

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Socialists respond to
Oklahoma bombing

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Washington uses falling dollar to club Tokyo

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Amidst international currency paroxysms, the capitalist class in Japan is taking the heaviest blows as the yen soars to new highs against the U.S. dollar. Washington is attempting to use the rising yen as a club against Tokyo. But to the chagrin of the U.S. government, the currency tumult and its consequences are beyond its control.

Since January 1, the greenback has declined 19 percent against the yen and 13 percent against the German mark. The currencies of the weakest imperialist powers, and those in much of the semicolonial world, have been ravaged.

But in spite of the long-term decline of the dollar, the billionaire class in the United States holds an edge over its international competitors — and their respective currencies. Washington's two largest trading partners — Canada and Mexico — have seen their currencies drop farther and faster than the dollar, which remains far stronger than most around the globe.

At this juncture, the rise of the yen against the dollar reflects the relative weakness of Japanese imperialism, including its slow progress in driving down living standards and speeding up the productivity of workers in Japan. U.S. big business has gone further than any of its rivals in these objectives.

The capitalist class in Germany continues to draw short-term benefits from the declining dollar. The mark is viewed by currency traders as a safe haven against political storms in Europe and beyond. Elections nearing in France and Italy sent the dollar to a new post-war low against the mark April 18. While a rising mark has contributed to planned layoffs at companies such as Daimler-Benz, it also draws capital from weaker economies in

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Bolivia gov't cracks down, orders state of siege

BY PAT SMITH

Unable to stem workers' protests after weeks of confronting union rallies with tear gas, rubber bullets, and arrests, the Bolivian government declared a state of siege April 19. The regime of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada arrested dozens of union officials and raided the offices of the Bolivian Workers Confederation (COB), where union leaders were voting to reject an agreement to end a six-week national strike.

The state of siege prohibits public gatherings of three or more people, imposes a curfew from midnight to 6:00 a.m., curbs travel within the country, and restricts other democratic rights.

Unions called the nationwide walkout in March, after the government arrested dozens of leaders of the striking teachers'

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Rallies demand, 'Free Irish political prisoners'

Sinn Fein calls on London to quit stalling on talks

BY NAOMI CRAINE

"If the British refuse to listen to reasoned and reasonable argument, then let them listen to the sound of marching feet and angry voices," said Gerry Adams. "We cannot accept the exclusion of the Sinn Fein from dialogue." Adams, the president of Sinn Fein, was speaking to more than 1,000 people gathered for an April 16 graveside commemoration in Dublin, Ireland.

The same day several thousand marched to a cemetery in west Belfast to mark the anniversary of the Easter Rising against British rule in Ireland. The 1916 rebellion was crushed by British forces after nearly a week of fighting and its leaders executed.

Dozens of actions took place Easter Sunday this year in cities and neighborhoods across Ireland, north and south. Additional processions were held in several cities the following day, and 3,000 turned out April 18 for a commemorative march near the Sinn Fein office in Belfast.

In New York, several hundred supporters of Irish self-determination marked the anniversary of the uprising at an event in Queens, many of them workers who recently immigrated from Ireland. Other celebrations took place in Irish communities internationally.

Sean Garland, an unemployed worker and member of the Young Socialists who participated in the Belfast march, remarked that the commemoration there was bigger than similar events in previous years. "People, including a significant number of youth, lined the parade route,"



Militant/Marc Lichtman

Protests are demanding that London quit stalling and begin serious negotiations with Sinn Fein. Hundreds rallied in New York April 8 to free Irish prisoners in U.S. jails.

he noted.

Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness addressed the rally in Belfast. He and Adams both demanded the British government stop stalling and include the republican party in talks on the future of Northern Ireland, which has been under direct British military occupation for the last

quarter-century.

In an attempt to slow negotiations and take the onus off its troops as the source of violence in Ulster, London has demanded that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) completely disarm before Sinn Fein is allowed to fully participate in the negotia-

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As campaign to promote Curtis pamphlet gains, prison authorities deny him a copy

BY JOHN COX

DES MOINES, Iowa — Prison officials at the Iowa State Penitentiary in Fort Madison, Iowa, have informed Mark Curtis that they are withholding the copy of the new pamphlet *Why Is Mark Curtis Still in Prison?* sent to him by the Pathfinder bookstore in Des Moines.

Curtis told visitors April 15 that he was informed by prison officials that the pamphlet has been sent to the headquarters of the Iowa Department of Corrections in Des Moines for review. After the review, he was told, a decision will be made whether he will be allowed to receive the pamphlet.

Supporters of Curtis, along with attorney William Kutmus, are attempting to learn what prison officials' objections are and are working to reverse this undemocratic measure.

Curtis, a union and political activist, has been imprisoned for more than six years on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. He is currently being held in segregated lockup in the maximum security Iowa State Penitentiary after being victimized by prison guards.

A recent international mailing by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee informed supporters of the new pamphlet on Curtis's case and urged them to help ensure broad distribution.

"By campaigning with this pamphlet," the defense committee letter said, "we will not only find new support but will lay the groundwork for the next big push of the defense committee — to press Iowa officials to release Mark from lockup and grant him parole."

John Studer, coordinator of the defense committee, reports that they have received a significant response to the mailing.

"We've already received a dozen re-

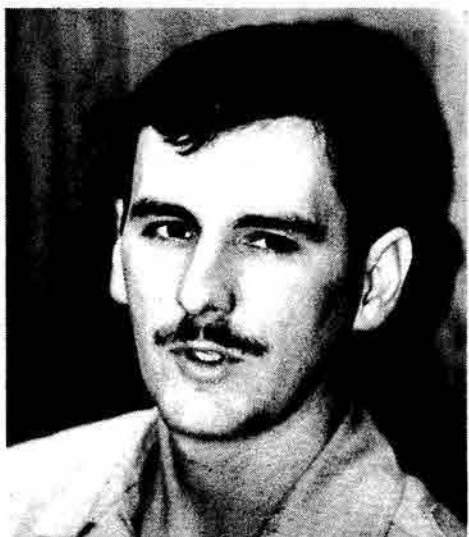
sponses, including requests for copies of the pamphlet," Studer said. "A number are from unionists, including one from John Bohlman, a United Transportation Union activist in Lincoln, Nebraska, and from Ed Everts in Charlotte, Vermont, former president of Packinghouse Workers Local 201 at Wilson and Co. in Los Angeles."

"Others come from political activists, like Carol Warren and Todd Garland in Cumberland, Kentucky. Warren is active with the Peace and Justice Office of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky, and Garland is with the Catholic Committee of Appalachia," Studer said.

"Another response came from the author Michael Parenti," Studer added. "Parenti noted that he has written a summary of the Curtis case in the most recent edition of his book *Democracy for the Few*."

"A number of other activists have responded with financial contributions, including from Portland, Oregon; Denver; New York City; Iowa City, Iowa; and Omaha, Nebraska," Studer said. "In the first week after we sent out the mailing we received more than \$600 in the mail."

To help with the campaign to circulate the new pamphlet and to keep up with the efforts to win justice for Mark Curtis, contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.



Militant/Luis Madrid

Mark Curtis at Anamosa prison, 1990.



IN BRIEF

Wages up for São Paulo workers

Auto workers organized by the metalworkers union in Brazil's São Paulo region recently won an 18 percent pay increase and a reduction in working hours from 44 to 42 hours a week. Ten percent of the pay increase covers inflation since November. The union previously won a 15.8 percent wage increase to cover inflation before November.

The agreement covers some 110,000 workers, 60 percent of whom work in auto plants, most of them owned by Ford and Volkswagen. Demand in the Brazilian auto industry has risen sharply; car production hit a record 151,000 vehicles in March. There are about 33,000 auto parts workers who have not reached an agreement and are threatening a strike. Some 20,000 General Motors workers have been on strike since April 4 fighting for a contract.

No May Day as usual in Mexico

Fidel Velázquez, president of the Mexican Workers Confederation (CTM), announced an unprecedented cancellation of this year's May Day march. Velázquez said organizational costs were too high given the economic crisis in Mexico. But Velázquez, at a meeting of the Congress of Labor, was quoted by the Mexico City daily *La Jornada* as saying, "the rank and file could go beyond our control and that could lead to a serious situation."

Instead, the Congress of Labor, which groups unions affiliated with the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, will place advertisements supporting the government's economic policy and possibly hold a rally in a small auditorium. However, unions unaffiliated with the CTM, along with the capitalist opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution, are announcing their own plans to organize a May Day march.

Venezuelan banks go belly-up

Following the collapse of Venezuela's second largest bank, Banco Latino, last January, a string of 16 large banks have failed. The fall of these institutions was the most dramatic crisis to hit a banking system this century, taking more than half of all deposits and assets in the banking sector.

Hundreds of thousands of accounts were frozen and 15 percent of Venezuela's gross national product was spent to refund depositors and to bail out the banks. Venezuela was once touted as the richest country in Latin America due to its massive oil wealth.

EU and Ottawa reach fish deal

After weeks of negotiations between the Canadian government and European Union officials, an agreement has been reached on apportioning the turbot catch outside Canada's 200-mile fishing limit. The Canadian fleet can now take in 10,000 tons, 7,000 in its waters and 3,000 outside, while the European-owned trawlers will be allowed to catch 5,013 tons above the 6,000 caught so far in the disputed waters. Ottawa also agreed to drop charges against the Spanish captain whom it had seized earlier and refund the bond and bail posted by Madrid, along with proceeds from the seized catch.

