

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

30 years since victory of Vietnamese people: 1975 SWP statement

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## U.S. gov't curbs personal bankruptcy protection

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

HOUSTON— In the name of “restoring integrity to the bankruptcy system,” U.S. president George Bush signed the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005 into law April 20. The measure further restricts the ability of working people and many in the middle class to get out from under crushing debts. At the same time, the law maintains safeguards for bankruptcy filers who own capital or have enough wealth to shield it in trust funds or expensive properties.

The move comes as millions of working people in the United States are facing an ever-increasing personal debt burden fed by stagnating wages and benefits, the ballooning cost of health insurance, and rising

housing and other basic costs of living.

The bill is the largest rewrite of the U.S. bankruptcy laws since 1978. Its passage signifies a victory for the banks and credit card and auto financing companies that drafted the legislation and have been pushing for passage of some version of it over the past decade. The bill won bipartisan support, passing by a 302-126 vote in the House of Representatives and a 74-25 margin in the Senate.

The new law is aimed at preventing many who file personal bankruptcy from making use of Chapter 7 of the bankruptcy code, which allows individuals to forfeit some assets in exchange for wiping out much of their debt based on a decision

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## Socialists to launch ballot efforts in New Jersey, Boston

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaigns in New Jersey and Boston are launching drives in the first week of May to get their candidates on the ballot. Young socialists and other canvassers have already hit the pavement and started campaigning for the working-class alternative to the Democrats, Republicans, and other pro-capitalist candidates.

“We’re asking supporters of the socialist campaign to join us in the streets, starting May 7, to put Angela Lariscy on the ballot for governor of New Jersey and Michael Ortega for state assembly in District 28,” said state SWP campaign director Ved Dookhun.

The socialist campaign in New Jersey plans to collect 1,600 signatures for Lariscy and 200 for Ortega—twice the required number. Lariscy, 40, is a garment worker and unionist. Ortega, 19, is a student and a Young Socialist.

“We’ve already found a good response

to our stance on the importance of workers using union power to defend their interests, and to organize a union where we don’t have one,” Lariscy told the *Militant*. “It strikes a chord for a lot of workers who face the bosses’ assault on our wages, working hours, pace of work, safety conditions, and social gains.” She added that fighting workers can also understand more readily the need to organize independently from the bosses’ parties, and ultimately “to take political power out of the hands of the ruling capitalists and establish a government of workers and farmers.”

“A lot of working people also appreciate the fact that our campaign starts with the common interests of working people around the world,” the socialist gubernatorial candidate noted. This stands in contrast, she said, with the “we Americans” pro-imperialist stance of all the big-business candidates, from Sen. Jon Corzine, the liberal Democratic front-runner and

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## Ecuador gov't collapses amid popular protests

Capitalist crisis, austerity measures fuel upsurge



Reuters/Angelo Chamba

High school students join April 20 demonstration in Quito, Ecuador, to demand the resignation of President Lucio Gutiérrez. Banner reads “Ever onward to victory.”

BY SAM MANUEL

In face of repeated demonstrations by tens of thousands against his government, President Lucio Gutiérrez of Ecuador fled into exile to Brazil April 24. He was the third president in that country since 1997 to be brought down by mass protests fueled by anger at brutal austerity measures against the living standards of working people.

Three days earlier, as antigovernment protests spread from the capital city of Quito and popular anger grew—especially after a short-lived state of emergency and the killing of two demonstrators by security forces—Congress voted to remove Gutiérrez. He was replaced with Vice President Alfredo Palacio.

The collapse of Gutiérrez’s government is the latest expression of the roiling discontent among working people and layers of the middle classes who have been squeezed by the capitalist economic crisis throughout Latin America. In Ecuador the wealthy have enjoyed the fruits of economic growth, while workers and farmers face a continuing plunge in living standards, fueled by austerity measures designed to boost the profit margins of foreign and domestic capitalists.

Newly appointed president Palacio, seeking to get the demonstrators off the streets, denounced his former colleague Gutiérrez as a “dictator.” He said it was

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## Steps needed to raise \$\$ for Militant Fund

BY SAM MANUEL

Now at the halfway point, partisans of the *Militant* need to organize steps to get the \$90,000 Militant Fund onto a weekly campaign footing. This is necessary not only to catch up and collect all the funds by May 22, but to help cover the week-to-week expenses that are incurred in producing and shipping the *Militant*—a socialist newspaper whose financing depends solely on its working-class base of support.

Supporters of the fund have scheduled public fund-raising events in four cities and plans are under way in eight others. Organizing timely meetings in every city is key to reaching out broadly for new contributors as well as to winning contributions from long-time supporters of the socialist press in the four remaining weeks (see list of events on page 3).

Four weeks into the drive, \$45,000 needs to have been collected. We have continued to fall behind, however, with less than \$16,000 received in contributions to date. These funds are being used week by week to help pay for rent, utilities, and printing and shipping costs for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The work to build the upcoming meetings provides a focus to approach regular contributors beforehand as well as to maximize attendance by potential new

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## N.Y. bus drivers win gains after 48-day walkout

BY DON PANE

YONKERS, New York—“This strike was not just about us. It was for the safety of passengers and the public,” said Michael Ware, a bus driver with Bee-Line for 24 years. On April 20, bus drivers at Bee-Line voted overwhelmingly to approve the company contract offer after walking the picket line for seven weeks. The more than 550 bus drivers and mechanics who

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—Jack Barnes

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# Pentagon presses gov't of Nicaragua to scrap anti-aircraft defense

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. government announced in March it would suspend millions of dollars in military aid to Nicaragua in an effort to force the country's government to destroy more than 1,000 Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADs) missiles. The shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles form a key strategic component of the country's air defenses. For months, Bush administration officials have pressed Managua to destroy the missiles, claiming they might fall into the hands of "terrorists" or "revolutionaries."

In January, two men were arrested in a sting operation by U.S. and Nicaraguan authorities reportedly attempting to sell one of the missiles. Congressional testimony in Washington warned of al-Qaeda recruiting operatives in Latin America and a new "axis of evil" across the Western Hemisphere, from Venezuela, through Nicaragua to Cuba. Nicaraguan president Enrique Bolaños gave Washington assurances that destruction of the missiles would proceed.

But a bloc in the Nicaraguan legislature of members of the conservative Constitutionalist Liberal Party and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) passed a series of measures that weakened the Bolaños administration, including a provision that requires the agreement of the Nicaraguan congress before destroying weapons.

Tomás Borge, FSLN vice-secretary, accused Washington of meddling in Nicaragua's internal affairs out of fear that the Sandinistas will win Nicaraguan presidential elections scheduled for 2006, said the Associated Press. The FSLN claimed the sting operation was orchestrated by Washington to press Managua to disarm.

Arriving in Argentina March 21 at the start of a Latin America visit, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld said, "A MANPAD is something that the handlers, the operators, can be managed by terrorists or by revolutionaries, or others...terrorists who are willing to, anxious to kill people and to threaten people, a MANPAD is a very effective weapon." In Managua that day Peter Brennan, deputy chief of the U.S. embassy

there, said, "These missiles are not necessary to a country that is not at war."

In July 1979 a popular uprising throughout Nicaragua led by the FSLN overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. Failing to economically strangle the revolutionary government, in late 1981 Washington organized a counterrevolutionary army, known as contras, and began a war to overthrow the revolution. The contras were headed by former officers of Somoza's military and armed and supported by the U.S. military. They were defeated after a six-year-long war.

It was during that war that the Nicaraguan government armed itself with these portable air defense systems to defend the country from airborne assaults by the contras.

The FSLN leadership retreated from the anticapitalist road they began down in 1979. By 1989 the FSLN had become a bourgeois electoral machine and increasingly advocated policies that relied on market mechanisms and deepening integration of the Nicaraguan economy into the world capitalist market.

The FSLN lost the presidential election



Reuters

Spanish commander, right, gives class at the Xilola military base outside Managua, January 2004. The governments of the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador sent troops to Iraq as part of the U.S.-led "coalition of the willing."

in 1990 and Washington subsequently restored diplomatic relations. Formal relations with the Nicaraguan military, in which former Sandinistas are said to still hold high positions, was not restored until two years ago, when Managua sent a small number of soldiers to join the U.S.-led war in Iraq. In a joint press conference with Bolaños last November, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld praised the performance of Nicaraguan troops in Iraq.

"This is not the way you treat friends," Nicaraguan defense minister José Adán

Guera complained March 18, according to the *New York Times*. "We have supported the United States in Iraq. We have supported them on Cafta. And this is what we get for it?"

Guera was referring to the Central America Free Trade Agreement with the United States, which also includes El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. The trade pact opens up the economies of those countries to further penetration by U.S. finance capital.

## Chicago meeting demands freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoners in U.S.

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

CHICAGO—"Twenty-five years ago today, a group of Puerto Rican patriots were imprisoned," said José López, the executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center. "Three of them are still in jail and we make the commitment to free them." López was speaking to 75 people here at an April 4 reception held to mark the 25th anniversary of the imprisonment of the three Puerto Rican political prisoners still held in U.S. dungeons—Oscar López Rivera, Carlos Alberto Torres, and Haydée Beltrán.

Among the honored guests at the event was Rafael Cancel Miranda, one of five Puerto Rican nationalists who spent more than 25 years in U.S. jails. He was freed

in 1979 along with four other prisoners who were jailed in the 1950s for their pro-independence activities. Their release was the product of a massive international defense campaign. Luis Rosa, one of the political prisoners who were released in 1999, was also present. He spent 19 years behind bars.

"The campaign for the release of the political prisoners was becoming an international issue, in the UN, in Cuba, in Venezuela, everywhere," said Cancel Miranda. "They have not been able to defeat us."

At the beginning of the reception, Oscar López Rivera addressed the crowd by phone from prison. López Rivera is serving a 70-year sentence at the maximum security federal prison at Terre Haute, Indiana. The independence fighter spent 12 years in solitary confinement before an international campaign won his 1998 transfer to Terre Haute from the federal prison in Marion, Illinois, and his release into the general prison population.

He was jailed in 1981 and sentenced to 55 years on charges of "seditious conspiracy." U.S. officials claimed that he was a leader of the Armed Forces of National Liberation, a pro-independence organization accused by Washington of carrying out a series of bombings of government, business, and military sites. Seven years later, López was framed for "conspiracy to escape" and sentenced to an additional 15 years. The Puerto Rican fighter is not eligible for

release until 2027.

Carlos Alberto Torres was arrested on April 4, 1980, and was convicted of seditious conspiracy and other charges the following year. He was sentenced to 78 years. Prison authorities refused to allow him leave to attend his father's funeral services in February despite a campaign on his behalf that won the support of the colonial governor of Puerto Rico and three Puerto Rican congressional representatives.

In 1999, in the face of growing protests against U.S. colonial domination of the island, President William Clinton released 11 of the 17 political prisoners held at that time. The releases were a by-product of the growing support for the prisoners' cause that grew out of the movement for the withdrawal of the U.S. Navy from the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, struggles against efforts to sell off the nationally owned Puerto Rican telephone company, and other resistance to Washington's imperial boot in Puerto Rico. Three more of the prisoners have been released since then.

The April 4 event was followed by a concert by Puerto Rican singer Roy Brown attended by 300 people. Organizers announced that an art exhibition of works by Rivera and Torres would be shown April 9-30 at the Galería Que No Era in Chicago. The exhibit is sponsored by the National Boricua Human Rights Network and the Committee on Human Rights of Puerto Rico

## THE MILITANT

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U.S. Aegis guided-missile cruiser Lake Erie at Niigata port in Japan last year.

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# London Ambala Foods strikers demand pay hike

BY JOYCE FAIRCHILD

LONDON—Forty workers crowded the gates of the Ambala Foods factory in Stratford, East London, in a determined picket that started early the morning of Friday, April 22, their first day of strike action.

“We’re confident and determined,” Lokon Miah told the *Militant*, “and we’re keeping the picket up all day.” Miah is one of two shop stewards at the factory where he’s worked for nine years. “We got the union organized a couple of years ago,” Naveed Chaudhry, the other shop steward, explained. Chaudhry has worked at Ambala for 27 years.

“It was in 2003,” commented Muhammad Khan. “My brother and cousin were sacked for not working overtime when a family emergency came up. When they returned to work the next day, the boss, Shoukat Ali, gave them immediate sacking letters. All the workers on the day shift stopped work and went to the canteen to demand a meeting with the boss. We wouldn’t accept the sacking and demanded to be heard.”

Chaudhry said that he organized a petition demanding reinstatement and the bosses backed off. The petition was signed by 90 workers. “Out of this experience we decided to get organized and joined the Transport and General Workers Union [TGWU].”

“Now we’re on strike to improve our pay,” Mohammad Khan said. “We’re demanding a £50 raise to make up for a five-year wage freeze. We’re striking for one day

a week at present but if we don’t get our demands, we’ll escalate the action.”

