant/George White
Construction workers at Tuborg brewery May 14. "We're stronger to fight against austerity" because of strike, said Steen Lundgren (top row, second from left).

the Tuborg brewery. A half dozen of his coworkers gave their opinions to these reporters as they sat inside a trailer on the work site eating their lunch.

The work stoppage began April 27 after members of the LO trade union federation voted down a government-mediated deal that had been reached by the bosses and the union officials. That 55 percent of the unionists voted "no" clearly shocked both the employers and the union officials. The walkout, which was the first general strike in Denmark in 13 years, unfolded with little leadership offered by official union bodies. Government workers and others in state-owned enterprises were not part of the strike.

On May 11 workers returned to their jobs after the Social Democratic-led parliament voted to impose a modified version of the bosses' "final offer" that was earlier rejected by the unions. While additional vacation days were granted, there are many qualifications and exemptions. In addition, the previously agreed upon increase in employer payments to the pension fund was reduced.

"If we stayed out longer we could have won more," said Elvin Hansen at the gate to the Carlsberg brewery in Copenhagen. Hansen has worked at the plant since 1959 and is a member of the brewery workers union. "For many workers this was their first strike and the expectations were high. But the government, which is run by the Social Democratic Party, a workers party, acted as the errand boy for the employers."

Working-class votes in last March's general elections led to the re-election of the SPD government, which had been widely expected to lose. Many workers saw these results as a way to kick-start the negotiations with the employers federation, which had stalled. Glennie Tietze said, "If the unions had gone on strike even one more week, it would have made a difference. There was still gas and food in the stores. One more week and the whole country would have seen the workers' power."

This widespread feeling led to some workers walking off the job on Monday, May 11, the day they were set to return to work. These one-day strikes involved 6,200 workers in 96 workplaces. The biggest involved 800 workers at the Lindø shipyard in Odense, Denmark's second-largest city; 370 workers at Aalborg Boiler in Aalborg; and 350 at Radiometer in western Copenhagen. Two thousand workers protested outside parliament as the vote to intervene was taken and 400 more demonstrated the following Monday. Almost all of these protests arose spontaneously.

Other forms of protest took place. For example, the baggage handlers at Copenhagen International Airport decided to cut off their yearly, automatic contributions to the Social Democratic Party.

At Radiometer, a manufacturer of medi-

cal equipment, workers were eager to talk about their decision to hold a one-day protest strike. "We were angry at what the government did," said Søren Jensen, a worker in the forge and a member of the metal workers union. "There was a suggestion made by some of us that we protest this. So that morning we had a meeting of 300 workers. A majority voted that we go home."

Anger at gov't intervention in strike

"Our one-day strike was successful," said Egon Petersen, also a member of the metal workers union at Radiometer, "because it told the bosses and the union what we want."

Sune Skulund, however, wasn't so sure. "This strike hurt the shareholders," said the 24-year-old technician, "and many of us have shares, too."

Another view was put forward by Per Løngren, the top local official of the metal workers union at the plant. "Whether the general strike was a success is difficult to judge. But surely it did give us some more space for local negotiations."

Almost every unionist these reporters spoke with said that workers will vote against the Amsterdam Treaty in the upcoming referendum as a measure of protest. "I think the government will get a nasty surprise on May 28," said Glennie Tietze.

Opinions against the treaty were strongly held, but the views expressed were often contradictory. Both the official "Yes" and "No" forces are running chauvinist "Denmark-first" campaigns with a distinctly anti-immigrant thrust.

Many workers in Denmark view the plans for the European Union as in direct conflict with their interests. They see the drive against wages and working conditions that follows in its wake. But many workers these reporters spoke with tended to echo the employer's propaganda that the way forward is to protect "national" interests rather than seeing workers in other countries as natural allies in a common fight.

Henrik Petersen, a young baggage handler at SAS said, "I will vote against the Amsterdam Treaty for two reasons: I want to punish the government for intervening in the general strike and I don't want open borders." Erik-Jan Boemaars, a young cleaner at Tuborg who is from Holland, put it this way, "Of course the European Union will be good for the eastern European countries, but this is the wrong way. We will lose our national identity as Danish or Dutch."

Often such views were expressed in nearly the same breath as explanations of the crucial role that unity across divisions in the workforce in Denmark played in the gains won in the general strike.

"I think the workers have grown closer," said Søren Jensen, standing in the parking lot at Radiometer and expressing his views at some length. "We're now standing to-

gether. Me, I'm a supporter of the SPD. But many of my coworkers support the conservative parties. We're divided in many ways. But now we're united and getting stronger."

The gains won by the general strike are further illustrated by the splits and divisions that have opened up in the employer class. Some ruling-class layers are bitterly complaining that too many concessions were made to the workers. An opinion piece by leading financial analysts in *Aktuelt*, a Copenhagen daily, explained, "The intervention is expensive and counters the long-term economic strategy of the government that we should work more." Furthermore, the authors warn, "The extra free days will encourage groups in the public sector to make the same demands."

"Conflict might split the DA!" read a headline in the financial daily, *Børsen*. DA, the Danish Employers Federation, is the bosses' outfit that negotiated with the union federation. The Retail and Service Federation, the DA's third-largest division, is considering leaving the group because of dissatisfaction with how the walkout was handled.

EU campaign scapegoats immigrants

Fissures have also opened up among bourgeois forces calling for a "Yes" vote in the May 28 referendum. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) has the leading role in this campaign but strong opposition by tens of thousands of its members in the wake of the general strike has provoked a crisis. The Conservative Party and Venstre, a liberal party, have sharply criticized the SPD for "waging a weak campaign." Indeed the main slogan of the pro-European Union campaign — "The Safe Choice: Yes" — is hardly stirring.

The slogan of the official "No" vote campaign is, "If you're not sure, vote No." The political forces running this effort are a variety of liberals, leftists and rightists whose arguments are marked by demagogic attacks on immigration and appeals to Danish nationalism. Those in favor of the treaty have joined the chauvinist bandwagon. SPD prime minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen was quoted in Copenhagen newspapers saying that a vote for the Amsterdam Treaty would lead to less immigration from Turkey, the Balkans, and the Middle East.

The united strike action by half a million unionized workers, on the other hand, and the tone of confidence and combativity it inspired, offers another way forward. Despite the lack of leadership by the existing union officialdom, workers have found a new confidence and sense of their own potential power. The door is now opened wider for a vanguard layer of workers to look at the world in a more conscious way and begin to chart a working-class road forward.

What the strike has opened up in politics was expressed by two high school students who stopped by a communist literature table at the University of Copenhagen. "I liked it that the unions stood up to the employers," said Ina Lingren. "It's changed a lot in Denmark now. Things aren't going to be the same." She and her friend then said they planned to visit Cuba in the next year or so in order to learn more about the socialist revolution there and its lessons for young people in Denmark.

Radiometer worker Egon Petersen's evaluation was, "We didn't get much in the general strike. But in the long term we will be stronger because we stood up."

Henrik Petersen at SAS urged these reporters to publicize the lessons of the 11-day general strike as widely as possible. "It's good that people learn about our strike. The boss's press doesn't want to write about it. That's because it's contagious."

Anita Östling is a member of the Transport Workers Union in Stockholm, Sweden. Lars Erlandsson, a member of the Food Workers Union in Stockholm, contributed to this article.

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