New enforcement laws were agreed to, giving the Canadian government new powers to monitor fishing off Newfoundland. Monitors will be on every vessel in disputed waters. Spain and Portugal are the only EU member countries whose fleets fish in this region.

Fujimori wins Peru election

Self-proclaimed authoritarian and Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori retained his post with 65 percent of the vote in his second bid for the presidency. The closest candidate was Javier Perez de Cuellar, former United Nations secretary general, who received 22 percent of the vote.

Railing against political parties, vowing



Students at Rutgers University in New Jersey continue to demand that university president Francis Lawrence resign following racist remarks he made last year. Some 250 students marched and sat in the street in front of Lawrence's home in protest April 12. Cops used pepper gas and clubs to evict the demonstrators. Students reported injuries from the police attack.

to gain "total control of inflation," and continuing aggressive privatization of state enterprises — including Petroperu, the state-owned oil and gas company — Fujimori said he plans to make Peru "a leader in Latin America in a very short time." The Peruvian president wants to renegotiate the \$6 billion debt with international creditors. He promises "a real democracy that depends on social justice...that seeks efficiency. And that's an efficiency without political parties."

Ukraine is not investor-friendly

Woes continue for would-be investors in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as they compete with state-owned companies for domination of the Russian and CIS markets. Cargill, the agribusiness giant, complains it signed a \$10 million seed growing contract with the Ukrainian government — only to find out the contract had to be approved by the state-run Ukrainian Seedgrowers' association, Cargill's main competitor in the country.

Capitalists fear unpredictable and fluctuating CIS policy changes, which undermine their ability to take advantage of investment opportunities. Investors also complain the tax system does not defend their profits.

Argentina workers fight attack

When Continental Fleguina bosses recently announced the closing of their domestic electronics plant in Ushuaia, Argentina, 200 metalworkers occupied the plant in protest. Cops immediately went in

and forced the workers out with tear gas, injuring 14 workers. Following the police assault, the workers surrounded the governor's mansion and the police headquarters and pelted both buildings with rocks.

On April 12, worker Victor Choque was fatally shot in the head and at least 25 were injured when cops attempted to bust up another demonstration. José Estabillo, governor of Tierra del Fuego province, at the southern tip of South America, asked Buenos Aires to send in 200 cops for reinforcement. Estabillo's spokesman said the death of the worker resulted from a head injury, claiming, "No one ordered the police to use lead bullets."

Winnie Mandela resigns post

After being fired for a second time, Winnie Mandela resigned her post as deputy minister of arts, culture, science, and technology April 17, the day before her dismissal was to take effect. She had earlier gone to court to contest attempts by South African president Nelson Mandela to have her discharged. She told reporters she was stepping down to pursue "more pressing" interests, and indicated she would drop her legal case.

Winnie Mandela is presently under investigation for corruption and influence-peddling. She was removed from her cabinet post in the South African government following insubordination. In announcing her dismissal South African president Nelson Mandela said, "I sincerely hope this action will help her to reflect and improve on her conduct in positions of leadership."

— DAMON TINNON

THE MILITANT

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Washington clubs Tokyo with the dollar

Continued from front page

Europe and can be used as a weapon against them.

These developments are borne of worldwide depression conditions, which have sparked increased competition between capitals, a soaring pile of investment in debt — as opposed to value production — and deflationary pressures on world capitalism. This instability has created a tense situation in which sudden political developments or financial shocks threaten a collapse of world capitalist finance.

Japanese exporters hurting

For the moment, the masters of finance capital in the United States have decided to use the latest installment in the dollar's two-decade-long decline as a battering-ram against their weaker Japanese rivals. Some of the largest exporters in Japan are screaming for relief as it becomes harder and harder for them to produce commodities that can be sold profitably abroad, forcing short-term factory closures and exacting a squeeze on prices.

Mazda is closing its factories in Japan for two days in April and again in May to eliminate production of cars that cannot be sold in the United States due to exchange rates. Mitsubishi Materials is closing a zinc smelter. Sumitomo Metal Industries, a steel company, has announced 1,500 additional layoffs by March 1997.

The currency storm has increased deflationary pressures bearing down on the Japanese economy and threatens to choke off a nascent upturn. For the past half decade, land prices have been in free fall from the heyday of the superheated 1980s. Last year, commercial land prices fell an average of 10 percent. Since the 1991 peak of the land bubble, commercial property prices in the Tokyo area have plummeted an average of 48 percent.

The chronic pressure on land and asset prices has cascaded to other commodities, including consumer goods. Capitalists in Japan holding cash, denominated in yen, currently prefer to hold onto it because it provides a better return than domestic stocks, land, or capital.

The stock market has dropped 22 percent since January 1. This in turn puts new pressure on the banking system in



Nissan workers in Japan leave the Zama plant before it closed. Washington is taking advantage of currency fluctuations to demand greater share of Japan's auto market.

Japan, which is heavily loaded up in the stock exchanges.

The 21 largest banks in Japan hold an estimated \$300 billion in bad debts. If housing loan companies and credit cooperatives are included, the figure rises to nearly \$570 billion.

Washington has attempted to use Tokyo's discomfort to extort trade concessions. The Clinton administration is now threatening several billion dollars in punitive tariffs against Japanese exporters unless Tokyo agrees to numerical quotas for U.S. auto and auto parts imports.

"We can't worry anymore about the weakness of the current Japanese government or the reaction of the Japanese bureaucracy," barked one senior U.S. official. "Sometimes you have to act as a great economic power."

Japan's highly protected domestic market is also under enormous strain. At the beginning of April, the equivalent of 90 yen would have purchased a dollar's worth of goods in most countries — but in

Japan it took 200 yen to buy the same amount.

Currency storm feeds instability

Central banks throughout Asia are now under pressure to dump their dollars and grab yen, since they are sitting on gobs of depreciating currency. In addition, rising levels in debt to Japanese imperialism are denominated in yen. Indonesia's debt to Tokyo, for example, is now 20 percent of its gross domestic product. Beijing, which has 20 percent of its foreign debt in yen — about \$17 billion — is demanding relief.

On April 10, the dollar plunged nearly 5 percent against the yen in Tokyo trading, sending currency traders running for their antacids. That morning, Japanese finance minister Masayoshi Takemura told Parliament, "I want the United States to feel responsible and make a clear stance to defend the dollar." Takemura then stated, "We also need to think whether we can leave the current exchange-rate system as it is now." These comments set off the sharp dollar decline.

Bonn has missed no opportunity to denounce U.S. policy as being to blame for the currency turmoil. German officials were particularly angered by Washington's strong-arming of European capitalist powers to sign onto the Clinton administration's Mexican loan guarantees. The German finance minister, Theo Waigel, said his government could not make up for Washington's "national deficiencies." "A country which is responsible for the key currency of the world has the responsibility of maintaining reasonable stability of it," complained International Monetary Fund managing director Michel Camdessus.

Repeated efforts by central banks to buy up dollars — though without much enthusiasm from Bonn — have failed to halt its slide. Tokyo spent \$15 billion in March alone trying to shore up the dollar. Washington is not anxious to draw attention to its inability to have much impact on the \$1 trillion a day sliding across global currency markets. Strident Clinton administration threats to slap trade sanctions on Japan sent the dollar to historic lows against the mark and yen April 18, rattling U.S. stock and bond markets.

Wall Street sages now point to a new gallery of culprits for the dollar droop. These include a continuing large trade deficit, low national savings, and uncertainty concerning the future in Mexico.

Prominent columnists and financiers are offering new alchemy for the predicament of U.S. capitalism, including higher interest rates. One proposal getting a wider berth is the introduction of a regressive "flat tax," and the abolition of the current system of slightly graduated income tax in the United States.

The Clinton administration plans to unveil proposals to guard against the problem of the international "hot money" pool at a Group of Seven summit this June in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The linchpin of the White House plan is cooperation among

big imperialist powers, which might include a proposal to set up an emergency fund to bail out governments whose future defaults could shatter the capitalist world.

But such proposals are rubbing Washington's rivals the wrong way. Financial ministries in Europe, who would be among the first asked to help, are already warning such a fund would create "moral hazard" for them.

"I think it is very desirable to stop this trend toward making the world a gambling casino," said Stephen Axilrod, former vice chairman of Nikko Securities International, "but I do not know how."

Search for higher returns

The search for higher returns fuels the vast currency flows and speculative investments that are the norm today. Internationally, the employing classes have increasingly favored such measures over capacity expanding plant and equipment, since profit rates in industrial production are on long-term decline.

While Washington stands to benefit from the current yen-dollar ratio, various pundits are expressing discomfort over the uncertainty in currency markets.

The United States, fretted an article in the Wall Street weekly *Barron's*, "is perilously close to a currency crisis," adding that "the real work of steadying the dollar involves cutting government spending in Washington and pursuing policies that encourage Americans to save more and spend less. Otherwise, we may soon be kissing the current economic expansion — and this buoyant stock market — goodbye."

The latest offer to expand the debt balloon hanging over world capitalism came from Kirk Kerkorian, a billionaire investor who has offered to buy the 90 percent of the U.S. auto company that he does not already own — with other people's money.