Strikers said that many of them are on minimum wage. They told the *Militant* about what conditions were like in the plant before the factory was unionized. “Workers used to have to negotiate their wages individually,” said Abdul Raza. “Sometimes a manager would get a family member or friend taken on, and they’d get 20 percent or 30 percent more.”

“There also used to be huge amounts of overtime worked,” said Miah. “Fifty hours overtime a week was not uncommon. In many ways this is not just a strike about wages. It’s about really establishing the union.”

An impromptu meeting of the strikers was held at the factory gate. First to address the strikers was Tony Gould, one of two TGWU officials who were on the picket from early morning. Naveed Chaudhry addressed the meeting in Urdu. The bulk of the workers at the plant are from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh and have worked at the plant for many years. “The vote was 43 to 3 for strike action,” Lokon Miah told the *Militant*. “Since then we’re recruited another 15 to the union.”

Among people visiting the picket line was Celia Pugh, Communist League candidate for Parliament in the nearby constituency of Bethnal Green and Bow. The strikers were keen to talk with Pugh to explain the background to the action.

“The TWGU members at Ambala Foods



Militant/Jim Spaul

Workers at the picket line April 22 at Ambala Foods in London. They organized a union in 2003 in response to low wages, brutal overtime, and company harassment.

are setting an example for the entire labor movement,” said the communist candidate, who works as a sewing machine operator. “Our campaign joins the fight to organize and strengthen the unions and use union power to resist the bosses’ attacks. Your

determination and confidence is a lesson for us all.”

The pickets said they would not be intimidated by company threats that they may move the work to a nonunion plant in St. Albans, about 30 miles away.

## Steps needed for Militant Fund

Continued from front page contributors.

Tom Leonard, a veteran leader of the Socialist Workers Party who was active as a merchant seaman at the end of World War II, will speak at a May 14 Militant Fund event in San Francisco on the topic *There Is*

*No Peace! 60 Years Since the End of World War II*. The presentation will draw on the lessons of that war for class-struggle fighters today. Ron Smith, a Young Socialist in Pittsburgh, will speak in Cleveland May 1 on the same subject.

*Militant* staff member Arrin Hawkins will be speaking in Boston May 7 on “Cuba and the Coming American Revolution.” Hawkins was part of a *Militant* reporting team in February that covered this year’s Havana International Book Fair and other events. Brian Taylor, a coal miner and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, will speak in Houston on “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun: The Working-Class Road to Power.”

Supporters of the *Militant* are encouraged to send in accounts of their progress each week that can be included in this column. Checks or money orders should be made out to the *Militant*, earmarked “Spring Fund Drive,” and sent to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

### \$90,000 Militant Fund 3/26–5/22: Week 4 of 8

	Goal	Paid	%
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>			
Auckland	1,750	1,002	57%
Christchurch	800	131	16%
<b>CANADA</b>			
AUSTRALIA	1,230	500	41%
ICELAND	750	180	24%
SWEDEN	200	20	10%
FRANCE	800	40	5%
UNITED KINGDOM	300	0	0%
<b>UNITED STATES</b>			
Craig, CO	1,800	1,250	69%
Des Moines	1,100	425	39%
NE Pennsylvania	1,500	500	33%
New York	11,000	3,311	30%
Los Angeles	9,000	2,280	25%
Detroit	2,500	585	23%
Philadelphia	3,000	700	23%
Washington	3,000	570	19%
Newark	3,750	635	17%
Omaha	355	60	17%
Price, UT	4,000	600	15%
Seattle	6,000	900	15%
Birmingham	1,300	175	13%
Boston	3,300	335	10%
Houston	3,500	340	10%
Twin Cities	4,800	431	9%
Chicago	4,000	340	9%
San Francisco	9,500	500	5%
Pittsburgh	2,500	100	4%
Miami	1,400	50	4%
Atlanta	4,300	5	0%
Cleveland	1,000	0	0%
Tampa	1,500	0	0%
Other	700	200	29%
Totals	90,635	15,625	17%
Should be	90,000	45,000	50%
Raised goal *			

### Militant Fund events

#### OHIO

##### Cleveland

**There Is No Peace: 60 Years Since the End of World War II** Speaker: Ron Smith, Young Socialists Sun., May 1, 11018 Lorain Ave. Tel: 216-688-1190

#### MASSACHUSETTS

##### Boston

**Cuba and the Coming American Revolution.** Speaker: Arrin Hawkins, *Militant* staff writer, Sat., May 7, 4:00 p.m. (Dinner following program) 12 Bennington St., 2nd fl., Tel: 617-569-9169

#### TEXAS

##### Houston

**Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun—The Working-Class Road to Power** Speaker: Brian Taylor, Socialist Workers Party Sat., May 7, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A, Tel: 713-869-6550

#### CALIFORNIA

##### San Francisco

**There Is No Peace: 60 Years Since End of World War II** Speaker: Tom Leonard, Socialist Workers Party and merchant seaman at the end of World War II, Sat., May 14, For more information: Tel: 415-584-2135

## New bankruptcy restrictions

Continued from front page

of a bankruptcy judge. Instead, a means-testing system is being instituted that will force those who are found to earn above the median annual income in their state to file under Chapter 13, which requires a regular repayment schedule to creditors.

For example, a person in this category who is judged able to pay at least \$6,000 over five years—\$100 a month—would be forced into a Chapter 13 bankruptcy. Further, those who are required to file under Chapter 13 would have to make repayments for five years. Under current law, those payments cease after three years, even if the debt is not fully repaid.

The new law also puts auto finance companies ahead of most other creditors in line for repayment—the fruit of intense lobbying by General Motors and other auto monopolies. In addition, the new means-testing system will increase the paperwork and along with it the legal expense of preparing a bankruptcy filing, further restricting the accessibility of debt relief for working people.

According to the American Bankruptcy Institute, up to 20 percent of those who file under Chapter 7 bankruptcy each year will be disqualified from doing so under the new law.

### Ballooning personal debts

Bankruptcy filings have been soaring in the United States as personal debts from credit card purchases and car loans have mushroomed. Some 1.6 million individuals in the United States filed for bankruptcy in 2003, nearly twice the number a decade earlier.

Debt from credit cards and car loans in the United States stood at a record \$2.05 trillion as of last September, and has continued to rise since then. That’s an average of \$7,296 per U.S. resident. Between 1999 and 2003, household debt rose from 70 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product to 83 percent. More than 13 percent of household income went toward paying interest and principal on those debts.

In fact, household debt in the United States as a percentage of disposable income—which the U.S. government defines as personal income minus taxes, fees, and fines—has risen from 60 percent in 1984 to about 115 percent in 2004.

Some 27 percent of households that earn less than \$20,000 in annual income pay 40 percent of it to creditors. “Too many people have abused bankruptcy laws,” Bush said in a press conference following the signing. “They’ve walked away from debts even when they had the ability to repay them.”

A study conducted by Harvard University in 2001, however, suggests that most people who file do so because of crushing debt brought on by unforeseen events. Of the 1,771 personal bankruptcy cases studied, about half were the product of rising medical expenses. “Nearly 95 percent of those who declare personal bankruptcy are swamped by job loss, family breakup,

medical problems or some combination,” reported *Newsweek* columnist Jonathan Alter about this study. “About 10 percent have the pleasure of getting cancer and going bankrupt at the same time.”

Alter further noted, “By the time a debtor has filed for bankruptcy, he or she has often repaid the original credit-card debt plus some interest but still owes thousands in interest on the interest and other fees.” The drive by the bosses to cut health benefits has been a key factor in the debt squeeze. The out-of-pocket costs for health care have increased steadily over the past two decades. Between 1995 and 2002 the costs went from an average of \$547 per person annually to \$744. That doesn’t tell the whole story, however, as more and more workers face the prospect of one serious illness or expensive treatment that could wipe out their savings and put them into long-term debt.

### Millionaire’s loophole

Under the new law the wealthiest bankruptcy filers remain shielded from creditors through a variety of devices.

The law does not touch, for example, the so-called millionaire’s loophole. Five U.S. states—Alaska, Delaware, Nevada, Rhode Island, and Utah—allow trust accounts set up in institutions in those states to be exempt from the federal bankruptcy code. People who have the means—read millions of dollars—to set up such a trust don’t need to live in the five states, simply set the trust up there.

That’s not even to mention the swath of offshore accounts, or the “spendthrift trust” that allows the wealthy to create a protected account for their relatives’ use.

These hidey-holes don’t merit so much as a mention in the bill.

Bankruptcy court has never been the terrain of the working class. It has always been designed for those who own capital and the banks they are indebted to. A large section of the code—Chapter 11—is devoted to the mechanisms through which capitalists can use bankruptcy protection to shield themselves from creditors while they restructure their businesses. This section includes subheadings like “Aircraft equipment and vessels”; “rejection of collective bargaining agreements”; “Abandonment of railroad line”; or “payment of insurance benefits to retired employees,” which provide mechanisms for the bosses to escape obligations and shield their capital while they reorganize.

In times of economic crisis, bankruptcy serves as an important safety valve for the capitalist class to maintain stability and defend the monopolists. In the recent period, large corporations like U.S. Airways and Horizon Natural Resources, a large coal company, have used the fig leaf of bankruptcy court to tear up union contracts and slash pensions and health benefits. The recent bankruptcy “reform” does nothing to challenge the prerogatives of these bankruptcy filers.

# Unionists prepare to fight mine boss suit against the 'Militant'

BY RON SMITH AND HELEN MEYERS

PITTSBURGH—"We need to meet with organizations, friends, people on the street, students, unionists, approach everyone to join in this fight, for the Co-Op miners, the *Militant*, and the union," said Chris Sang, a student at the University of Pittsburgh.

Sang was part of a crowd of 50 people who participated in a special Militant Labor Forum to defend free speech and freedom of the press on April 23 at the Friends Meeting House here. Speaking at the event was Paul Mailhot, the organizer of the Militant Fighting Fund in Salt Lake City.

Participants in the meeting came from Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and northeast Pennsylvania. Also present were socialist coal miners from around the country who are involved in many efforts to organize and strengthen the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

"What the bosses are trying to do is to hurt the *Militant*, the workers' movement, people trying to organize unions, and coal miners. I think it is important that supporters of this struggle fight hard to build support," Sang emphasized. "The issues here: solidarity with Co-Op miners, freedom of speech and freedom of the press, go to fundamental ideas. What affects one person, affects everybody. We need to win people's support. Explain to them that unless we fight, the outcome of this court case could and will open doors for the bosses, for more oppression and further attacks on all social political struggles."

The Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF) is backing the Militant Fighting Fund to raise tens of thousands of dollars necessary for the legal defense of the *Mili-*

*tant* and SWP in the lawsuit. Supporters of the Bill of Rights are campaigning to win endorsers for this fund, which will also pay for literature that explains the freedom of speech and freedom of the press issues involved in this case.

Mailhot explained in his talk that there are nearly 100 groups and individuals who have been sued by C.W. Mining, owners of the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, for being involved in, writing about, or supporting the fight by miners there to win better pay, safe working conditions, dignity on the job, and union representation. The defendants include 17 of the Co-Op miners themselves, the UMWA, the *Militant* newspaper, the Socialist Workers Party, Utah AFL-CIO, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret Morning News*.

"The courts are not a good arena for workers or for newspapers dedicated to working-class struggles. This case is designed to divert attention from the real struggle, and that is why it is so important to vigorously fight this harassment lawsuit. That is why we are asking you to become supporters of the Militant Fighting Fund," said Mailhot.

"At the same time, as long as the bosses have dragged us onto this terrain for a fight, we intend to put up a big one," he added. "We will use it as an opportunity to explain the stakes in the Co-Op miners fight; the stakes in the battle for free speech and freedom of the press; and in the process we will win greater respect for the *Militant* and the Socialist Workers Party for refusing to back down in any way in the face of this company assault.

"Attorneys for the three newspapers involved in this suit have effectively an-



Militant/Martha Ressler

**Norton Sandler, national organizer of the Militant Fighting Fund, speaking April 23 at Pittsburgh meeting to discuss fight against coal bosses' harassment suit. Romina Green, member of UNITE-HERE Local 168-C, to his right, and Paul Mailhot, organizer of the Militant Fighting Fund in Salt Lake City.**

swered the Co-Op mine owners' contention that every statement in support of the miners, or the reprinting of every statement made by the miners, is defamation," Mailhot continued. "C.W. Mining says workers are unreliable sources because of their association with a 'rabid labor union.'"

"We are asking that the judge assigned to this case throw it out of court quickly, before C.W. Mining accomplishes more in its effort to use the courts to trample on workers rights and the rights of newspapers to tell the miners' side of the story," he said.

"The *Militant* does not have an item in its budget for harassment lawsuits," Mailhot explained. "We have to raise the money for this legal defense from workers, students, and many other defenders of the Bill of Rights."

"I listened to exactly what the company said was defamation," said Mike Slavik, 20,

a supporter of the Militant Fighting Fund from Cleveland who works in a sandblasting shop. "I can't see how anything they said is defamation. I'm taking this to work. Tradesmen come into the shop all day long, and we always talk about work and the unions. If I can get a guy a day to donate \$5, that's \$35 a week for the fund. Most workers are sympathetic when they hear about the exploitation of other workers. For me, it's not that the miners make \$5.50 an hour, it's what they do for that wage. My sister started at McDonald's for \$7.00 an hour."

Romina Green, a garment worker and member of UNITE-HERE Local 168-C, chaired the meeting. She brought with her a message from a co-worker, Franz Kopp, that said in part, "I support the miners at Co-Op and I am a worker myself. I've been a union member since 1956 and appreciate the benefits we had, but now we get less and less. I support the *Militant* and Socialist Workers Party because I believe we have the right to free speech. I am also making a financial pledge in support."

Following Mailhot's presentation, Norton Sandler gave a brief fund appeal presentation. Sandler is the national organizer for the Militant Fighting Fund.

"The *Militant* has been telling the truth about the struggle of miners in this country for decades," Sandler said. "Because of this, the paper has respect from coal miners from Appalachia to the western coal fields."

The bosses at Co-Op want to silence the *Militant* and keep it from telling the truth, he said. They intend to drag the paper into time-consuming and intrusive discovery proceedings while draining the paper financially.

Sandler described the *Militant's* unique contributions, noting the series the paper is currently running on the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and the hidden lessons that working people need to know about the causes of the war, and the consequences for workers and farmers of U.S. imperialism's "victory." He pointed out that the paper in coming issues will tell the true story of the Vietnamese workers' and farmers' defeat of Washington that culminated 30 years ago.

More than \$3,400 was contributed at the meeting. Sandler also asked for help and ideas to win donations from other individuals who believe it is important to fight for freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

A literature table at the entryway to the meeting provided fact sheets, endorser cards, and other materials.

Contributions to the Militant Fighting Fund can be sent to the Political Rights Defense Fund, P.O. Box 761 Church Street Station, New York, NY 10007.

## Miners, unions respond to coal bosses

BY PAT MILLER

SALT LAKE CITY—Attorneys for 16 Co-Op miners being sued by C.W. Mining submitted their final written arguments to federal district court in Utah on April 22, requesting once again that the court dismiss the lawsuit. These legal papers were filed in response to a memorandum by the coal company in opposition to the miners' earlier motion to dismiss the case.

The suit against the miners is part of an extensive legal action stemming from a 19-month-long struggle at the Co-Op mine. Workers have been fighting for better pay, safety, and dignity on the job, and union representation with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). Unable to defeat the miners, the company tried firing nearly all union supporters shortly before a December 17, 2004, union election and also to use the courts to undercut the union struggle. The votes of the majority of pro-UMWA miners have yet to be counted by the National Labor Relations Board, the federal agency that oversaw the union election.

"It is well-settled that 'neither employers or unions may sue individual employees in damage suits,'" states the miners'

reply to the coal bosses in explaining why the C.W. Mining suit should be thrown out of court. The company contends it is the victim of unfair labor practices by the union and the individual miners, and that nearly 100 other defendants who have written about or supported the Co-Op miners' struggle also defamed the company.

The miners' attorney argues that especially during labor struggles, where it is to be expected charges and counter charges would be made, a charge of defamation against the miners has no standing. In the course of a "labor dispute," says the miners' reply, courts have repeatedly ruled in cases where unionists called employers "criminals" or charged them with "hiding money" that those statements were nothing more than "fiery rhetoric," and not defamation. In the context of the long fight at the Co-Op mine, "describing oneself as having been fired, or the working conditions as unsafe or stating that the incumbent union did not properly represent these employees" cannot be the basis for action against the miners on the bosses defamation claim.

In addition to the miners' reply to C.W.

Mining, Ed Mayne and the Utah State AFL-CIO also responded to the C.W. Mining lawsuit on April 22, again asking the court to dismiss the case against them. Mayne is the state president of the labor body and has spoken out in support of the miners numerous times.

C. W. Mining utterly failed to respond to the arguments of the Utah AFL-CIO that Ed Mayne's statements "could not possibly be understood to be defamatory, even if this dispute was not set in a labor context, which it is," says the union organization's reply.

PACE Local 8-286, a union local which represents oil workers in the Salt Lake City area, also filed papers asking the court to deny C.W. Mining's request to make the union part of the suit. A proper summons was never presented to the union, according to the union reply, but the company's lawyers contend this was not their fault and the court should allow them the right to amend their lawsuit to include Local 8-286.

The union asks the court to stop the coal bosses attempts to drag them into the case stating "this is not simply a case of misnomer, as previously stated [by C.W. Mining]" but "by reason of the lack of any allegations whatsoever against Local 8-286."

C.W. Mining wants to name the local "because it is a member of PACE Region 11, and because Region 11 was reported to have passed a resolution in support of the striking miners." But the union points out that the local and the regional body are not the same. And in any case "the resolution itself is the purest form of lawful, protected free expression and support of solidarity for coal miners engaged in a labor dispute."

Attorneys for the *Militant* newspaper and the Socialist Workers Party, who are also prominent among those being sued by C.W. Mining, are working on a reply to C.W. Mining's recent memorandum to the court in regards to their motion to dismiss the suit. Those papers will be filed with the court before April 29 and will be reported in next week's issue of the *Militant*.

## 'Essential Works of Lenin' available from Pathfinder

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.— *Essential Works of Lenin*, an important collection of four key works by V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, is now available. It includes two works, *State and Revolution* and *What is to Be Done?*, that had been out of print in English prior to its publication.

The collection, published by Dover Publications, is being distributed by Pathfinder Press.

In *What is to Be Done?* Lenin takes up a range of questions regarding the building

of a communist party, from the importance of its press and general propaganda to the daily rhythm of work of its professional cadres. In *State and Revolution* Lenin defends Karl Marx's view of the state as the product and manifestation of the irreconcilability of class interests.

The collection also contains *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* and excerpts from Lenin's early work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*.

*Essential Works of Lenin* can be ordered at [www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com). It can also be found at the book centers listed on page 8.

**Order revolutionary books on the Internet!**

**[pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)**

# With boost from L.A. book fair, 'Militant' sub drive stays on track

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

In the first three weeks of the drive to win 1,350 new readers to the *Militant*, 590 people have signed up to subscribe to the socialist weekly.

Supporters of the *Militant* sent in 177 new subscriptions to the business office in week three, keeping the campaign just ahead of pace.

Partisans of the *Militant* in Los Angeles sent a whopping 46 new subscriptions in to the *Militant*, the bulk of them sold at the *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books. "From start to finish, our stand, prominently featuring the new issues of the *New Internationalist* magazine, and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, was filled with people," wrote Frank Forrester, a *Militant* supporter in L.A.

"Some of the top sellers included *Che Talks to Young People*, *Revolution in*

*the Congo*, and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes," Forrester reported.

"By the end of the two-day festival," he said, "45 people had bought subscriptions to the *Militant*. Another 60 people bought single copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. And a total of 144 books and pamphlets were sold to participants at the book festival."

In light of their success, supporters of the *Militant* in Los Angeles raised their quota from 90 to 100 subscriptions.

## Omaha sets pace *New Internationalist* sales campaign

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

"This has been our best week so far," was the message from Omaha, Nebraska. Campaigners for *New Internationalist* there



Militant/Frank Forrester

The Pathfinder booth was a big hit at the April 23-24 Los Angeles Times Book Fair

## SWP ballot efforts launched

Continued from front page

former Wall Street executive, to the various Republican contenders.

"The ballot drive kicks off Saturday, May 7, at the Socialist Workers campaign hall in Newark, with a breakfast for the petitioners at 10:30 a.m., orienting the teams at 11:00 a.m., and then a full day of petitioning," Dookhun reported. "We'll end with a barbeque at 6:30 p.m. On Sunday, teams will start at noon for another big day of signature-gathering and leafleting—from working-class districts in Newark to the Cinco de Mayo celebration in Passaic." Teams will also go out on weekdays, including an all-day team, he added.

Lariscy said Young Socialists and other campaign supporters have maintained a regular presence at the Rutgers University campuses in both Newark and New Brunswick. They have also been campaigning in Morristown, where immigrant day laborers are fighting against harassment by cops and capitalist politicians. Several workers involved in that fight have expressed interest in the platform of the socialist campaign.

**Boston petitioning campaign**

In Boston, supporters of the Socialist Workers Party slate—Margaret Trowe for mayor and Laura Garza for city council at-large—will be fanning out throughout the city to put Garza on the ballot. They plan to collect 1,000 signatures, double the requirement, as they campaign in workers districts from East Boston,

where the campaign hall is located, to Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, and South Boston.

"Our campaign calls on the union movement to oppose the recent arrests of Brazilian-born and other airport workers in Boston by the immigration cops," Garza said.

The Boston campaign will focus on three Saturdays and two weekday efforts of petitioning, with a big push on Saturday, May 14, when campaigners will cap a day of petitioning with a meet-the-candidates barbeque.

On April 23 Garza spoke on a panel during a teach-in at Roxbury Community College, called to oppose the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq.

Most speakers on the panel presented a radical or liberal perspective, attributing the Iraq war and occupation to the Bush administration. In contrast, Garza explained why the U.S. ruling class is impelled by the economic decline of its system to transform its armed forces to be able to fight one imperialist war after another all over the world. She pointed to the working-class struggles and broader mood of resistance in the United States today, and why this points to the potential power and capacity of workers and farmers in this country to take on the ruling rich and win.

Two students participating in the teach-in were particularly interested in the perspective presented by the socialist candidates and signed up to help campaign for them.

sold another 11 copies of the two new issues of the Marxist magazine last week, bringing their total to 26 so far. Their report and others are an indication that those campaigning with these political weapons are getting some experience in presenting the political questions taken up in *New Internationalist* nos. 12 and 13.

A team from Omaha went to the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, where students purchased four copies of *New Internationalist* together with four *Militant* subscriptions, David Rosenfeld reports. A meat packer who has been getting involved with the socialist movement sold a two-pack of *Nueva Internacional*—the Spanish-language edition of *NI*—to a friend. Another meat packer bought the twin issues for himself.

Supporters of the Socialist Workers candidates around the country have found that these issues of *New Internationalist* explain effectively the two political axes of the SWP campaign. One is the need to organize and use union power, which is at the heart of the two main articles in *NI* no. 12: "Their Transformation and Ours" and "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun."

"Our Politics Start with the World," the feature article in *NI* no. 13, explains the other central axis of the Socialist Workers campaign: the championing of efforts by oppressed nations—against opposition by the imperialist powers—to expand access to electrical power by whatever means necessary, including nuclear energy. This is key to bridging the gap in conditions between the imperialist and the semicolonial world, between city and countryside.

### 'Militant' Subscription Drive April 2–May 22 Week 3 of 7

Country	Goal	Sold	%
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>			
Auckland	20	16	80%
Christchurch	15	9	60%
N.Z. total	35	25	71%
<b>SWEDEN</b>			
	16	8	50%
<b>UNITED STATES</b>			
Omaha	25	19	76%
Los Angeles	100	72	72%
Newark	70	38	54%
San Francisco	25	13	52%
Craig, CO	20	10	50%
Boston	60	30	50%
NE Pennsylvania	40	19	48%
Des Moines	50	23	46%
Twin Cities	70	32	46%
Washington	55	25	45%
New York	115	51	44%
Tampa	30	13	43%
Houston	50	21	42%
Atlanta	40	16	40%
Chicago	65	26	40%
Seattle	35	12	34%
Price, UT	50	15	30%
Pittsburgh	50	15	30%
Miami	65	19	29%
Detroit	28	8	29%
Birmingham	25	7	28%
Philadelphia	50	10	20%
Cleveland	35	6	17%
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>1153</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>43%</b>
AUSTRALIA	30	11	37%
ICELAND	17	6	35%
CANADA	60	20	33%
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>			
London	40	14	35%
Edinburgh	20	6	30%
UK total	60	20	33%
<b>Int'l totals</b>	<b>1371</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Goal/Should be</b>	<b>1350</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>43%</b>



### *New Internationalist* sales campaign March 26 – August 15

Country	Goal	Sold	%
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>			
Auckland	50	30	60%
Christchurch	20	9	45%
N.Z. total	70	39	56%
<b>UNITED STATES</b>			
Omaha	32	26	81%
NE Pennsylvania	40	25	63%
Miami	70	43	61%
Washington	80	45	56%
Atlanta	100	56	56%
Cleveland	40	22	55%
Los Angeles	200	108	54%
Chicago	100	53	53%
Seattle	90	46	51%
Houston	100	50	50%
Detroit	60	29	48%
New York	250	117	47%
Pittsburgh	100	45	45%
Tampa	60	26	43%
Philadelphia	75	31	41%
San Francisco	185	71	38%
Newark	125	44	35%
Price, UT	65	21	32%
Twin Cities	105	33	31%
Boston	120	37	31%
Craig, CO	40	10	25%
Birmingham	50	12	24%
Des Moines	80	17	21%
Other		72	
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>2167</b>	<b>1039</b>	<b>48%</b>
CANADA	120	54	45%
SWEDEN	40	18	45%
AUSTRALIA	50	21	42%
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>			
Edinburgh	35	14	40%
London	120	39	33%
UK total	155	53	34%
ICELAND	32	9	28%
<b>Int'l totals</b>	<b>2634</b>	<b>1233</b>	<b>47%</b>

2005 Socialist Workers Party Election Campaigns		
City/State	Candidate(s)	
Atlanta	James Harris, Mayor	
Boston	Margaret Trowe, Mayor, Laura Garza, City Council	
Cleveland	Romina Green, Mayor	
Des Moines, IA	Edwin Fruit, City Council At Large	
Detroit	Ilona Gersh, Mayor	
Houston	Brian Williams, Mayor, Anthony Dutrow, Comptroller	
Miami	Omari Musa, Mayor	
New Jersey	Angela Lariscy, Governor, Michael Ortega, State Assembly, 28th District	
New York City	Martín Koppel, Mayor, Arrin Hawkins, Manhattan Borough President, Peter Musser, Bronx Borough President, Dan Fein, City Comptroller	
Pittsburgh	Brian Taylor, Mayor	
Seattle	Chris Hoepfner, Mayor	
St. Paul, MN	Jacob Perasso, Mayor, Rebecca Williamson, City Council	

Petitioning schedule for 2005 SWP campaigns		
City/State	Signatures required / Goal	Petitioning dates
Boston	500/1,000	May 3 - May 24
Newark, NJ	800 / 1,500	May 7 - May 21
Pittsburgh	1,040 / 2,000	May 28 - June 30
Seattle	1,500 / 3,000	June 18 - July 5
New York City	7,500 / 15,000-20,000	July 12 - August 5

# 30 years since victory of Vietnamese people

SWP National Committee hailed 'Victory for all oppressed' in May 1, 1975 statement

Printed below is a statement adopted May 1, 1975, by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, at a meeting in New York City. We are reprinting it as part of celebrating the 30-year anniversary of the day—April 30, 1975—the Vietnamese people drove the final detachments of imperialist troops from their soil. Copyright © 1975 by the *Militant*.