Kerkorian, noting Chrysler was flush with cash and relatively low debt, has proposed to come up with \$3 billion in equity capital (stock) plus \$11 billion of new debt in a takeover bid. Kerkorian and those supporting this proposal hope they can get in and make a fast buck on Chrysler, and quickly unload \$11 billion in debt on someone else before the bubble bursts.

A *Financial Times* article explained the logic of Kerkorian's bid in these terms: "More debt and less equity concentrates equity gains in the hands of a smaller group of shareholders, gearing up (or leveraging) their gains if a company is successful — though increasing the risks for shareholders when things are bad. Also, debt is a more tax-efficient form of finance, since interest payments are tax-deductible."

Socialists respond to Oklahoma bombing

The following statement by the Socialist Workers Party National Committee was released to the media April 19 by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes.

Working people, youth, and all defenders of democratic rights should reject the anti-Arab and anti-Islamic campaign being whipped up by politicians on both sides of the aisle in Congress and sections of the big-business media following the April 19 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

A barrage of television news stories, radio shows, and newspaper articles have relentlessly pressed such a campaign, even casting suspicion on a national Islamic convention held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, last week.

Immediate comparisons have been made to the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 and current trial in New York of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman and 10 others on charges of sedition for conspiring to wage a "war of urban terrorism." The anti-Arab hysteria and frame-up methods in those cases are a hint of what the administration has in mind in the wake of the Oklahoma bombing.

Attorney General Janet Reno used the bombing as a pretext to bolster the bipartisan drive to widen use of capital punishment. "The death penalty is available," in a case like this, she said, "and we will use it." President Clinton asserted that "justice will be swift, certain, and severe."

These remarks by Clinton and Reno came two years to the day after the massacre they ordered in Waco, Texas, against scores of members of the Branch

Davidian religious group — an example of what the White House means by "justice" that is "swift, certain, and severe."

In the days ahead, the labor movement and all supporters of democratic rights must be on the alert to protest the trampling of hard-won rights that will mark their "investigation" — the presumption of innocence; the right to due process; protection from illegal search, seizure, and wiretaps; freedom of association without infiltration by police informants and agents provocateurs; and many others.

The bombing of the building housing federal offices in Oklahoma City and the killing of scores of men, women, and children — whoever organized and carried it out — has nothing whatsoever to do with the fight against exploitation and oppression. These methods are ones that revolutionists and other class-conscious working people and fighting youth reject.

It is important never to forget that the U.S. government and its allies are the greatest perpetrators of terror around the world — from Waco on its home territory to Vietnam, Iraq, Nicaragua, and countless other parts of the world just in recent decades.

Working people must oppose efforts by the government to utilize the Oklahoma City bombing to further restrict democratic rights; stereotype and demonize people based on their national origin, religious practices, or "features"; and rationalize its own responsibility for the oppression and violence inflicted on working people the world over day in and day out.

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Chain gangs aim to dehumanize those in prison

"From behind prison walls" is a regular column written by framed-up union and political activist Mark Curtis. To correspond with Curtis, write him at #805338, Iowa State Penitentiary, Box 316, Fort Madison, Iowa, 52627.

BY MARK CURTIS

FT. MADISON, Iowa — Like most U.S. prisoners, I've never worked on a chain gang. As more draconian punishments are being brought back into use, that could change. The prison commission



Mark Curtis

in Alabama plans to put 400 inmates in chains to work 12-hour shifts along the roadside in a state whose summer heat can be murder.

This will be forced labor in the strongest meaning of the word. Guards armed with shot guns and orders to shoot escapees will oversee the men chained together and dragging leg irons. Here in Iowa the Senate passed a bill recently establishing chain gangs, although they will be renamed "highly secured work groups."

Whatever they are called, the effect is the same: to humiliate, degrade, and brutalize those in prison. But the real target of this "anti-crime" campaign is not just

prison inmates and law-breakers. The number of prisoners who actually end up slinging a weed sickle will be just a fraction of the prison population due to security, logistics, costs, and the need for most inmate labor to keep the kitchens, laundries, and building maintenance going.

Fueling the fires of resentment by showcasing a growing number of humans labeled as "beasts" is an indispensable ingredient for a big political project. That project is to deepen divisions among working people and heighten the panic level in the middle class. The ruling class hopes to use resentment of "criminals," "welfare cheats," immigrants, and others as a vaccine against working-class solidarity.

Politicians and media commentators are quite openly spreading the resentment against anyone they think "deserves it." Crack down, exact a harsh cost, instill discipline, quit mollycoddling them. And who is "them?" Not just prisoners, but all kinds of workers, farmers, and students who've supposedly "got it too easy."

These so-called freeloaders are the producers of the wealth our capitalist masters own. Any successes we've had in keeping ourselves, like Social Security, welfare benefits, unemployment insurance, Medicare, pensions, etc. is deeply resented by the bosses. They know they'll have an easier time taking it away if they narrow our democratic rights and have us fighting



Prisoners on "hoe squad" at work in Texas cotton field. Restarting chain gangs is attempt to humiliate, degrade, and brutalize those behind bars and further divide the working class.

among ourselves over who does and doesn't deserve these rights and entitlements.

It is interesting that the crime debate has now moved to the question of forced and degraded prison labor. Up until the 1930s prisoners were leased out to the bosses for work in farm fields and coal mines. In Alabama, hundreds died digging coal in the worst imaginable conditions. The great labor upsurge of the 1930s saw workers organize the first industrial unions through huge and bloody conflicts. One victory was forcing the government to ban the practice of slave labor. Like Social Security and the other many victories of the 1930s, this is now being chipped away.

Advocates of hard-labor chain gangs say that work will do the inmates good.

Work will do you good, but what kind of labor is being discussed here? Being chained up is one of the most inhuman of all experiences. I've worn all kinds of iron in my six plus years of incarceration: handcuffs, leg shackles, belly chains, "black boxes" that immobilize the wrists, and stainless steel links dangling between the legs. In my current lockup status just going to the shower requires being handcuffed behind my back for the 30-foot walk.

Chain gangs on display will not only tear up the bodies of the men in iron but also bring the working class down a notch in our humanity. The fight against such barbarism by our own capitalist masters must be a fight of the whole labor movement.

Calls for inquiry mount in New Zealand 'child-abuse' case

BY JOAN SHIELDS

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — Renewed calls are being made for a public inquiry into the 1992-93 police investigation of the Christchurch Civic Childcare Centre.

On March 16, the Employment Court ordered the Christchurch City Council to pay more than NZ\$1 million compensation to 13 workers at the center who were dismissed in 1992 amid allegations of child sex-abuse.

The largest of the personal grievance payouts will go to four women child-care workers who were arrested on child-abuse charges one month after the city council closed the center in September 1992. These charges were thrown out of court in March and April 1993.

Another former worker at the child-care center, Peter Ellis, is well into his second year of a 10-year prison sentence for 16 charges of sexually abusing children in his care. When first arrested in March 1992, 45 charges were laid against Ellis.

Late last year, New Zealand's Court of Appeal declared that it found no reason to overturn the jury's verdict. This is despite the revelation during the hearing that one

of the children who testified against Ellis — and was the basis of three charges against him — had retracted her testimony, declaring she had made it up.

Ellis has also been refused legal aid to continue his challenge.

Among the charges against Ellis were claims that he forced children at the center to drink urine and eat feces, touched children in their anal and genital areas with needles, and put sticks in their anuses. The women had each faced several charges of indecent assault and one of sexual violation.

The prosecution case was based almost solely on videotaped interviews conducted by Social Welfare Department interviewers. In all, 118 children were questioned. The case that went to court was based on more than 60 taped interviews with 20 children.

The children alleged they had been buried in coffins and hung in cages from the ceiling, that animals had been sacrificed, that one boy had been stabbed to death, and another had had his penis cut off and then stuck on again with tape.

Not one corroborating witness was produced for any of the allegations. Defense

lawyers called a number of former workers at the child-care center and some parents who described management practices at the center that would have made it virtually impossible for many of the alleged incidents to have occurred as described.

Medical experts who appeared for the prosecution testified that they had found no physical evidence of abuse.

"Having seen a lot of the transcripts of evidence presented during the Ellis case, I'm staggered by the way the whole thing was handled — by the police and by the interviewers," unionist Peter Lawson told the March 29 *Christchurch Star*. Lawson is secretary of the Southern Local Government Officers Union, which represented the child-care workers at the Employment Court hearing.

An editorial in the same issue of the *Star* commented, "In simple terms this case should serve as a landmark of what not to do."

From the beginning, the police whipped up a witch-hunt atmosphere around the case. Allegations of "satanic rituals" involving snakes and Asian businessmen, and of child pornography rings, appeared in the news media.

Police raided the houses of the four women, seizing "evidence" that included a charm bracelet of the Ten Commandments and a Christmas decoration made by a school child. At one house, they photographed the design on the carpet. At another, they dredged the goldfish pond.

"Common sense has been lacking as superstition and hysteria have propelled this black farce," columnist Frank Haden declared in the April 2 *Sunday Star-Times*. "The Ellis jury should never have accepted the charges were established beyond reasonable doubt."