On this May Day the world working class is celebrating the history-making victory of the Vietnamese rebels, who have succeeded in expelling the last contingent of imperialist armed forces from their country.

The Socialist Workers Party hails this victory, which has come after decades of heroic struggle against a succession of imperialist powers. The triumph is a powerful reaffirmation of what May Day itself represents to the workers movement: worldwide solidarity of all the oppressed. This solidarity found powerful expression in the international antiwar movement, the strongest component being right here in the United States, where the American revolutionists played a major role.

The victory in Vietnam will inspire the peoples of the colonial and semicolonial world who are fighting for national liberation from economic and political domination by imperialism. It is a victory for all those throughout the world who are fighting oppression and exploitation.

For nearly ten years the war in Southeast Asia was the central focus of the struggle between imperialism and the advancing world revolution. The U.S. rulers decided to contain the revolution in Vietnam by American military means and entrenchment of a counterrevolutionary government in South Vietnam. They wanted to show the peoples in the colonial and semicolonial areas that any who tried to stand up against U.S. imperialism would be crushed. But although Washington's mighty military machine pounded this tiny country year after year, it could not defeat the popular resistance.

The victory of the Vietnamese people over imperialism was long delayed by the policies of Moscow and Peking. In 1945, after the defeat of Japanese imperialism, the Vietminh swept into power. Under Stalin's agreements at Yalta and Potsdam, however, Indochina was to remain in the imperialist "sphere of influence." The Vietminh, whose leaders were trained in the Stalinist school, accepted the reentry of imperialist forces, which ushered in the next phase of the war.

After the French were defeated by the Vietminh in 1954, both Moscow and Peking pressured the Vietnamese to accept the division of their country and the creation of the artificial "country" of South Vietnam, this time under Washington's aegis.

Moscow and Peking refused from the beginning of Washington's escalation to provide adequate material aid for the Vietnamese rebels or to take the initiative in organizing international mass actions in their behalf. This betrayal was condemned in 1967 by Che Guevara, who warned that the Vietnamese were "tragically alone" in their struggle and that in addition to the guilt of U.S. imperialism, "they are likewise guilty who at the decisive moment vacillated in making Vietnam an inviolable part of social-



Vietnamese liberation fighters sit on a tank captured from the U.S.-puppet Saigon regime April 30, 1975. Inset, photo as it appeared on front page of the *Militant* March 9, 1975, issue.

ist territory..."

This treachery took its most blatant form in the spring of 1972, when Nixon was toasted in Moscow while he was carrying out the brutal bombing, mining, and blockade of North Vietnam. It was under this pressure that the Vietnamese were forced to accept the continued presence of the Thieu puppet regime in the 1973 accords.

But despite these obstacles, which greatly increased the cost in blood and suffering for the Vietnamese people, their revolutionary aspirations pressed the struggle forward.

#### International movement

The heroic resistance of the Vietnamese helped promote the radicalization of a new generation of youth throughout the world. An international antiwar movement developed, with hundreds of thousands of demonstrators taking to the streets throughout the United States and in cities such as Tokyo, Melbourne, London, Berlin, Mexico City, and Paris.

The brutality of the Pentagon's military onslaught revealed for the whole world the terrible lengths to which Wall Street will go in order to maintain and advance the capitalist system. Millions of Vietnamese were killed. One million Cambodians, one-seventh of the population, were killed or wounded. The countryside of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos was devastated.

The military cost alone for bringing about this death and destruction amounts to an estimated \$400 billion. More than 56,000 American soldiers lost their lives.

As the U.S. military commitment deepened, and the economic and social costs of the war at home rose, the rulers found it harder and harder to use the old anticommunist arguments to justify their brutality. At each turn, they were exposed as brazen liars.

Washington put all its political and military authority on the line in Vietnam, but the White House strategists miscalculated badly. They underestimated the determination of

tions like NATO and the CIA.

#### A common enemy

But the American people's opposition to imperialist military adventures is not "isolationism." Just the opposite. It is part of the internationalism of the oppressed and exploited all over the globe who have a common interest in struggling against a common enemy.

As a result of the political education the American people have gained from the war and the antiwar movement, the options open to the top cops of international capitalism have become more restricted. They now must bring into their calculations the likely opposition of masses of Americans—including

ing GIs—to new U.S. military operations to prop up dictatorships threatened by popular rebellions.

They can no longer rely on the American people bowing passively to the defense of imperialism under the banner of anticommunism. As all the opinion polls now show, the American people are opposed not only to intervention in Vietnam but also to U.S. military intervention in other areas of the world.

The antiwar movement played a crucial role in helping to bring about this change in American political consciousness. This movement began ten years ago as a small minority of the population. But it won over the majority of the American people.

#### Role of the SWP

The Socialist Workers Party is proud of the role it played in leading and organizing the antiwar movement in the United States. From the very beginning, the SWP recognized the importance of this movement and threw its energies into it.

In the November 22, 1965, issue of the *Militant*, Fred Halstead, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and a prominent antiwar organizer, predicted the course the antiwar movement would follow:

"It is well within possibility that not just a few hundred thousand, but millions of Americans can be actively involved in the struggle against the Vietnam war. A movement of that scope, even though centered around the single issue of the war, would have the most profound effects on every social structure in the country, including the trade unions and soldiers in the army.

"It would very probably also result in a general rise in radical consciousness on many other questions, just as it has already had an impact against red-baiting. But above all, it could be the key factor in forcing an end to the Pentagon's genocidal war in Vietnam. The lives of untold thousands

Continued on Page 7



the Indochinese people to be rid of foreign domination and their capacity for struggle to achieve that goal. And they underestimated the deep antiwar sentiments of the American people and their ability to see through the government's lies about its aims.

The defeat of the imperialists in Vietnam thus represents something new. It is the first

**"The victory in Vietnam will inspire the peoples of the colonial and semicolonial world who are fighting for national liberation from economic and political domination by imperialism. It is a victory for all those... who are fighting oppression and exploitation."**

war of such size that the United States, the world's strongest imperialist power, has lost. It is also the first war that has led to the development of a mass antiwar movement inside the United States. It is this overt antiwar sentiment that left the White House with no choice but to accept defeat and to withdraw to a new line of encirclement of the colonial revolution in Southeast Asia.

President Ford and others in ruling-class circles are bemoaning the rise of what they call "isolationism." They are trying to persuade the American people to support the "internationalism" of a world police force, of B-52s, of secret wars, and of organiza-

#### For Further Reading

##### Out Now!

**A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. against the Vietnam War**  
by Fred Halstead

The fight for a political course to organize working people, GIs, and youth and help lead growing world opposition to the Vietnam War. Gaining momentum from the mass struggle for Black civil rights at home, together with the unyielding revolutionary resistance by Vietnamese national liberation fighters, the antiwar movement helped force Washington to bring the troops home, altering the dynamic of the class struggle in the U.S. \$30.95



**Revolutionary Strategy in the Fight against the Vietnam War**

by James P. Cannon

\$10.00

[WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM](http://WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM)



Vietnamese fighter captured by U.S. forces in 1966.

# Protests oust Gutiérrez

Continued from front page

"immoral that Ecuador spends about 40 percent of its national budget to service its \$16.6 billion debt to international banks."

Although Palacio quickly clarified that the government would continue making its debt payments, Standard and Poor's said it might lower Ecuador's credit rating because the recent unrest puts at risk the government's ability to make a \$75 million interest payment in May. Investors in the country's debt bonds have been reducing holdings, Bloomberg news reported.

Antigovernment protests began to grow in mid-April. On April 15 Gutiérrez declared a state of emergency. Demonstrators defied the ban, which the government then hastily withdrew. The protests spread after police used tear gas to prevent a march of 30,000 on the National Palace on April 19.

The mobilizations that led up to Gutiérrez's ouster were substantially smaller than the two-day strike and protests of 2 million that forced out President Abdalá Bucaram in 1997 and the storming of the National Palace by indigenous protesters in 2000 that brought down President Jamil Mahuad's administration.

Gutiérrez had expressed confidence that his government would weather the protests, which had largely been confined to the capital and had been more heavily middle-class in composition than the popular mobilizations of 1997 and 2000.

But the Ecuadorian rulers decided they did not want a repeat of the previous upsurges. On April 20 the heads of the army and the national police withdrew support for the president. The attorney general's

office filed charges against Gutiérrez for "flagrant crimes" related to the deaths of two demonstrators. Congress voted to oust the president because he had "abandoned" his duties, and swore in Palacio.

That day Gutiérrez attempted to flee the country by military helicopter but protesters shut down Quito's international airport. For three days he took refuge in the Brazilian embassy, and then flew to Brazil.

## Austerity measures spark protests

Gutiérrez, a former army officer, was elected in 2002 largely on the strength of his association with the popular revolt two years earlier that had toppled Mahuad, hated for his imposition of sharp austerity measures. While giving lip service to the poor, Gutiérrez carried out similar policies to those of his predecessors, earning him a reputation among Wall Street bankers as "fiscally responsible."

Under "market reforms" prescribed by Washington, Ecuador's economy grew 6.6 percent last year. LatinSource, a New York-based analyst of Latin American economies, praised Ecuador for "outperforming even the most optimistic scenarios," according to the *New York Times*. The "fiscal growth" was paid for in sharply reduced spending on social services such as health care and education.

For example, at the Baca Ortiz public hospital in Quito, considered the country's best children's hospital, patients have to bring their own medicine and doctors say they lack clean facilities, decent wages, and even the most rudimentary equipment, the *Times* reported. Parents at the May 23 Ele-



Reuters

After weeks of protests thousands of indigenous peasants toppled the government of Jamil Mahuad and took over the National Congress on Jan. 21, 2001.

mentary School in the working-class southern district of Quito pool their money to pay for blackboards, classroom benches, paint jobs, and teachers salaries. And conditions are much worse for the largely indigenous rural population.

Growing anger at government economic policies was compounded by the president's political maneuvers. In December his congressional allies removed 27 of the 31 Supreme Court justices and packed the court with their own candidates. "The new court then suspiciously cleared several politicians in exile of corruption charges, including ex-president Abdalá Bucaram," the *Miami Herald* reported April 25. Bu-

caram returned from exile just days after the court cleared him.

It was these kinds of conditions that sparked a popular revolt in 1997 that culminated in a two-day strike and protests of as many as 2 million people against the economic austerity measures imposed by Bucaram, in face of which Ecuador's legislature decided to remove him. The strike was led by Ecuador's largest organization of indigenous peoples, CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador).

In 2000 the government of Jamil Mahuad was brought down by another revolt. Ecuador's parliament was occupied by thousands, again led by CONAIE and other Indian organizations. Among the measures that earned Mahuad popular hatred was the replacement of Ecuador's sucre with the U.S. dollar as the country's currency. With an exchange rate of 25,000 to one, already meager wages and savings were slashed overnight.

That revolt led to a short-lived provisional governing triumvirate consisting of the president of CONAIE; Gutiérrez, then an army colonel; and a former supreme court president. However, this provisional government voluntarily ceded power to the military, which then handed the government to Mahuad's vice president, Gustavo Noboa. The Noboa regime prosecuted lower echelon officers associated with the revolt, among them Gutiérrez.

The new president, Palacio, has sought to distance himself from Gutiérrez. He has pledged to overhaul the country's social security system and settle wage demands by state doctors, according to Bloomberg News. He said he would favor renegotiating terms of how monies from an oil stabilization fund are spent, 70 percent of which is currently set aside to make debt payments. Ecuador is South America's fifth-largest oil producer.

Wall Street bankers have expressed concern over the instability in Ecuador and what it means for their profits. "The uncertainty over who will be the next president and what type of policies he will implement are enormous," said Boris Segura of Standish Mellon Asset Management in Boston. "Today it's the vice president, but nobody knows who will be in power the day after."

# 1975 revolutionary victory in Vietnam

Continued from Page 6

of Vietnamese men, women, and children, and U.S. G.I.'s may depend on it. That alone is reason enough to put aside sectarian differences to unite and help build a national organization which can encompass anyone willing to oppose U.S. involvement in Vietnam, regardless of their commitment, or lack of it, on other questions."

This understanding of the significance and impact of the antiwar movement guided the activities of the Socialist Workers Party throughout the course of the war. Building this movement was seen as our foremost task.

## Perspective for Vietnam

What is the perspective now opening before the Vietnamese masses with the defeat of U.S. intervention?

The Vietnamese people have been fighting for more than thirty years for national and social liberation. This irrepressible struggle—generated by the intolerable conditions of life of the masses of peasants and workers—took its first leap forward with the Vietnamese defeat of Japanese imperialism at the end of World War II. It continued after the war, first against the French, and then against the United States.

This fight for national liberation against imperialist domination was closely intertwined with popular struggles for an end to repression, an end to onerous taxation, for land reform, and for other social gains.

The leaders of the Vietnamese liberation forces have often compared their struggle to that of the revolutionary fight of the American colonies against Britain two centuries ago.

The parallel is valid, but unlike the American Revolution, which occurred when capitalism was on the rise as a world system, the Vietnamese revolution is occurring when world capitalism is in its death agony. The fight for national liberation in Vietnam has been a fight against the most powerful capitalist countries and their puppet regimes, and it has an anticapitalist logic and potential.

The indigenous capitalist and landlord class within Vietnam was so stunted by the imperialist domination of the country that it has always been completely dependent on the imperialists for support. This has meant that the struggle against foreign capitalism has also been a struggle against its domestic agents and counterparts.

With the defeat of the Saigon army, and



Militant/Eli Finer

Students join 1968 protest in New York. "The heroic resistance of the Vietnamese helped promote a radicalization of a generation of youth throughout the world."

with Washington's options severely limited by antiwar sentiment at home, the objective possibility now exists for achieving the long-strived-for goal of national unification and self-determination of Vietnam. The objective conditions also exist for a social revolution to abolish the entire system of exploitation for private profit.

The needs of the masses of workers and peasants of Vietnam run directly counter to the interests of the landlords and capitalists and their military machine, which supported the U.S.-created puppet government. A workers and peasants government independent of these elements is needed to carry out such tasks as land reform, lowering of taxes, and reunification of the North and South.

The upsurge in South Vietnam and the crumbling of the puppet Saigon government have already carried the Provisional Revolutionary Government well beyond its stated program of "reconciliation" with the now collapsed Saigon regime. "Reconciliation" with the remaining capitalist-landlord forces is impossible without going against the desires and interests of the masses of peasants and workers.

After years of suffering and war, the Vietnamese masses deserve the full fruits of their victory. The task ahead is unification with the workers state of North Vietnam and the establishment of proletarian democracy.

A government based on soviets as exemplified in the October 1917 revolution in Russia would inspire the masses throughout Asia and throughout the world and would bring appreciably closer the victory of socialism on a global scale.

This is the perspective we as revolutionary socialists support as we celebrate the victories now being won in Vietnam.

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# Workers cannot 'reform' away capitalism

Below is an excerpt from *Reform or Revolution* by Rosa Luxemburg, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in May. In the German Social Democratic Party at the turn of the 20th century Luxemburg was a leader in the fight against the attempt to revise Marxism led by Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein, one of Marx and Engels's literary executors, attempted to refute the basic tenets of scientific socialism. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder. Reprinted by permission.

BY ROSA LUXEMBURG

The greatest conquest of the developing proletarian movement has been the discovery of grounds of support for the realization of socialism in the economic condition of capitalist society. As a result of this discovery, socialism was changed from an "ideal" dream by humanity for thousands of years to a thing of historic necessity.

Bernstein denies the existence of the economic conditions for socialism in the society of today. On this count his reasoning has undergone an interesting evolution. At first, in *Neue Zeit* he simply contested the rapidity of the process of concentration taking place in industry. He based his posi-



Armed patrol of Berlin by the Spartacus Bund, forerunner of the German Communist Party founded by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, in the weeks after the November 1918 revolution in Germany that overthrew Kaiser Wilhelm.

tion of socialism, either a definite rate of concentration of industry—that is, a definite delay of the realization of socialism—or, as we have already shown, the absolute disappearance of small capitals, usually described as the disappearance of the small bourgeoisie.

In the course of the latest development of his ideas, Bernstein furnishes us in his book a new assortment of proofs: the statistics of shareholding societies [publicly held corporations]. These statistics are used in order to prove that the number of shareholders increases constantly, and, as a result, the capitalist class does not become smaller but grows bigger....

#### Are all shareholders capitalists?

The statistical passage of immense shareholding societies to middle-sized and small enterprises can be explained only by referring to the fact that the system of shareholding societies continues to penetrate new branches of production. Before, only a small number of large enterprises were organized as shareholding societies. Gradually shareholding organization has won middle-sized and even small enterprises. Today we can observe shareholding societ-

ies with a capital below 1,000 marks.

Now what is the economic significance of the extension of the system of shareholding societies? Economically the spread of shareholding societies stands for the growing socialization of production under the capitalist form—socialization not only of large but also of middle-sized and small production. The extension of shareholding does not therefore contradict Marxist theory but, on the contrary, confirms it emphatically.

What does the economic phenomenon of a shareholding society actually amount to? It represents, on one hand, the unification of a number of small fortunes into a large capital of production. It stands, on the other hand, for the separation of production from capitalist ownership. That is, it denotes that a double victory is being won over the capitalist mode of production—but still on the capitalist base.

What is the meaning, therefore, of the statistics cited by Bernstein, according to which an ever greater number of shareholders participate in capitalist enterprises? These statistics go to demonstrate precisely the following: at present a capitalist enterprise does not correspond, as before, to a

single proprietor of capital but a number of capitalists. Consequently, the economic notion of "capitalist" no longer signifies an isolated individual. The industrial capitalist of today is a collective person, composed of hundreds and even of thousands of individuals. The category "capitalist" has itself become a social category. It has become "socialized"—within the framework of capitalist society.

In that case, how shall we explain Bernstein's belief that the phenomenon of shareholding societies stands for the dispersion and not the concentration of capital? Why does he see the extension of capitalist property where Marx saw its suppression?

This is a simple economic error. By "capitalist," Bernstein does not mean a category of production but the right to property. To him, "capitalist" is not an economic unit but a fiscal unit. And "capital" is for him not a factor of production but simply a certain quantity of money. That is why in his English sewing thread trust he does not see the fusion of 12,300 persons with money into a single capitalist unit but 12,300 different capitalists. That is why the engineer Schuze whose wife's dowry brought him a large number of shares from stockholder Mueller is also a capitalist for Bernstein. That is why for Bernstein the entire world seems to swarm with capitalists.

Here, too, the theoretic base of his economic error is his "popularization" of socialism. For this is what he does. By transporting the concept of capitalism from its productive relations to property relations, and by speaking of simple individuals instead of speaking of entrepreneurs, he moves the question of socialism from the domain of production into the domain of relations of fortune—that is, from the relation between capital and labor to the relation between poor and rich.

In this manner we are merrily led from Marx and Engels to the author of the *Evangel of the Poor Fisherman*. There is this difference, however. Weitling, with the sure instinct of the proletarian, saw in opposition between the poor and the rich, the class antagonisms in their primitive form, and wanted to make of these antagonisms a lever of the movement for socialism. Bernstein, on the other hand, locates the realization of socialism in the possibility of making the poor rich. That is, he locates it in the attenuation of class antagonisms and, therefore, in the petty bourgeoisie.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

tion on a comparison of the occupational statistics of Germany in 1882 and 1895. In order to use these figures for his purpose, he was obliged to proceed in an entirely summary and mechanical fashion. In the most favorable case, he could not, even by demonstrating the persistence of middle-sized enterprises, weaken in any way the Marxian analysis, because the latter does not suppose, as a condition for the realiza-

*May* BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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**Separation of church and state, a note**—Returning on Air Force One from the recent burial of Pope John Paul, President Bush



Harry Ring

summoned reporters on board to hear his experience at the funeral. He told them that as he knelt in prayer at John Paul's bier, he

felt "much more in touch with a spirit."

He added, "There is no doubt in my mind, there is a living God. And no doubt in my mind that the Lord Christ was sent by the Almighty."

**P.S.**—Blithely trampling the Constitutional requirement of separation of church and state, a transcript of Bush's hallelujah press session was sent to the White House for broader media distribution. Taxpayers, of course, will foot the fuel tab for Air Force One.

**Education in France**—A new

French law requires schools to teach in a more favorable light the history of the country's filthy imperialist record—particularly the decades-long "dirty war" against colonial Algeria. Hundreds of thousands of Algerians died before winning independence.

We learned of the new French law from a report in the *Times* of London. Earlier, at least two ranking United Kingdom officials called for a similar approach to the gory history of British imperialism.

**Sounds good**—The African National Congress, which uprooted

the apartheid system of South Africa with the aim of a non-racist social order, has moved to rename Pretoria, the capital city. The proposed name is Tshwane, which means "We are the same."

**And no one's behind bars**—A Canadian Pacific Railway freight train hit a passenger car in Wisconsin, killing four people. A company spokesperson said the crossing was marked by a sign, but it had no lights or gates.

**This they call a union?**—"You keep putting rats in a box and pretty soon these rats go off and kill each

other"—From media interview on prison overcrowding with Charles Hughes, chapter president of the guards "union" at the state prison in Lancaster, California.

**Members of 'ownership society'?**—"Rhode Island: The number of people entering homeless shelters in Rhode Island reached an all-time high [last year]. The Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project says 6,030 people entered shelters, a 6 percent increase from the previous year. It counted 1,564 homeless children, an 8 percent increase from 2003."—*USA Today*.

## U.S. federal, local cops conduct nationwide dragnet

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

In a coordinated nation-wide effort that involved federal, state, and local cops, more than 10,300 people were arrested in the United States in a police sweep the week of April 4–10. This dragnet, timed to coincide with National Crime Victims' Rights Week, was dubbed "Operation FALCON"—Federal and Local Cops Organized Nationally—by the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS).

As its name indicates, Operation FALCON is a part of the recent steps taken by Washington to increase the centralization and information-sharing of its police and intelligence agencies.

"This operation, which produced the largest number of arrests ever recorded during a single initiative, would not have been possible without the cooperation of our law enforcement partners on the federal, state, and local levels," USMS director Benigno Reyna told an April 14 press conference. At the press conference U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez said the exercise showed the government's dedication to deal with "traditional violent crime" as well as "terrorist" threats on U.S. soil. "As a result of this effort, we've developed new relationships, established new lines of communication," Gonzalez added.

This deployment involved more than 3,000 cops daily from 959 separate police, intelligence, and government agencies. Reyna said that this "force multiplier" task force "erases the jurisdictional barriers" that have been obstacles to making arrests. "We can now go anywhere in this country and arrest these fugitives," he said.

In total 10,340 people were arrested and 13,800 cleared on felony warrants, the Justice Department announced. In most states, such as in Louisiana where nearly 349 people were rounded up, local police were deputized to act as marshals to cross jurisdictions. Government agencies such as the Department of Housing and

Urban Development in 37 districts and the Social Security Administration in 17 districts were also involved.