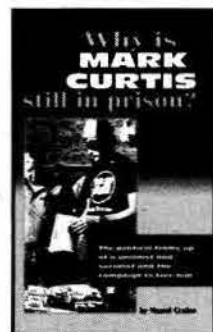
Supporting the call for a public inquiry, an editorial in the March 31 *Christchurch Press* declared: "For the sake of genuine cases of sexual abuse the outpourings [of criticism] need to be staunch and confidence in the system restored..."

"It would be a false economy to limit the inquiry solely to the case of the four women. If flaws are exposed in the handling of their case they will apply equally if not with greater force to the case against Peter Ellis."

Joan Shields is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Christchurch.

WHY IS MARK CURTIS STILL IN PRISON?

The political frame-up of a unionist and socialist and the campaign to free him



Available in English and Spanish \$6

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Report condemns brutality of U.S. border cops

BY PAT SMITH

A U.S. border cop pointed his gun at Martín García Martínez on May 28, 1994, as García knelt with his hands on his head. García had just crossed from Mexico into California. After threatening his family and severely beating his brother, the Border Patrol agent shot the 30-year-old immigrant in the stomach. García died six days later. The treatment border police dished out to this young immigrant and his family is not unusual.

A recent Human Rights Watch/Americas report documents this and dozens of other assaults by U.S. cops at the border with Mexico. The 43-page study, entitled "Crossing the Line," is based on a July 1994 fact-finding trip to the California and Arizona borders with Mexico and refers to cases in the group's two earlier reports. Human Rights Watch also points out that there has been no discernible change in the practices of Border Patrol cops since the earlier investigations and recommendations.

"U.S. Border Patrol agents are committing serious human rights violations, including unjustified shootings, rape, and beatings, while enjoying virtual impunity for their actions," states "Crossing the Line." Immigration officials told the human rights organization that only one agent, Thomas Watson stationed in Nogales, Arizona, was ever fired for breaking agency rules or using excessive force despite more than a decade of well-documented violations.

"The Clinton administration has abdicated its responsibility to correct the ongoing abuse problem," Human Rights Watch notes. The report uncovers injustices "that appeared to be tolerated by Border Patrol management."

Agent Michael Elmer, who fatally shot Dario Miranda Valenzuela in the back, left him in the desert and tried to cover up the killing, was acquitted on state murder charges in December 1992. A year later, an Arizona court found him not guilty of violating Miranda's civil rights. Elmer had

been charged earlier with firing on a group of undocumented workers, wounding Francisco Salgado-Munoz.

Fellow agent Luis Esteves was accused of making sexually explicit, harassing telephone calls to a woman he stopped at a checkpoint north of Calexico, California. Esteves was not punished, but transferred to the Calexico border crossing where he was arrested twice for rape.

Several women described acts of kidnapping and rape by uniformed and nonuniformed border agents to the Human Rights Watch investigators. Others detailed brutal beatings that required hospitalization. The victims were not informed of their right to file a complaint against the agents.

The report urges both the Clinton administration and Congress to apply international human rights standards in the United States. It also urges legal reforms, which would allow immigrants who suffer abuses at the border to obtain justice for crimes committed by U.S. agents.



international campaign to win new readers



Militant 2,950
Perspectiva Mundial 675
New International 1,200

sold 16%
should be 20%

Sales drive picking up steam

BY LAURA GARZA

The international campaign to win new readers of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the *New International* magazine is entering the third week slightly behind schedule. Supporters have so far sold 16 percent of the goal; we should be at 20 percent. However, reports during the first two weeks of the effort show the potential to catch up and get on schedule.

From the April 9 women's rights rally in Washington, D.C., to an appearance by Fidel Castro in Copenhagen, Denmark, more youth are being drawn to events where they hope to be a part of offering up some resistance to the worsening conditions of capitalism. The socialist press is getting some attention from these fighters.

There have also been more opportunities to introduce the *Militant* to workers taking strike action, from transit workers in Philadelphia and grocery workers in California, to France, where a wave of strikes is shaking up the bosses. The ongoing discussions on affirmative action, the real history of the war in Vietnam and its lessons for today, the debate on events in World War II—all are providing more opportunities to win new readers of the socialist press.

This bodes well for organizing a special push to sign up new subscribers and put the campaign back on schedule. Participants in the international circulation campaign are planning for a special target week from April 29 to May 7, taking extra time to reach new readers, go to more events, and travel to some areas where political discussions and fights are occurring.

Miners in Kayenta, Arizona, bought 21 copies of the *Militant* during a shift change and one miner who had seen the *Militant* previously bought a copy of *New International* no. 10, with articles on "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution" and "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War." Another bought a copy of *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*. At the P&M mine in Window Rock, Arizona, another 20 miners bought copies of the *Militant* and one renewed



Socialist candidate Betsy Farley with farmers at rally in Missouri

his subscription.

Supporters of the *Militant* from Salt Lake City, Utah; San Francisco; and Seattle were on a four-day team that visited Arizona and New Mexico to talk to miners and others. The team also visited the University of New Mexico, where one subscription to the *Militant* was sold along with a variety of other literature. At Armond Hamner University, 28 students attended a meeting to hear Young Socialist leader Tami Peterson. There was great interest in the literature display set up on the campus before the meeting and a copy of *New International* no. 10 was sold along with other titles.

A student from Bucknell University in Pennsylvania invited supporters of the *Militant* to set up a literature table on the campus. A busload of students had gone to Washington, D.C., for the April 9 women's rights rally and some recognized the *Militant* from there. Five subscriptions to the *Militant* were sold, as well as two copies of *New International* and \$50 worth of other literature. The student literary magazine hosted a get-together for Erin Forbes, a Young Socialist member in Philadelphia, to discuss his recent visit to Cuba. About a dozen people attended.

At the University of California at Santa Barbara, eight subscriptions to the *Militant* and three copies of *New International* were

sold over two days. A raging debate is taking place on the campus around affirmative action. *Militant* supporters set up a table with signs calling for its defense, as well as demanding U.S. hands off the Cuban revolution. The signs attracted many young people and three asked to join the Young Socialists after discussions with *Militant* supporters from Los Angeles who set up the literature table.

Supporters in Los Angeles report that their sales of subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* are keeping pace with those of the *Militant*. This is without any special effort to concentrate on *Perspectiva Mundial* alone.

A table at Sergels torg in Stockholm, a commercial center in the city, netted two subscriptions to the *Militant* on a recent Saturday. One passerby was pleasantly surprised to see revolutionary books published by Pathfinder. He had seen the *Militant* and Pathfinder books in Britain and was glad to find them in Sweden. *Militant* supporters also sold at a demonstration of more than 100 in solidarity with the struggle in Chiapas, Mexico, and one participant bought a subscription.

Contributing to this article were Jason Redrup in Seattle; Barbara Greenway in Morgantown, West Virginia; Craig Honts in Los Angeles; and Dag Tirsén in Stockholm.

Wealth, income gap widens in U.S.

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The United States is "the most unequal industrialized country in terms of income and wealth, and we're growing more unequal faster than the other industrialized countries," said Edward Wolff, an economics professor at New York University, commenting on recent studies on income distribution worldwide.

As part of that trend, the child poverty rate in the United States is now four times the average of countries in western Europe, according to Robert Greenstein, the executive director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The richest 1 percent of U.S. households—each with a net

worth of at least \$2.3 million—owns almost 40 percent of the country's wealth. In addition, the wealthiest 20 percent of U.S. households—with \$180,000 or more—owns more than 80 percent of the nation's wealth.

These figures are higher than all other industrial countries. In Britain, the richest 1 percent of the population owns 18 percent of the wealth, which is a drop from 59 percent in the 1920s.

Meanwhile, the poorest 20 percent of the U.S. population earns some 5.7 percent of all the after-tax income paid to individuals each year. Census Bureau figures reveal that incomes rose for the most well off 40 percent

of U.S. households in 1993, while the income for the rest of the population fell, after adjusting for inflation. Top executives of U.S. manufacturing companies are paid 25 times more than workers in those industries.

The assault on welfare and other social programs, tax cuts for the rich, and technology are cited by the *New York Times* as the reasons for the widening income gap. While apportioning most of the blame for the income gap to Republican policies, the *Times* points out, "Census Bureau figures show that the trend toward greater income inequality continued during the first year of the Clinton administration."