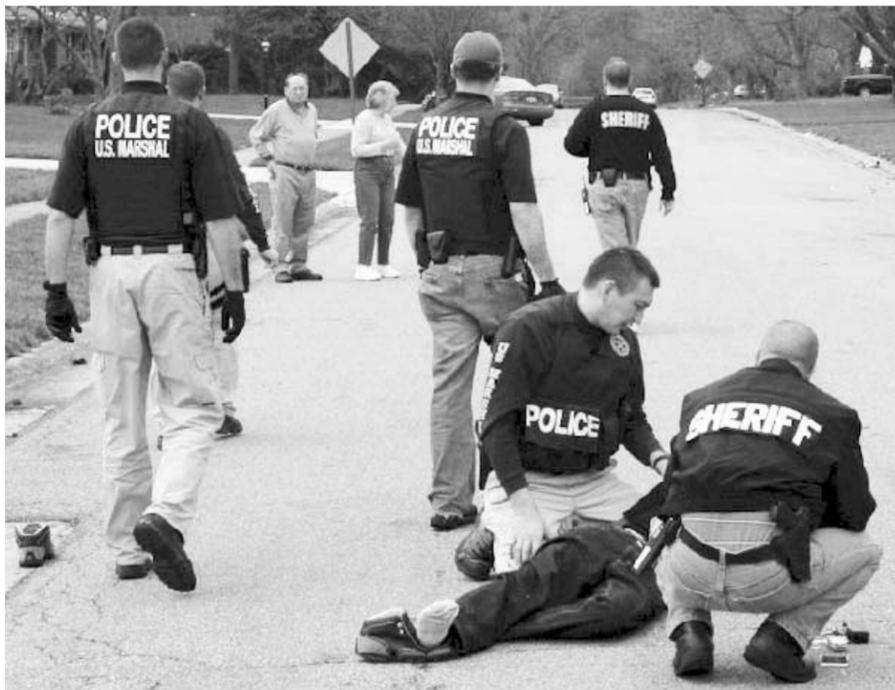
An April 15 article in the *Connecticut Post* reported that U.S. deputy marshals and detectives in Bridgeport and Stratford, Connecticut, "combed utility, motor vehicle and labor department records and used electronic surveillance, informants and stakeouts to get their men."

In the Chicago area, the cops tracked down a man who had escaped from a federal detention center in Fort Dix, New Jersey, in 1997. They knocked on neighbors' doors and questioned his girlfriend. "Everybody knew him, he was very personable," Deputy U.S. Marshal John Jaehnig said, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. "Someone finally told us what train he was going to be on coming home. We caught up to him walking down the street."

The immigration police also played a role in Operation FALCON. At the same time, the Department of Homeland Security reported that during the month of March immigration police conducted their own dragnet aimed at facilities they deemed to be "risk-sensitive." They rounded up 57 undocumented workers, the Associated Press reported, in targeted workplaces that included an airport in Greensboro, North Carolina, the Sears tower in Chicago, and an oil refinery in New Orleans.

The April 14 Justice Department briefing also mentioned the case of a Connecticut man who was arrested at his mother's residence in Kingston, Jamaica. Customs Enforcement got word that he was living in that country and the USMS foreign field office in Kingston working with the Jamaica Constabulary Force has detained him pending extradition.

Gonzalez mentioned some of the new tools that the cops have at their disposal, including the "sneak-and-peek" provision in the Patriot Act that allows the cops to



U.S. Marshals and local cops carry out arrest during Operation Falcon April 4–10.

sneak in and search a home or property secretly and present a search warrant after the fact. This was justified under the rubric of fighting the "war on terrorism." "It has been very useful in a variety of—dealing with all kinds of crime," Gonzalez said. "It is a tool that the Congress says that law enforcement can use in dealing with different kinds of criminals."

This police dragnet took place as the number of people on probation, parole, or serving time in U.S. prisons and jails continues to mount. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number reached a record high of nearly 6.9 million in 2003, the last year for which such figures are available. This represents 3.2 percent of the adult population in the United States.

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



May 9, 1980

CHICAGO—Union pride, solidarity, and the desire to fight for women's equality were the dominant sentiments of the 1,000 women and men who attended the Illinois Labor Conference for the Equal Rights Amendment held here April 26.

They came from every major union in Illinois, and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). Some labor representatives attended from as far away as New York and New Jersey. Members of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and other women's rights groups were also present.

The participants came to join forces to demand that the Illinois state legislature ratify the ERA before its adjournment on June 30. Illinois is one of the fifteen states that have not ratified the proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution barring discrimination on account of sex. Thirty-eight states are needed before June 30, 1982.

They responded with thunderous applause as major labor leaders pledged all-out support for the fight for the ERA and the May 10 national march for the ERA in Chicago called by NOW.

Several important themes ran through the conference. "Labor United for the ERA" proclaimed a big banner above the platform. This was the first time in decades that the major trade unions—AFL-CIO, United Auto Workers, Teamsters, and Mineworkers—in this country have joined together under one roof in pursuit of a common goal.



May 9, 1955

Drug houses licensed to manufacture the Salk vaccine will hit it rich this year, thanks to the miracle preventive. It's theirs, all theirs, to profit on.

Dr. Jonas Salk, the vaccine's discoverer, will collect no royalties. As a man of science he refused to patent the vaccine, giving it to the nation. But the U.S. government handed it to the private companies.

According to the May 3 N.Y. Post, the vaccine is expected to bring about \$20,000,000 in pretax profits to its manufacturers this year.

Dividends on stocks are expected to climb about 70% this year for Allied Laboratories, from \$3.25 per share in 1954 to \$5.50. Other drug houses expect similar bonanzas.

Stock market speculators also stand to gain a handsome profit. They quietly bought up stock in the six drug houses a few months ago.

That they didn't operate entirely on guesswork is hinted in a private newsletter circulated to its clients by Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades and Co., one of the nation's largest brokerage firms.

"While the Francis report on the Salk polio vaccine was supposedly a well-guarded secret," says the newsletter, "the financial community with its usual perspicacity and aplomb, discounted (that is, invested in) the findings well in advance of publication."

## U.S. gov't expands 'watch list'

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The number of individuals on the U.S. government's list to be "watched" at airports and flights has expanded dramatically. The number has grown to 31,000, up from 19,000 last September, according to a report in *Time* magazine.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA), which was formed in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, keeps a secret list of thousands of individuals who are "potential terrorists." Some of them, designated "no-fly," are barred from boarding commercial flights.

Non-U.S. airlines with destinations to the United States must submit a list of passengers and crew members 15 minutes before takeoff. If the flight is destined for another country but must travel through U.S. airspace the airline is only required to provide a list of the crew members. The TSA is now considering new guidelines requiring submission of a list of crew members and passengers on such flights.

On April 8 a KLM flight from Amsterdam to Mexico was denied entry into U.S. airspace and ordered by U.S. authorities to return to the Netherlands. According to press reports, two of the 278 passengers on

board were Saudis whom the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said are on the government's no-fly list. The two men are alleged to have received pilot training with one of the men involved in 9/11 attacks. The plane was diverted to London where the two men were both released after being interrogated by Dutch authorities.

The TSA denied the existence of such a list until November 2002. In 2003 the American Civil Liberties Union in Northern California filed a Freedom of Information request on behalf of two local antiwar activists who had been told they were on such a list. The suit requests that the TSA and Department of Homeland Security provide information on what criteria are used to place individuals on its no-fly/watch list and a method of appeal for those who believe they are on the list mistakenly.

Tom Burke, an attorney for the ACLU in the case, told the judge that he has also been subjected to extra screening and searches at airports and is unable to print his boarding pass at home after booking a flight over the internet because there is a Tom Burke on the list. "I don't know if they mean me, because I'm representing the ACLU, or it's another Tom Burke," he told the press.

# The own debt orship society

In his speech to the Republican convention in New York last September, President George Bush promised to foster an “ownership society” in the United States. A society where health care, pensions, home ownership—you name it—are a private matter between you and your bank account. A “nest egg” of savings, investment, and property that guarantees economic security and is free from government interference.

But from the look of things, as the trends of the last two decades continue, for working people this “ownership society” is increasingly a debtorship society.

The banks, mortgage brokers, auto loan sharks, and credit card companies have more and more ownership over things that working people consider ours. As real wages decline, pensions shrink, and hospital bills and rents skyrocket, those of us who own nothing but our labor power are finding out that all we hold is a growing burden of debt. Working farmers are even more subject to debt slavery—and to losing their land.

As a percentage of disposable income—personal income minus taxes—household debt in the United States has risen from 60 percent in 1984 to a whopping 115 percent today.

In Bush’s convention speech he bragged that “home ownership in America is at an all-time high.”

He forgot to add that the homeowner whose share is growing fastest is the bank.

Since 1995, home prices have risen much faster than the rate of inflation, while the average percentage of the market value of a home paid off to the bank or finance company—equity—is at an all-time low of 55 percent.

That’s the ownership society for you—ownership for the rich, while working people are owners in name only.

“More people will own their own health plans and have the confidence of owning a piece of their retirement,” the president said last September.

About half of the nearly 1.6 million personal bankruptcies in 2001 were due to crushing medical expenses. Is that what owning your own health plan means? Not to mention what we will face when the growing capitalist crisis leads to a financial collapse and millions are thrown out of work.

The new bankruptcy law is aimed primarily at making it harder for working people to get out from under these debts. It

is a cash bonanza for the owners of the auto finance companies, credit card companies, and other lenders. At the same time, it leaves a million little “millionaire’s loopholes” to keep their wealth from being touched by creditors.

Bush said that “ownership brings security and dignity and independence.”

It seems, however, that given the disaster capitalism has in store for us, working people are going to have to find another road to become secure, dignified, and independent.

How about the Utah coal miners who have been fighting a year-and-a-half-long battle for a union? They are fighting for security, dignity, and independence. Not by buying into the dog-eat-dog propaganda that the bosses use to divide us, but by learning that working-class solidarity is the only road to winning such a future.

Ask the Westchester, New York, bus drivers about owning your own retirement. They waged a strike for 48 days against bitter opposition by the bosses and, by sticking together, won a three-year reduction in the age when they can retire with a full pension.

Through these struggles, working people learn there is no individual way out of this disaster for our class. If we place our hopes in bankruptcy court, or a government labor board, or a Democratic Party snake-oil salesman instead of a Republican one, we will always end up holding the short end of the stick. Those all serve the bosses, not workers and farmers.

The “ownership society” is in reality a capitalist society. It’s a class-divided set-up in which a small number of propertied families own the factories, mines, railroads, and land—the means of production—and control the government and all its agencies. Meanwhile, workers and farmers, who produce the wealth, are the ones who bear the brunt of the economic and social catastrophe of capitalism.

The only road to a secure and dignified future for working people—both here and around the world—is to rely entirely on our own strength, our organizations, and our unity. To fight together to rid ourselves of this decaying, crisis-ridden profit system, putting the government and the ownership of the economy in the hands of workers and farmers.

## Vote Communist League in UK!

The *Militant* is publishing the following statement issued by the Communist League election campaigns for Parliament in Edinburgh, Scotland, and London. The general election in the United Kingdom takes place May 5.

British and all imperialist troops out of Iraq, Ireland, Africa and the Balkans! Defend the right of the power-starved colonial world to electrification!

Organize and strengthen the unions to resist the bosses’ attacks!

In two constituencies in the UK general election, working people have the opportunity to vote for a working-class alternative to the parties of capitalism. Communist League candidates Celia Pugh in Bethnal Green and Bow, London, and Peter Clifford in Edinburgh East are presenting a revolutionary working-class program to reach out to our sisters and brothers around the world in order to strengthen the struggle against our common enemies—the imperialist aggressors and capitalist exploiters the world over.

The line presented by the capitalist parties—“vote for us and we’ll do it for you”—is a fake and a fraud. Real social change will not come about by getting someone into Parliament. The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself.

Moreover, what the capitalist parties—whether Labour, Tory, Liberal-Democrat, Scottish Nationalist, or whichever—really mean is “vote for us and we’ll do it to you.” No matter who wins the election, the prospect for working people remains the same: at home, a grinding offensive by the employers against our living standards and conditions of work; government attacks on the social wage and on workers’ rights; scapegoating of immigrants as the billionaire rulers prepare for an open assault on working-class conquests. And their foreign policy will continue to extend these attacks on working people abroad, through imperialist wars.

Driven by the weakness of the British economy in a weakening imperialist system; by the failure of neo-colonial models from Iran to Argentina; and by a world financial crisis, the UK rulers are hitching their wagon to Washington in an attempt to safeguard their place in the pecking order in the imperialist redivision of the world. In this world of sharpening crisis and inter-imperialist competition, Prime Minister Anthony Blair has stated, with support across Parliament, that London’s military forces are “a huge part of British foreign policy in the 21st century.”

In election hustings, using loudhailers from campaign tables on the streets, in their election literature, in the media, at social protests, the Communist League candidates have been explaining that these questions can’t be resolved by a vote once every 4-5 years. They’ve been using the election to advance the international campaign to sell thousands of copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*, which explains the line of march of the working class to wrest political power from the billionaire rulers through a revolutionary struggle and establish a workers and farmers government. This campaign will extend way past the May 5 election date.

Both Communist League candidates are workers who participate in the daily resistance to the government and employer offensive. They are using their campaigns to tell the truth about the strike action by workers at Ambala Foods in Stratford, London, who have recently organized a union and are today using that union to defend their interests.

This action by workers overwhelmingly from the Indian sub-continent is strengthening all workers—it needs and warrants solidarity. The employers’ offensive will lead to more Ambala Foods. Resistance will deepen and broaden. And it’s such resistance that’s generating the seeds of the coming rebellions against the rule of the exploiters and provides hope for humanity’s future.

The Communist League candidates have used the campaign to talk up the need to defend a woman’s right to choose abortion. The leaders of the main capitalist parties have stated that, following the election, parliamentary time may be made available for enacting legislation restricting abortion time limits. But this, like all major questions faced by working people, has not been debated in the election.

In different ways, not just the openly capitalist parties, but also their left hangers-on, have centered their campaigns on the need to vote against Blair and Brown, or Tory leader Michael Howard, or a local MP of one or another party. But it’s not *who* you’re against, it’s *what* you’re for. Vote not for the individual, vote for the program. Vote Communist League.

## Fred Korematsu, fighter against internment of Japanese-Americans

BY PATTI HIYAMA

OAKLAND, California—More than 400 people attended a memorial service here April 16 for Fred Korematsu, who became a symbol of resistance to the World War II military internment of all Japanese-Americans on the West Coast in U.S. concentration camps. He lost a Supreme Court challenge in 1944, but won vindication decades later when his conviction was thrown out by a U.S. District Court.

Memorial speakers recalled his unshakeable belief that the wartime wrongs committed against Japanese-Americans needed to be overturned and his persistence in continuing the fight for justice and equality.

Born in Oakland, California, in 1919, Fred Korematsu was one of four sons of Japanese immigrants who ran a plant nursery. He was a welder working in the San Francisco shipyards in 1942 when President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, laying the groundwork for the removal of all Japanese-Americans from the West Coast.

That summer more than 112,000 people of Japanese descent were evacuated from the West Coast and incarcerated behind barbed wire in concentration camps in remote, harsh regions. Many of them had been given only 72 hours to dispose of their property and to pack all their belongings into two bags per person. Two-thirds of the evacuees were citizens of the United States. Their only crime was their Japanese ancestry.

The Korematsu family was evacuated to Tanforan, an abandoned racetrack south of San Francisco, where they lived in a horse stall. Although virtually all Japanese-Americans on the West Coast complied with the order to report for transportation to the camps, Korematsu refused. “I was just living my life and that’s what I wanted to do,” he said in a 1987 interview.

“All of them (family and friends) turned their backs on me at that time because they thought I was a troublemaker,” he recalled. “I thought what the military was doing was unconstitutional. I was really upset because I was branded as an enemy alien when I’m an American.”

He traveled around, changed his draft registration card to show his race as Spanish-Hawaiian, and even underwent plastic surgery to alter his Asian features, so he could stay with his Italian-American girlfriend. On May 30, 1942, he was arrested.

In jail Korematsu was visited by Ernest Besig, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Northern California, who, unlike the ACLU as a whole, was anxious to test the constitutionality of internment. The lawyer tried to free Korematsu by posting \$5,000 bail, but the military police refused to release him, sending him to join his family at Tanforan. They all ended up at a concentration camp in the desert at Topaz, Utah, where he was ostracized by his fellow inmates because he had tried to evade internment.

Korematsu was one of three young Japanese-American men who resisted the military-imposed curfew and/or evacuation. Minoru Yasui, a lawyer in Portland, Oregon, was arrested,

convicted, and served nine months in solitary confinement for violating the curfew. Gordon Hirabayashi, a 23-year-old math major at the University of Washington, refused to obey the curfew, to register for evacuation to a concentration camp, or to register for the draft because of his pacifist views. He never went to camp, spending nearly two years in county jails and federal prisons for his refusal to go along with the U.S. government.

Fred Korematsu was tried in a federal district court where he was found guilty of violating the military order that excluded all Japanese-Americans from the West Coast and was sentenced to five years probation. He appealed and lost in the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld his conviction by a 6-3 vote in 1944.

The majority of the court ruled that Korematsu was not excluded “because of hostility to him or his race,” but because the U.S. government was at war with Japan, and the military “feared an invasion of our West Coast.” The liberal Justice Hugo Black wrote, “we could not reject the finding of the military authorities that it was impossible to bring about an immediate segregation of the disloyal from the loyal.”

### History of discrimination

Japanese in the United States had faced extensive discrimination before World War II. After 1924, for example, they could no longer become citizens, buy land, or marry whites, and they were barred from even entering the United States.

Japanese residing in the United States were singled out as a target because of their race after the Japanese military attacked Pearl Harbor. But racism alone did not account for this treatment. The policy of mass evacuation and incarceration was also part of a national policy of suppressing dissent from the labor movement and the struggles of oppressed minorities under the slogan of wartime unity.

Furthermore, the Pacific theater of World War II was essentially an inter-imperialist conflict between two capitalist powers, Tokyo and Washington, for control of markets and natural resources in East Asia. The U.S. ruling class appealed to racist prejudice against Japanese to justify the war and disguise its true character. The creation of racist hysteria against the “sneaky, dishonest, sly Japs” was necessary for the ruling class to ensure that U.S. workers would fight.

Toward the end of the war, like many of the internees, Korematsu was allowed to leave the camp and work as a welder in Salt Lake City. Later he returned to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he worked as a structural steel draftsman. His felony conviction, however, prevented him from getting a job at a large firm or government agency.

Four decades later, in the 1980s, a lawyer and historian, Peter Irons, stumbled upon “top secret” government documents showing that officials withheld, suppressed, and altered evidence indicating that there was no military necessity to

Continued on Page 11

# N.Y. bus drivers win

Continued from front page

struck are members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100.

In the face of an unrelenting anti-union campaign in the media and by local politicians, the strikers held the line and forced the company to yield substantial gains in the new agreement.

The strikers' main demand was for a reduction in the age at which drivers can retire with a full pension from 62 to 57. The strikers won a reduction in the age to 59 by the fourth year of the agreement, which makes it possible for workers with 20 years of service to receive full benefits at that age.

Workers who retire earlier than that lose 25 percent of their pension. "For many, many years we have had this 25 percent penalty for early retirement," Ware said. "Now with this strike settlement, we have cut three years off the age where we can retire with no penalty."

The drivers also won a wage increase. "We got yearly raises of 3.5 percent, 3 percent, 3 percent, and 3.25 percent in the new contract," said John Watson, a bus driver with 8 years' seniority. "I have an ill wife at home, so keeping the mail order prescription plan in effect and the other medical benefits

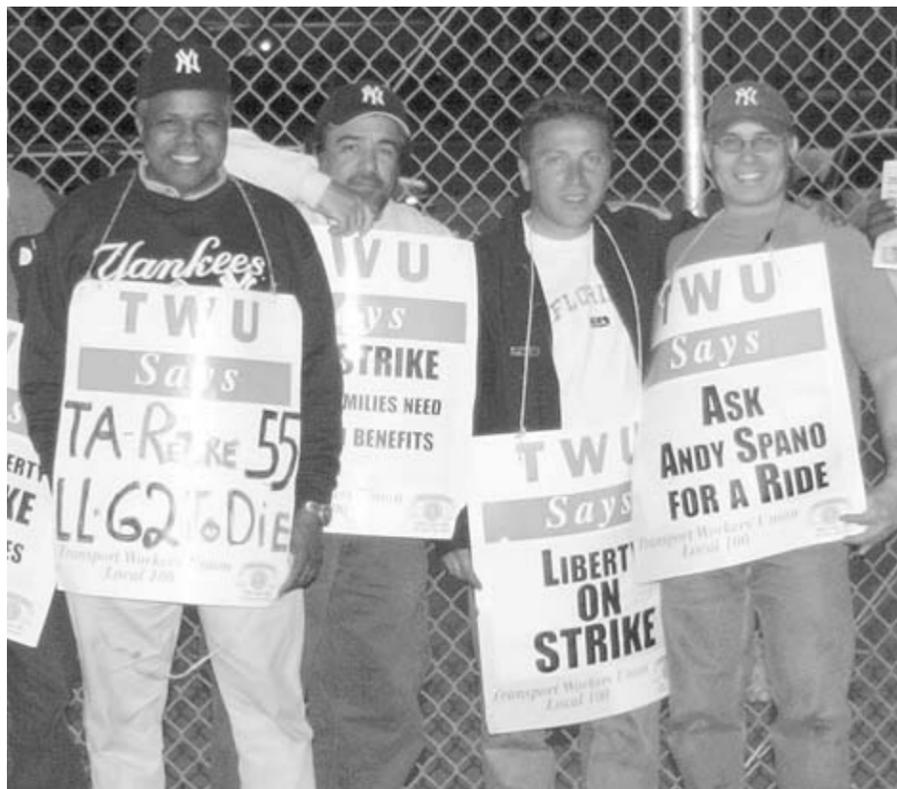
are important to me."

The company pushed for concessions on the health-care benefits and won some takebacks. Under the old contract workers paid \$5 weekly for medical insurance. The new contract increases this figure to \$13.80 the first year and adds a few more dollars each year of the contract.

But overall, the workers coming out of the contract vote were happy about the gains they had won through the hard-fought strike. "What they offered us at the beginning of the strike was substantially less than what they offered at the end," said James Pace, a driver with 30 years seniority. "That's why I voted for the contract."

The settlement meeting, which almost all of the strikers attended, also had a sad note to it as one of the members of the local, Barry Garvey, was killed in a motorcycle accident while leaving his picket duty the day before. Those attending the meeting wore a ribbon reading "Mourn for the Dead. Fight for the Living."

"Barry was on the picket line everyday," Watson said. "As far as the local goes, he died in the line of duty." More than \$1,000 was collected at the meeting for Garvey's wife and three children.



Militant/Willie Cotton

Members of TWU Local 100 on picket in Westchester, New York, April 5. After 48 days on strike the bus drivers won a wage increase and lower retirement age.

## Right-wing Cuban terrorist seeks asylum from Washington

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—At a well attended press conference on April 15, Dago-berto Rodriguez, chief of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, demanded that the U.S. government immediately arrest Cuban counterrevolutionary Luis Posada Carriles.

A participant in the CIA-organized Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, Posada Carriles has a decades-long history of violent attacks on the Cuban revolution. He was involved in a mid-air bombing of a Cuban airliner that killed 73 people in 1976. Most recently he led a failed assassination attempt in Panama on Cuban president Fidel Castro in November 2000. He and three others were convicted of charges related to the failed assassination, but were later pardoned by the Panamanian government.

Rodriguez said that as early as April 1 Cuba's foreign ministry and the Interests Section asked Washington whether it could confirm press reports that Posada Carriles had entered the United States. Castro repeated Havana's demand on April 11. "Up to now, no U.S. government authority has issued a word on this matter," said Rodriguez.

On April 13, Posada Carriles's attorney,

Eduardo Soto, confirmed that his client had entered the United States and planned to apply for political asylum. He said that the Cuban rightist would also claim status under a 1966 law that grants Cubans permanent legal residency status one year and a day after arriving in the United States.

Both the Cuban and Venezuelan governments have demanded he be extradited to be tried for his crimes. "We believe that he is in danger anywhere but the United States," his lawyer said at the press conference.

According to the Cuban newspaper *Periodico26*, Castro said that Kevin Whitaker, coordinator of the U.S. State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs, denied the credibility of information published by the *Miami Herald*, including statements made by the Cuban rightist's lawyer. Diplomats at the Cuban Interests Section confirmed the paper's account.

Last August Posada Carriles and four other Cuban counterrevolutionaries were released from a Panamanian prison after receiving a pardon from Panama's outgoing president and White House ally Mireya Moscoso. The four were serving seven to eight year terms resulting from charges of attempting to assassinate Castro during the

Cuban leader's visit to Panama to attend the Ibero-American Summit in 2000. A Panamanian court convicted them on the lesser charge of "endangering public safety," claiming no detonators were found in the area in which the attack was to occur.

Three of the Cuban ultrarightists, Gasper Jiménez, Pedro Remón, and Guillermo Novo, who are also U.S. citizens, were flown to the United States. Posada Carriles went to an undisclosed country. According to press reports, he recently entered the United

States through Mexico. Castro has called on the Mexican government to explain how he could have traveled through the country without detection.

In 1985 Posada was allowed to escape from a Venezuelan prison where he was being held pending a Venezuelan prosecutor's appeal of his acquittal on charges of bombing the Cuban airliner. He later turned up in El Salvador, helping to supply arms to U.S.-backed Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries.

## Life of Fred Korematsu

Continued from Page 10

incarcerate the Japanese-Americans.

For instance, these documents revealed that the Justice Department knew there was no evidence to support the claim that people of Japanese ancestry were engaging in "extensive radio signaling and in shore-to-ship signaling" to Japanese ships. In fact, they admitted that some of the so-called "evidence of signaling" was nothing more than kids going to outdoor toilets at night with flashlights! Even FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and officials in the Federal Communications Commission secretly concurred.

When Korematsu was presented with this new evidence by Irons he decided to act, even though reopening the case was a big risk. (In fact, within weeks of reopening his case, Korematsu was fired from his job.) He and Irons decided to try to overturn his conviction, along with those of Hirabayashi and Yasui. A team of young, mostly Japanese-American lawyers, whose families had also been interned during World War II, filed the appeals.

In light of the new information, in 1983 U.S. District Judge Marilyn Patel threw out Korematsu's conviction. Yasui's conviction was vacated in 1984 and Hirabayashi's conviction was vacated in 1987 by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 1971 Congress revoked the law under which all three had been convicted. In 1983, the Commission on Wartime Relocation condemned the internment of Japanese-Americans as "not justified by military necessity," but motivated by "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."