	Militant			Perspectiva Mundial			New International		
	sold	goal	%	sold	goal	%	sold	goal	%
Puerto Rico	1	2	50%	1	8		5		
Iceland	5	15	33%	1	1		3		
Sweden	11	40	28%	3	15		40		
Australia	11	40	28%	1	6		15		
France	2	10	20%	5	11		20		
Greece	2	10	20%	1	1		4		
New Zealand									
Auckland	18	80	23%	6	2		20		
Wellington	2	10	20%				4		
Christchurch	6	40	15%	1	2		10		
Total	26	130	20%	1	8		34		
Canada									
Vancouver	19	70	27%	2	8		20		
Montreal	14	75	19%	1	25		45		
Toronto	9	85	11%	3	15		45		
Total	42	230	18%	6	48		110		
United States									
Greensboro	21	70	30%	1	8		20		
Boston	29	100	29%	4	30		35		
Houston	21	80	26%	3	15		20		
Washington, DC	20	80	25%	5	30		35		
Peoria	11	50	22%	2	2		20		
Miami	23	105	22%	10	45		60		
Morgantown	12	55	22%	1	2		20		
Seattle	18	85	21%	3	15		25		
Los Angeles	35	180	19%	28	90		90		
Pittsburgh	19	105	18%	2	12		30		
Salt Lake City	18	105	17%	5	20		35		
Brooklyn	18	130	14%	4	40		65		
San Francisco	20	150	13%	3	45		75		
Detroit	12	95	13%	1	10		28		
Chicago	16	130	12%	3	30		50		
New York	14	135	10%	30	1		75		
Twin Cities	12	120	10%	1	17		35		
Tucson	1	10	10%	1	2		5		
Philadelphia	11	115	10%	1	30		45		
Cleveland	6	65	9%	1	12		20		
Des Moines	7	85	8%	5	36		30		
Newark	6	130	5%	1	35		60		
Atlanta	4	90	4%	2	20		25		
Birmingham	3	70	4%	5	5		1		
Cincinnati		15	0%						
New Haven		15			3		3		
Total	357	2355	15%	90	584		926		
Britain									
London	12	70	17%	1	5		30		
Manchester	5	60	8%		4		25		
Sheffield		10			1		10		
Total	17	140	12%	1	10		65		
Belgium		3	0%		4		10		
Other	2			1					
International Total	476	2975	16%	104	690		1232		
Should be	590	2950	20%	135	675		1200		
IN THE UNIONS									
IN THE UNIONS									
AUSTRALIA									
AWU-FIME				2			1		
CANADA									
CAW							1		
CEP	2								
IAM	1								
USWA	1								
Total	4						1		
NEW ZEALAND									
EU	1	5	20%		1		2		
MWU		4	0%				1		
Total	1	9	11%		1		3		
SWEDEN									
FOODWORKERS		2					3		
METALWORKERS	1	2					2		
TRANSPORT		1					3		
Total	1	5	20%				5		
United States									
UTU	20	85	24%		7		12		
IAM	14	75	19%	2	15		33		
ACTWU/ILGWU	5	30	17%	3	24		18		
UFCW	2	15	13%		25		40		
UAW	13	100	13%	1	10		25		
USWA	2	40	5%	1	3		7		
OCAW	2	55	4%		6		33		
UMWA	0	23	0%				12		
Total	58	423	14%	8	90		180		
UNION TOTALS	64	439	15%	8	92		192		

ACTWU-Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; AEEU-Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AFMEU-Automotive, Food, Metals and Engineering Union; CAW-Canadian Auto Workers; EU-Engineers Union; FPU-Food Preservers' Union; IAM-International Association of Machinists; ILGWU-International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; MWU-Meat Workers Union; NUM-National Union of Mineworkers; NUW-National Union of Workers; OCAW-Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT-National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU-Transport and General Workers Union; UAW-United Auto Workers; UFBGWU-United Food, Beverage and General Workers Union; UFCW-United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA-United Mine Workers of America; USWA-United Steelworkers of America; UTU-United Transportation Union.

'Lenin's Final Fight' addresses key issues in fight to replace capitalism with socialism

Published below is the preface to "Lenin's Final Fight," a new book from Pathfinder Press. It will be available in bookstores at the end of April. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder.

BY GEORGE FYSON

Five years after the victory of the October 1917 revolution in Russia, Bolshevik leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin waged his final political fight. The stakes were very high. Against mounting odds Lenin fought to maintain the proletarian internationalist course that had prepared the Communist Party to lead the exploited producers to power over the landlords and capitalists and enabled them to begin building a workers state. He fought for a course to unite the workers and peasants of Russia and of the nations long oppressed under tsarism into a voluntary federation of soviet republics.

This book documents Lenin's battle in his own words.

It is not a history book. The political questions addressed by Lenin deal with the most decisive piece of unfinished business in front of those who produce the wealth of the world and make possible culture: they deal with the worldwide struggle, opened by the Bolshevik-led revolution nearly eighty years ago, to replace the dictatorship of a tiny minority of exploiting capitalist families with the dictatorship of the proletariat—"political power wielded by the majority of the population," as Lenin put it in 1919, a "democracy for the masses, for the working people, for the factory workers and small peasants."¹ The outcome of this unfinished struggle will determine whether the future of the world will be one of capitalist-imposed fascism and war or the transition to a communist society based on human solidarity and collective labor.

The center of every modern revolution

How to resolve these bitterly contested issues has been at the center of every modern revolution in which the toilers have toppled the landlords and capitalists from political power and established workers and farmers governments. These questions remain relevant today to the socialist revolution in Cuba—the first revolution since the Bolsheviks to be headed by a communist leadership that consciously uses state power in an effort to defend and advance the interests of the working class.

The revolutionary government that came to power in Russia in October 1917 was based on councils of workers, peasants, and soldiers delegates called soviets, the Russian word for "council." Having overthrown the monarchy and political power of the bourgeoisie, the young Soviet republic immediately acted to negotiate an end to Russia's involvement in the imperialist-organized slaughter of World War I. It encouraged the peasants to expropriate the landlords' estates and distribute the nationalized land to be worked by the tillers themselves. It repudiated tsarist debts to imperialist governments and bankers. It institutionalized separation of church and state. It asserted the full political rights of women, and initiated steps to advance the equality of women in social life.

The Soviet republic organized the working class in Petrograd, Moscow, and elsewhere to take increasing control over the production and distribution of goods and the organization of work in capitalist- and state-owned factories, mines, and mills. The new government set free the peoples subject to Russian oppression in the former tsarist empire and established their



Rural market in Russia, early 1920s. Workers and peasants defended their revolutionary government from invasion and civil war. To aid desperately needed economic recovery, requisitioning of grain used during war time was ended and private markets were authorized.

right to national self-determination. Working people from the Ukraine to Azerbaijan, from Belorussia to Mongolia, were inspired by what workers and peasants in Russia were achieving and rose in revolt to link up with the workers and peasants republic.

By early 1918, forces loyal to the tsar, landlords, and capitalists had launched a civil war to overthrow the revolution. The imperialist powers—from London and Paris to Washington and Tokyo—soon intervened militarily on the side of the counterrevolution.

As the civil war deepened in 1918, the Communist Party and Soviet government backed initiatives by the working class to stop mounting sabotage of production by factory owners and other exploiters, culminating in the expropriation of the big majority of the remaining capitalists by the end of that year. The workers and peasants government also imposed a series of emergency policies that became known as "war communism" to mobilize labor and scarce industrial and agricultural resources to defeat the counterrevolution. These measures included compulsory requisitioning of a surplus portion of peasants' grain in order to feed soldiers at the front and workers in the cities. By the close of 1920 the Soviet government had won the war. But the war had taken a massive, bloody toll on the lives of the most class-conscious workers and devastated the countryside, where the majority of peasants had backed the Soviet government to prevent the return of the landlords.

Revolutionary wars in Europe

Given an impulse by the workers and peasants victory in Russia in 1917, a revolutionary wave swept across Europe from 1918 through 1920, and anti-imperialist uprisings were spurred in Asia and elsewhere in the colonial world. In March 1919, in the midst of the civil war and imperialist intervention in Russia, the Communist International (Comintern) was launched under Bolshevik leadership, attracting parties and fighters the world over who sought to emulate the revolutionary accomplishments of workers and peasants in the Soviet republic.

By the end of 1920, however, the revolutionary workers movement had sustained defeats in Germany, Hungary, and Italy. No new soviet republics had been consolidated anywhere outside the boundaries of the old tsarist empire.

When the civil war was over, coal production and rail transport, the sinews of industry, had declined to 30 percent of prewar levels in Russia. Overall factory production in 1920 was a third of the prewar rate, and steel output in 1921 was a mere 5 percent of 1913 production. Agricultural production was also down severely. Grain output in 1920 and 1921 was about 50 percent of the prewar average. In 1921 millions died of starvation.

In a resolution drafted for discussion at the Third Congress of the Communist International in mid-1921, Lenin summed

up the revolution's international position by pointing out that "although it is far stronger, imperialism has proved unable to strangle Soviet Russia and has been obliged for the time being to grant her recognition, or semi-recognition, and to conclude trade agreements with her. The result is a state of equilibrium which, although highly unstable and precarious, enables the socialist republic to exist—not for long, of course—within the capitalist encirclement."

As for the alignment of class forces inside Russia at the close of the civil war, Lenin said in the resolution, "The alliance between the small peasants and the proletariat can become a correct and stable one from the socialist standpoint only when the complete restoration of transport and large-scale industry enables the proletariat to give the peasants, in exchange for food, all the goods they need for their own use and for the improvement of their farms."²

In face of this situation both internationally and inside the Soviet republic, the Bolsheviks launched the New Economic Policy (NEP) in early 1921. In March the Soviet government decreed the end of requisitioning of peasant grain surpluses and replaced it with a tax in kind. That is, peasants were required to provide the government a percentage of their harvest, fixed by a sliding scale to favor the small peasants as well as those who produced most efficiently. The government authorized a private market, first for farm prod-

ucts and later for other commodities. Privately owned enterprises were permitted in rural and small-scale industry. Foreign capitalists were encouraged to invest in the Soviet republics by acquiring "concessions" that they would operate under strict government control, although very few responded to this offer.

In order to restore production and trade, runaway inflation had to be reined in. The government sharply cut back the minting of rubles, reduced state expenditures, and moved toward the stable currency required for state accounting and planning. State enterprises were increasingly weaned from government subsidies and had to live off revenues from sales and attempt to turn a surplus.

By early 1922 the Soviet working class and revolutionary government had scored modest but important successes through the NEP in regaining the confidence of the peasantry, while increasing overall economic production, and in particular the availability of light industrial products that could be traded for food supplies. These events set the scene for this book, which opens with Lenin's March 1922 political report to the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party.

Lenin's deteriorating health

The opening rounds of Lenin's final political fight took place in September 1922. This book follows that fight up to the time of the severe stroke in early March 1923 that brought Lenin's political life to an end. Throughout this period, his deteriorating health repeatedly interrupted his activity. After a stroke in late May 1922 that paralyzed his right hand and leg and impaired his speech, and a brief recovery that summer, Lenin suffered several relapses in the closing months of 1922 and early 1923. He died a year later in January 1924.

The chapters in this book present, chronologically, the articles, letters, speeches, resolutions, and memos by Lenin that were part of this fight. From December 21, 1922, until his last letter of March 6, 1923, everything that Lenin is known to have written is included here. In addition, writings by other Bolshevik leaders have been included to the degree these documents figured prominently in the battle and help the reader follow its evolution. The editor has provided chapter titles highlighting an aspect of the struggle during a particular time period, but each chapter contains material by Lenin on not just that aspect but on the range of questions central to the communist course he was fighting to defend and advance.

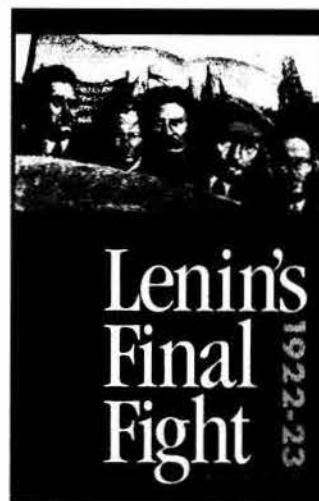
Over the years following Lenin's death, an increasingly privileged bureaucratic caste consolidated its brutal hold on the state and party apparatus and carried out a political counterrevolution against the proletarian internationalist policies around

Continued on page 14

2. A useful summary of the first five years of the Soviet workers and peasants republic is contained in the two-volume series by Farrell Dobbs, *Revolutionary Continuity: The Early Years (1848-1917)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1980) and *Revolutionary Continuity: Birth of the Communist Movement (1918-1922)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1983).

3. Lenin, "Theses for a Report on the Tactics of the R.C.P.," CW, vol. 32, pp. 453-61.

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Lenin's Final Fight

by V.I. Lenin

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1. "The Third International and Its Place in History," Lenin, *Collected Works* (hereafter CW) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1960-70, based on fourth Russian edition), vol. 29, pp. 305-13. Also in John Riddell, ed., *Founding the Communist International: Proceedings and Documents of the First Congress: March 1919* (New York: Pathfinder, 1987), pp. 31-38, a volume in the series *The Communist International in Lenin's Time*.

Cuba's fight is for 'dignity, sovereignty and independence'

BY CANDACE WAGNER
AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "The struggle the Cuban people are waging is a struggle for dignity, sovereignty, and the independence of our nation," stated Cuban youth leader Kenia Serrano to an audience of some 95 people April 5 at George Washington University (GWU).

The event — sponsored by the GWU Program Board, Progressive Student Union, and Latin American Studies Program — was also supported by the D.C. "Hands Off Cuba" Coalition, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and the Spanish Club at the University of the District of Columbia. The meeting launched a successful four-day visit to the Washington, D.C., area.

Working people feel the effects of the economic crisis in Cuba the most, explained Serrano, "but it is working people who accept the challenge to defend the social benefits" of the revolution. She pointed out that daily life is marked by "intense discussions."

Commenting on the effects of tourism in Cuba, she said, "it's a tough stage for all of us, especially young people. But we're not afraid to discuss the problems." While it has led to prostitution and fueled the operation of the black market, about 40 percent of the country's hard currency comes from tourism, stated Serrano. "What you don't hear much about is the Cuban young people working in tourism who recently donated \$600,000 from their tips to keep social programs going."

A Puerto Rican student asked the Cuban youth leader what message she has for the youth of Puerto Rico. "When [José] Martí spoke of the independence of Cuba, he always also spoke of the independence of Puerto Rico," Serrano said. She condemned the U.S. government for denying visas to Cubans who want to visit their brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico.

A member of the United Transportation Union on AMTRAK was happy for the opportunity to hear a revolutionary from Cuba. "I'm glad I came," he said. "I was impressed by the tolerance for different viewpoints at the meeting."

Upon arriving here, Serrano went to Capitol Hill for a meeting with Rep. Donald Payne of New Jersey and an aide to Rep. Jose Serrano of New York.

Members of the International Association of Machinists were able to meet Serrano in the break room at Washington's National Airport. "Why are so many people leaving Cuba?" one young worker asked. "Cuba is a poor country," Serrano responded. "Even after the revolution it is still a poor country. People leave Cuba because these conditions can get very hard. But we must not forget that while 30,000 Cubans left, more than 9 million fighters

for socialism remain in Cuba. Those are the ones never mentioned."

Participation in the April 9 national women's rights rally was a highlight of her tour here. She took many photographs of the protest to share with others when she returns to Cuba.

Brian Taylor contributed to this article.

BY ELIZABETH STONE

NEW YORK — When Cuban youth leader Kenia Serrano spoke at Bernard M. Baruch College here March 31, many of the 150 who attended were students from area campuses who have participated in demonstrations against cuts in education and social services.

"I've met a lot of people here who desire to struggle, and that's important," Serrano told the meeting. "I've talked with immigrants, farm workers, Afro-Americans, and workers on strike against different companies. I have run into many young people who are aware of how unjustly the wealth is divided."

Serrano explained that despite the economic hardships in Cuba today, the government's budget includes increased expenditures on education, which is free.

When the meeting opened for discussion, two Cubans from the United States spoke opposing what Serrano had said. They raised questions about what they considered a lack of democracy in Cuba. A third, younger Cuban asked how Cuban youth in the United States could open up more channels of communication with young Cubans on the island.

Serrano welcomed the participation of the Cubans at the meeting and pointed to the need for more exchanges between youth of the different countries, such as youth brigades to Cuba. "I think Cuba has a democratic process because students, peasants, and workers participate in the decision making," she said. "But Cuba is not perfect. We are fighting for more democracy, where people have greater decision making power..."

"Our starting point is that workers own the factories, that they continue to be the owners of our country."

Others at the event joined the discussion. A Salvadoran pointed to the death squads in El Salvador saying nothing like this exists in Cuba. A woman from Ecuador spoke on racial discrimination in Latin America and the strides made against racism in Cuba. Another woman spoke about the repression of the Black Panther Party and others fighting racism in the United States.

One member of the audience asked about high birthrates, saying, "Is this hurting economic development?" Serrano responded, "The most important rate we can talk about is infant mortality and Cuba has



Kenia Serrano, left, discusses Cuba with students at George Washington University. Militant/Charles Ostrofsky

managed to keep it very low, even during the difficulties of the special period. Malthus had the idea that population increases are a problem. He thought world wars and epidemics were good as a way of eliminating mouths to feed. But we're fighting to develop, to produce more. Every child is welcome because that means we have one more person to think and to fight in Cuba."

Earlier that day Serrano spent the lunch hour talking with workers at Quality Braid, a garment shop in Queens. Five garment workers, including one from Quality Braid and four from another garment shop, came to the meeting at Baruch, which was hosted by Soul Survivors and other student groups.

The next day, railroad workers who are members of the United Transportation Union hosted a breakfast for Serrano. One of the workers asked what Serrano thought was behind the attacks on Latin American

workers today. "Is it because of the fall of the Soviet Union?" he asked.

"It is capitalism that is in crisis," Serrano answered. "What is happening to workers in Latin America is because of that. The Soviet Union fell," she said. "But Cuba is still standing. There was a legitimate revolution in the Soviet Union, but what fell down was a wrong way of practicing socialism."

Other events for Serrano in New York included an interview on WBAI radio, a meeting at Brooklyn College sponsored by Familia Latino, and a visit to Hillcrest High School, where she toured the school and spoke to combined classes of 150 students.

She met with Fred Davis, deputy to Borough of Manhattan president Ruth Messinger. David Galarza, an aid to Messinger, opened the meeting at Baruch with a message of welcome. Rep. Charles Rangel also sent greetings.



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

By Maggie Pucci

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes books and pamphlets by revolutionary fighters whose struggles against capitalism, racism, and all forms of exploitation and oppression point the way forward for humanity. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.

Pathfinder was one of more than 900 exhibitors at the March 19-21 London International Bookfair. More than 18,000 booksellers, librarians, and others associated with the book trade in Britain attended the fair.

The Pathfinder stand, staffed by representatives from Britain and the United States, centered on the forthcoming *Lenin's Final Fight*, a new collection that documents Lenin's struggle against the rising Soviet bureaucracy.

Alan Harris, director of Pathfinder Distribution in London, reports that individuals and booksellers from Malta, Nigeria, Botswana, South Africa, Mauritius, Turkey, India, and Lebanon were among those who stopped by to pick up a 1995 catalog. Visitors from most Eastern and Western European countries came by the stand as well.

A book buyer from a central London bookshop asked for a follow-up visit from a sales representative, commenting, "Pathfinder titles really count in the world today." More than 250 catalogs were distributed at the bookfair.