In 1988 President Reagan called the internment "a grave injustice" and signed a Congressional bill authorizing reparations of \$20,000 each to the 56,000 surviving internees. In 1998, Korematsu was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States.

In the years after the decision, Korematsu spoke around the country about the lessons learned from the U.S. concentration camps during World War II. At first he was reluctant to speak because he thought "he was not educated or eloquent enough to express himself," as Karen Kai, one of his lawyers, said at the memorial meeting. "But audiences always responded to his genuineness and he came to enjoy the experience."

"There are Arab-Americans today who are going through what Japanese-Americans experienced years ago, and we can't let that happen again," said Korematsu in a 2001 documentary film detailing his fight, "Of Civil Wrongs and Rights." Korematsu died on March 30 at age 86.

## LETTERS

### Agent Orange

Articles in the April 4 and April 11 *Militant* on the fight by Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange and by residents in New Plymouth, New Zealand, near a Dow Chemical plant described Agent Orange as a "defoliant." This characterization, repeated by the big-business press and the U.S. military, is inaccurate.

Defoliants cause premature leaf abscission, which usually doesn't kill the plant. The active ingredients in Agent Orange are members of a class of selective broadleaf herbicides that were developed under secrecy during World War II for use as biological warfare agents.

In 1961, President Kennedy approved the full-scale aerial application of these and other herbicides to deprive the "enemy" of food and cover.

Agent Orange was employed not as a defoliant, but as a lethal biological agent used on a mass scale against the people of Vietnam. It was a piece with Washington's indiscriminant carpet bombing and napalming making the Vietnamese workers and farmers pay as heavy a price as possible for going up against U.S. imperial designs.

Karl Butts  
Tampa, Florida

### Air India frame-up

The article by Joe Yates on the collapse of the attempt to frame-up two Sikh religious leaders for supposedly bombing an Air India plane in 1985 continues the *Militant's* fine record of exposing this and other frame-ups by the capitalist state.

There is one ambiguity in Yates' article that should be clarified. He reports that the two defendants, Ajajib Singh Bagri and Ripudaman Singh Malik, "spent well over four years behind bars in a case that was based on circumstantial evidence."

Actually the case was not based on a shred of credible evidence of any kind, circumstantial or otherwise. The frame-up collapsed because, the "prosecution (was) based on a pack of lies," according to *Vancouver Sun* columnist Ian Mulgrew. Christie Blatchford of the *Globe and Mail* said the crown's case was based on a gang of "disreputable witnesses motivated by naked self-interest, few of whom could be relied upon to accurately report even the time of day."

The names of all of the major witnesses were kept secret, supposedly for security reasons. One was an FBI informant who was paid \$300,000 (U.S.) for his "testimony" and, on the very eve of the trial, tried to bargain himself another \$200,000. The judge pointed out that he was able to maintain his status as a landed immigrant in the U.S. only as long as he continued as an FBI informant.

Steve Penner  
Vancouver, British Columbia

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. 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.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### CALIFORNIA

#### Los Angeles

Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Defeat of U.S. Imperialism in Vietnam. Speaker: Wendy Lyons. Fri. May 6, 7:30 p.m. Donation. 4229 S. Central Avenue. (323) 233-9372

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

How Vietnam's Defeat of Imperialism Changed Face of U.S., World Politics. Speakers: Argiris Malapanis, editor of the *Militant* newsweekly; Arrin Hawkins, *Militant* staff writer. Both recently participated in 2nd International Preparatory Meeting of World Festival of Youth and Students in Vietnam. Fri. April 29. Dinner 7 p.m., program 8 p.m. Donation.

307 W. 36th St. 10 fl. (north elevators) (212) 629-6649.

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

The U.S. Rulers' Coming Wars and the Tasks of Working People. Speaker: Joe Swanson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri. May 6. Dinner 6:30 pm, program 7:30 p.m. Donation. 3707 Douglas Ave. (515) 255-1707.

### SWEDEN

#### Stockholm

Vietnam: 30-Year Anniversary of the Victory Against Imperialism. Speaker: Anita Östling, Communist League. Fri. May 6, 7 p.m. Bjulvagen 33 kv, S-122 41 Enskede (08) 316933

## New Zealand miners demand pay parity

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—“[Only a] 2.8 percent wage offer!!? Get real!!” read a placard held by one of 50 pickets at the Spring Creek mine near Greymouth on the West Coast of the South Island. The April 21 action marked a 48-hour strike at coal mines across New Zealand involving five mines and around 700 miners.

The workers are demanding a 6 percent wage rise and are calling on the government-owned monopoly, Solid Energy—dubbed “Squalid Energy” in one of the placards—to take steps to eliminate pay disparities across the seven mines it operates.

“We want our fair share—EPMU stand tall!” read the lead banner at Spring Creek, which is an underground mine. Pickets carried the banner on a midday march through Greymouth, a town of 10,000 people. The following day West Coast miners picketed the company’s head office in Christchurch, a five-hour drive away. The miners, who until 1993 had their own national union, are organized by the Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union (EPMU). Their actions have reinforced the union’s “Fair Share—Five in ’05” campaign launched earlier this year. The union is aiming for a minimum of 5 percent wage rises in a series of contracts now up for negotiation.

EPMU members have organized a number of one-day strikes in support of the campaign. Other unionists have picked up the baton, from bank workers to Tramways Union—organized bus drivers in Auckland, who have given notice of six-day strike action to begin May 5.

The miners are also demanding action on longstanding grievances that are specific to the industry. Among their demands, reported the April 22 Christchurch *Press*, are a “multi-employer collective agreement to cover all the mines and pay parity across the sites.”

Quoted in a union press release, EPMU miners advocate Ray Urquhart explained April 15 that “generally speaking, workers at the underground mines in the South Island earn less than do those in the North Island, and workers at open-cast mines in the North Island earn less than those in the South Island.”



Striking coal miners protest April 21 at Solid Energy’s Spring Creek in 48-hour mine strike, part of the union’s national campaign for “Fair Share—Five in ’05.”

Open-cast (surface) mining has increasingly come to dominate coal production in New Zealand. By 1995, before the recent boom in prices and production, it was responsible for 81 percent of the coal mined.

### Lead-up actions

Leading up to the national stoppage—the first in a decade—workers at several mines organized local actions. At Huntly East and Rotowaru, reported the EPMU on April 20, miners refused “to do all work except to honor an agreement to supply 15,000 tons of coal to the Glenbrook steel mill before any strike started.”

In response to the spate of industrial action that has taken the company off guard, Solid Energy chief operating officer Barry Bragg said, “we find out when guys don’t turn up for work. It’s very difficult to run the business.” The *Greymouth Evening Star* reported, “Mr. Bragg said the company was a good employer, and it paid its staff two to three times the national average wage, as well as shared profits, subsidised superannuation, medical insurance and life insurance.”

A week earlier, Bragg had told reporters that the Spring Creek mine “is in danger of missing the boom in international thermal coal prices.” These were “currently US\$55 a tonne, up from US\$25 a tonne 18 months ago.” Spring Creek has been idled since

November while miners address coal seam problems, including gas leaks. “The future of the mine depends on it achieving a significant improvement in mine productivity,” Bragg said.

In response to Bragg’s claims of company generosity, Spring Creek miner Harold Gibbens told the media that “the pay parity issue is just not going to go away. The company is making good profits and we think it’s a good time for them to close the gap.”

“We only want the 11 percent disparity between us and Huntly,” said Gibbens, who convenes the mine’s union committee. Skilled workers are leaving the mines to make a better and less dangerous living “top-side,” he said.

The scarcity of trained miners presents the Solid Energy bosses with an acute version of the labor shortage that has been a theme of capitalist discussion across New Zealand. Officials of the company, which is 100 percent government-owned but functions like other capitalist concerns, traveled to the United Kingdom earlier this year in search of trained miners.

“We can’t afford to wait 18 months to two years to train people. So we are better off coming to the UK and making some jobs offers,” Bragg told the BBC. The company has “a lot of projects...under way,” he said, in the context of the “unexpected boom” in New Zealand’s mining indus-

try. The New Zealand Press Association reported in March that two weeks after advertizing in Britain the company had received 77 applications.

### Lucrative exports

While New Zealand’s coal industry is modest by international standards, Solid Energy has carved out lucrative export markets for its low-sulfur product among steel makers in Japan, China, India, and elsewhere. The company also supplies coal to the Huntly Power Station and New Zealand Steel’s Glenbrook Mill near Auckland.

The Huntly station also runs on 1 million tons of coal imported from Indonesia each year. As the coal miners launched their two-day strike, Bragg claimed that if the company doesn’t keep its wage costs down these imports could rise to 1.5 million tons.

According to government figures, coal-fired power plants supply less than 5 percent of New Zealand’s electricity needs. The country has no nuclear power plants. Hydroelectric river dams, by contrast, provide up to 70 percent of the country’s power. The diminishing options for more such dams has helped to draw attention to coal-fired stations as an alternative. Voices in the ruling class have demanded that nuclear power also be considered as an option.

### Wage campaign unfolds

Meanwhile, other protest strikes have unfolded as workers in the EPMU and other unions press their demands for wage rises of 5 percent or more. Some 250 bank workers employed by the ANZ and National banks marched in downtown Auckland April 22 as part of a daylong strike to demand overtime pay.

The bus drivers in the Tramways Union stopped work for 24 hours on April 4. Their decision to strike for a week from May 5 followed their rejection of the repackaged pay offer by the Stagecoach company. The workers “want their hourly pay lifted from \$13.94 to \$16 (NZ\$1=US\$0.72), and more rest breaks, against a previous offer of a three-year deal starting at \$15,” reported the April 21 *Herald*.

The workers have declared that they will refuse to drive the last trip of the day if previous runs have pushed them into overtime.

According to the *New Zealand Herald*, union advocate Gary Froggatt said the drivers “would consider a range of tactics, including a possible ‘fare-free’ day in which they would keep driving buses but refuse to make passengers pay for their rides.”

For further reading  
from Pathfinder

### Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

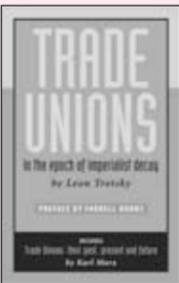
Tells the story of the 1934 strikes that built an industrial union and a fighting social movement in Minneapolis. \$16.95



### Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky and Karl Marx  
with Preface by Farrell Dobbs

Food for thought—and action—from revolutionary leaders of three different generations of the modern working-class movement. \$15.00



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## Peru farmers strike wins price increase

BY JUAN SEBASTIÁN LEÓN ROCA

LIMA, Peru—After a 10-day agricultural strike from March 28 to April 6, more than 20,000 potato farmers of the Apurimac region in the southern Andes of Peru forced the government to increase the price of potatoes to nine cents a pound. Previously the price was two cents. In addition to this, they pressured the government to buy 5,000 tons of potatoes to comply with Decree 27767, according to which the state must buy Peruvian produce for use in social programs. That decree was won through similar hard-fought struggles.

Potatoes are the main product of this region. Sixty-five percent of the region’s 400,000 inhabitants are farmers, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Information of Peru (INEIP). The farmers’ struggle mobilized thousands of producers in the region, who blocked highways and occupied the airport in the capital of the province.

In response, the government of President Alejandro Toledo declared a state of emergency, dispatching 800 armed police and soldiers. The police assaulted the strikers at the airport and removed them by force, leav-

ing 15 wounded, several of them gravely.

The farmers frustrated the government’s efforts to intimidate them with this public display of force. Reynaldo Ancco, a farmer and leader of the Regional Agrarian Defense Front of Apurimac (FDRA), pointed out that “they couldn’t push back the protests—all they could do was to call a truce to calm the situation so that a high level commission could be brought in, made up of the ministers of the departments of agriculture, transport and communication, and women, to begin a dialog to try to solve the dispute,” reported the daily *La República*.

Premier Carlos Ferrero blamed the farmers for the situation, claiming on the one hand that their lack of planning resulted in overproduction that drove down the price of potatoes, and on the other hand, that the farmers were obeying what he called the sinister interests of a Mafia of intermediaries who were behind the protests. Ancco rejected Prime Minister Ferrero’s accusations, stating that “in this fight we potato farmers are the leading force,” according to *La República*.

The government had no choice but to send in the high level commission the

farmers demanded, not second-string officials as it had originally intended. Those sent were: Manuel Manrique, minister of agriculture; José Ortiz, minister of transportation and communication; and Ana María Romero, minister of women’s affairs and social development, who met at the airport with farmer leaders of the Andahuaylas FDRA.

In addition to the price guarantees, the farmers won the government’s promise to pave the Andahuaylas highway and reopen José María Arguedas National University, something many local residents have demanded as a minimal requirement for access to education in the area.

With this victory the farmers won another step forward in the ongoing struggle to win a national food policy that doesn’t rely on imports for basic foods, and in which the farmers are paid sustainable prices for their products. For example, imported wheat products have displaced locally grown potatoes for a long time.

The food import policy affects 94 percent of farmers who produce for the national market and compete with heavily subsidized agricultural imports from other countries.