A London-based company that specializes in selling English-language books in Russia ordered six Pathfinder titles and 20 catalogs to display at the English Educational Books and Equipment Exhibition held in Moscow in early April.

Hundreds of people picked up copies of the 1995 Pathfinder catalog at several recent events. The Pathfinder bookstore in Washington, D.C., reports the new catalog was the best seller at the April 9

Rally for Women's Lives, and at the Young Feminist Summit that took place in the days leading up to the rally. Thirty-two catalogs were sold at these events. The cover price of the catalog is \$0.50.

Supporters of Pathfinder from several cities sold more than \$500 worth of books and pamphlets at the summit and rally. Sales included several copies of books by Evelyn Reed: three copies of *Woman's Evolution*, two copies of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*, and one copy each of *Sexism and Science* and *Problems of Women's Liberation*. Two copies of *New International* number 10 were sold at the Young Feminist Summit. Among the articles in this issue of the Marxist magazine are "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War," "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution," and "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold."

Volunteers from the New York Pathfinder bookstore sold 80 catalogs at the Socialist Scholars Conference held April 8-9 in New York City. The conference was attended by more than 350 people, who purchased \$528 worth of books and pamphlets from the Pathfinder stand, some \$200 more than was sold at last year's conference. Three participants joined the Pathfinder Readers Club.

The 1995 catalog was a central part of the Pathfinder display at the seventh national conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries held in Pittsburgh March 29-April 1. Sales representatives from Pittsburgh and Morgantown, West Virginia, organized Pathfinder's participation in this conference, which was attended by 2,700 academic librarians.

More than 100 catalogs were distributed at the conference and Pathfinder sales representatives collected names of some 40 librarians who sought more information or a visit by a sales representative.

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Communist League congress discusses Irish struggle, crisis of United Kingdom

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON — "For 25 years the British government has prevented by force and violence the world from learning of the legitimate demands of the Irish people. Now another voice can be heard, that of Irish freedom fighters who are gaining a platform from the United States, to Britain, to Ireland," said Marcella FitzGerald at the opening of the fifth congress of the Communist League (CL) in the United Kingdom. FitzGerald's report on the resolution, "The Crisis of the United Kingdom and the Irish Question," was the centerpiece of the March 25-27 meeting here.

The resolution, along with reports on "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution," and "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War," were adopted by congress delegates. A report on "Organizing the Communist League and Building the Young Socialists," which mapped out the tasks of the party in the coming months, was also discussed and approved by delegates to the meeting.

Sixty-six people attended the congress, including 15 delegates from the Communist League's branches in London and Manchester, as well as international guests from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, Sweden, the United States, and New Zealand. The majority of participants were industrial workers, with 26 participants belonging to the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU); the National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; and the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union. Thirteen members of the Young Socialists were among the 16 people attending their first congress of the Communist League.

Irish struggle making headway

"Fighters around the world have something to celebrate," FitzGerald told the congress. "The Irish struggle is making headway. Despite 25 years of military occupation and 75 years of partition, the Irish people have refused to get down on their knees to the British government and its allies. The repression has continued to produce fighters, not broken souls."

"We all need to join in actions, protests, and other activities — both in Ireland and Britain — calling for British troops out of Northern Ireland now; the release of all Irish political prisoners; the abolition of the infamous Diplock courts, under which the accused are denied the right to a jury and the accusers literally hide behind a special screen while giving testimony; the disbanding of the British-organized Royal Ulster Constabulary police; the opening of the border roads between the north and south of Ireland; repealing of the Prevention of Terrorism and Special Powers Acts



Militant/Naomi Craine

August 1994 march in Belfast to demand withdrawal of British troops. "Fighters around the world have something to celebrate," said Marcella FitzGerald. Despite 25 years of occupation and 75 years of partition, Irish people continue their fight.

under which tens of thousands have been detained, jailed, and framed-up; and implementation of affirmative action measures for Catholics in Northern Ireland to reverse the institutionalized and systematic discrimination they continue to face in employment, housing, and education.

"It is an outrage," FitzGerald said, "that London, which militarily occupies Northern Ireland and has been the driving force of the violence there, should demand of Sinn Féin that the Irish Republican Army disarm before talks can begin. We demand London begin talks now!"

"The fight to get the imperialists off the backs of working people throughout Ireland — and national unification and respect of the sovereignty and independence of that country — this is the Irish question," FitzGerald said in her report.

"Working people in Northern Ireland are enthusiastic about the end of daytime patrols by British troops in Belfast — curtailing their widespread and intimidating presence in the streets — and the IRA cease-fire. It opens up greater opportunities for working people to engage in political activity. These new openings have allowed fighters in Ireland to gain a greater platform for their struggle, as Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams's historic trip to the

United States demonstrated," she said.

For example, the annual "Bloody Sunday" march to commemorate the 1972 massacre of 13 unarmed people by British troops in Derry was significantly bigger this year. A new campaign, Saoirse, has been launched that calls for the release of Irish prisoners. On March 17, St. Patrick's Day, four major protests were organized by Saoirse in Northern Ireland: 1,000 marched in Omagh, 500 in Derry, 1,000 in Coalisland, and 100 in Belfast.

One hundred delegates from throughout Ireland attended a national meeting of Saoirse in Dublin in February. In London, activists launched Saoirse March 23. Those in attendance demanded the transfer of 28 Republican prisoners to Northern Ireland as well as the right to speak Irish in British prisons. Family visits are currently terminated if Irish is spoken.

"In Northern Ireland Catholics are two-and-one-half times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants," FitzGerald pointed out. Over generations, such discrimination has become deeply entrenched. Most workers who are Protestant have been won to identify their interests with the existence of the Northern Ireland state as part of the United Kingdom. Winning them to support the struggle for

Irish national self-determination will not be easy.

"Under the pressure of depression conditions worldwide," she said, "working people — both Catholic and Protestant — face sharp attacks on their standard of living, working conditions, and social programs. As struggles by youth and working people against these assaults unfold, however, opportunities will grow to break down divisions imposed by the wealthy rulers."

Delegates discussed the central place of the Irish freedom struggle for the working class in Britain. The capitalist rulers have utilized the oppression of Ireland to convince workers who are British that they have a common interest with their exploiters. They have stoked up divisions in the workforce in Britain as a cornerstone of maintaining their system of exploitation. Joyce Fairchild, an engineering worker from Manchester, said anti-Irish prejudice was "still in the background, but when you challenge it you get a serious hearing among workmates."

"There are more than 750,000 working people in Britain who were born in Ireland, with millions more whose parents were from Ireland, making the Irish the largest national minority in Britain," FitzGerald said. "Discrimination against the Irish, who are concentrated in the lower paid, heavier, and manual jobs, has been overlaid by new waves of immigration from all over the world."

Referring to the recent "Framework Document" issued by London and Dublin outlining their hoped-for political settlement and new constitutional arrangements between Britain, Ireland, and Northern Ireland, FitzGerald said, "What these governments would like to do and what they will end up with are two different things. The partition of Ireland is exhausted, 25 years of resistance has been unbroken, and what happens next will be determined in struggle. Nothing has been settled, and London recognizes this. The initiative is in the hands of Sinn Féin right now, not with the 'peacemaker,' Prime Minister John Major."

Behind this new opening, she said, is an accelerating crisis of British imperialism, sharpened by the disintegration of the so-called new world order. "At the same time Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams was gaining a worldwide platform during his tour of the United States, the Queen of England was touring Northern Ireland almost unnoticed either in the streets or the media," the Communist League leader reported.

"At the turn of the century the sun never set on the British empire. The wealthy families of Britain controlled one-fifth of the land in the world and ruled over one-quarter of the earth's population," FitzGerald said. Today, the weak position of British imperialism can be seen in the collapse of Barings bank, an institution that financed the rise of British imperialism. "Any way you look at it — from the position of Britain's military, to the weakness of the economy, to alliances with other imperialist powers — Britain's independent role in the world is long over," she said. "This deep crisis puts strains on the state structure, which is a Kingdom made up of four countries, not a united republic. This whole structure of the United Kingdom is becoming a lot less united."

Communist League leader Tony Hunt, in a report on "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War," published in *New International* no. 10, focused on the problems facing British imperialism at home and abroad.

In their attempts to press forward their fight to reverse the social wage of working people, drive down the standard of living, and push back democratic rights, the employers and their government in Britain are running into problems. "There is a massive gap between what they announce they want to do and what they can actually accomplish," Hunt said.

For example, plans for privatization of the railways and postal service are beginning to run into opposition. The newly privatized electric industry is the object of

Opportunities to build Young Socialists

Continued from Page 16

interested in Cuba and in going to Cuba to see the revolution with their own eyes."

The meeting placed building the convention of the Socialist Workers Party in July high on the organization's priority list. "For youth interested in revolutionary politics, the convention is a way to give them the broadest idea of what socialist ideas are and what socialists do," he said. Tinnon suggested that chapters organize classes on the history of the communist movement in preparation for the convention.

In addition, Tinnon said, members of the National Committee of the Young Socialists in the New York/northern New Jersey area will be more focused on building YS chapters there.

The National Committee decided to elect a smaller Steering Committee, composed of three members, so that more leadership resources can be put into building chapters in New York, Brooklyn, and Newark.

Tinnon concluded his report stressing the importance of being a self-financing organization. Monthly dues paid by each member make it possible to carry out cam-

paigns on a national basis — and are crucial to building an independent youth organization.

Tinnon proposed YS members take the lead to strengthen the international campaign to win justice for framed-up unionist and socialist Mark Curtis. Local chapters can take goals for winning new endorsers for Curtis's fight for parole and selling the new pamphlet, "Why is Mark Curtis Still in Prison?" by Naomi Craine. The YS chapter in Salt Lake City, Utah, for example, organized a showing of a video on the Curtis fight and signed up new endorsers.

YS leaders at the meeting pointed out this case shows how the capitalist government tries to grind working-class fighters down — and how Curtis stands out as an example for fighters on both sides of prison walls.

The YS national committee members also discussed how to organize to make the "Young Socialists Around the World" column in the *Militant* newspaper reflect more of the activities the organization is involved in. The column can help YS chapters think out campaigns in their local areas. Many YS groups around the world begin their meetings with reading an arti-

cle or editorial from the socialist news-weekly.

The national committee reaffirmed the YS security policy, which states that use, possession, or being in a place where there are illegal drugs is incompatible with membership. Tinnon explained how illegal drugs have been commonly used by the ruling class to frame-up political activists. These laws, he said, are used selectively against working people, especially oppressed nationalities. "A revolutionary youth organization doesn't want to give the government the possibility of using this against our membership," Tinnon said.

The discussion by the YS in Britain and Sweden, Tinnon said "is applicable to the YS in the United States. Our political identification needs to go further than a youth organization. We need to identify with a communist workers party, the Socialist Workers Party. Working on common campaigns will politically and organizationally advance both organizations."

The National Committee elected a new Steering Committee of Diana Newberry, Damon Tinnon, and Jack Willey to help organize and lead the work of the YS.

mounting controversy, as rates workers pay have skyrocketed and the profits of the company and bonuses paid to management have gone way up as well. The failure of the government to push back the rail unions, thereby opening up a potentially lucrative industry for privatization, has set back plans to turn this nationalized industry over to private capital.

During the weekend of the congress, 10,000 people marched in London protesting proposed cuts in education. The following week nurses demanding the government pay them more than the one percent pay raise they have been offered set up 400 lunch-time picket lines.

"The pound sterling is now in decline even relative to the Spanish peseta and the Italian lira," Hunt said. "U.S. president Bill Clinton announced he won't come to the World War II Victory in Europe events planned in London, preferring to go to Russia instead, and the U.S. ruling families are making headway in dislodging Britain as the main investor in Ireland!" Hunt noted.

The ill fortunes of British imperialism have even been the topic of recent remarks by government minister Kenneth Clarke. In a *Daily Mail* article headlined, "The feel-good gap," Clarke was quoted saying that "people aren't going to feel more secure, more comfortable that we're going to get rising prosperity...for another couple of years at least. I think it could go through the nineties." The *Daily Telegraph* criticized Clarke, saying his honesty was "a debatable asset."

The Labour Party, a bourgeois labor party, continues to move to the right. "Labour leader Tony Blair is winning the fight in the party to replace Clause 4 of the Labour Party Constitution. The clause says that workers should receive the fruits of their labor through securing public ownership of industry. Blair wants to replace this with the need for a 'dynamic market economy.'"

"Added to this is the fact that the labor movement has been in retreat in the face of government and employer attacks. As a result," he said, "the leadership of the Trades Union Congress [TUC], the trade union federation in Britain, has a declining influence in bourgeois politics. TUC general-secretary John Monks' views are rarely even mentioned in the media."

Defending Cuba's socialist revolution

At the same time congress participants described the openings for young people and workers entering into struggle today in strikes and skirmishes and protest actions against racist assaults, attacks on the social wage, and in defense of Irish prisoners.

Standing shoulder to shoulder with the Cuban revolution was the central theme of a Militant Labor Forum addressed by *New Internationalist* editor Mary-Alice Waters. Some 100 people attended the forum, "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution," held in conjunction with the congress.

The next morning delegates continued discussion on the main political questions addressed during the forum presentation.

"If we try to put Cuba under a microscope, isolated from the rest of the world, we won't understand what is happening there. To accurately gauge where the Cuban revolution is at today, and what the working class is accomplishing, Cuba must be seen as part of the world, facing the capitalist economic crisis in the 1990s," Waters said.

The economic hardship, decline in industrial production, and drop in imports and exports has been called a "special period" by Cubans. "But Cuba is not the only country living through a 'special period,'" Waters said. "Look at what is happening to workers and peasants in Mexico today."

But working people in Cuba have a tremendous advantage over their brothers and sisters in Mexico, Waters pointed out. Mexican working people face a concerted drive by the capitalist government of their own country and by the U.S. imperialists.

In Cuba, she said, working people and youth are utilizing the conquests of their socialist revolution — nationalized property relations, a workers and farmers government, and a high level of class consciousness — to mitigate to the greatest possible extent the impact of the world economic crisis, which for them has been exacerbated by the disruption of trade and aid previously received from the Soviet Union.

"In face of the economic shortages in Cuba, a retreat has been necessary," Waters said, "to give ground to find a new line of defense that can be maintained. How far that retreat has to go will not be decided in Cuba alone. It will depend on what happens in the rest of the world."

"For us the important fact is the Cuban working class' resistance to giving more ground than necessary," Waters continued. "The Cuban working class is the most powerful army on our side" as workers around the world resist capitalism's march toward fascism and war. That is why "defense of the living socialist revolution in Cuba remains at the center of world politics."

Roberto de Armas, first secretary of the Cuban Embassy in London, brought greetings from the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party to the congress. "On this special occasion we express to you our sincere gratitude for the numerous demonstrations of solidarity that have bound us together in the struggle for the defense of our independence, national sovereignty, and the right to continue forward along the socialist option chosen by the Cuban people," read the greetings. Although Washington is "today intensifying its criminal and illegal blockade against our country we reaffirm our determination to resist and win."

Building the Communist League

"Defense of the Cuban revolution is the number one priority of the Communist League coming out of this congress," said Jonathan Silberman in the report, "Organizing the Communist League and Building the Young Socialists."

"Defending Cuba is an integral part of building a communist party of the working class in Britain, both because of the place of the Cuban revolution in the world and for advancing an internationalist consciousness among workers and youth," Silberman said. The success of the World Conference in Solidarity with Cuba held in Havana last October, which drew 3,000 people from around the globe, and a recent speaking tour in Britain of Cuban youth leader Pável Díaz, are examples of the potential to reach out to win new forces to this fight, he said.

Central to this effort will be deepening the involvement of communist workers and young socialists in the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC), the main group in Britain that organizes solidarity activities with Cuba. This summer the CSC is sponsoring a youth tour and brigade to Cuba, in collaboration with the Cuba's Union of Young Communists. Some 3,000 young people and others from around the world are expected to attend a week-long "Cuba lives" festival sponsored by youth organizations in Cuba, followed by work brigades and informational tours.

"Building this brigade along with other organizations in Britain will be at the center of our work," Silberman proposed, "which will help strengthen the CL's ability to reach out to a new generation of youth who are beginning to say 'No' to the increasing horrors of the capitalist economic and social order."

Young Socialists from Britain held their own meeting on an evening of the congress set aside for that purpose. Two youth from Manchester described meetings with 80 students in four classes at a high school to discuss the January International Youth Brigade to Cuba. In Sheffield, a similar meeting is planned for university students, hosted by a newly formed Cuba student society. In London, Young Socialist members explained how they sold five copies of *New Internationalist*



Militant/Antonis Pstasis

Delegates and guests to Communist League congress check out Pathfinder books to learn more about the Cuban revolution and workers' struggles around the globe.

no. 10 as part of getting involved in protest actions."

Frances Rogan, a 19-year-old young socialist from Manchester, summed up her view of the Communist League Congress. "It is such a massive inspiration to be here with other young people who are political, are thinking about politics, and are out doing something about it. I'll be taking this experience back to Manchester with me," she said.

One person joined the YS at the congress and a member of the YS decided to join the Communist League.

"Strengthening our work among union members in industry is an important part of turning to the political openings to defend Cuba, support the Irish freedom struggle, and join with those going on strike or hitting the streets in protest action," Silberman said. He noted that CL members have been among youth and others benefiting from an upturn in hiring in key industries in the country, thereby strengthening the spread of unions and big plants in which communists work.

Several delegates noted that despite continued high unemployment, employers in several industries are hiring younger workers in hopes of imposing more speedup and worse conditions on the job in an attempt to improve their profit margins and competitive advantage.

But big business is not having such an easy go of it, Chris Morris, an engineering worker from Manchester, pointed out. Phillips Power Semi Conductors, where he works, ran into stiff opposition to enacting a compulsory 12-hour shift. "This created an opening to talk about why the

eight-hour day was an important social conquest of the labor movement, as well as how the unions need a political strategy not just to reject this proposal but to shorten the workweek with no cut in pay to create jobs and forge unity between the employed and unemployed," he said.

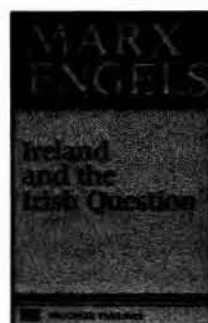
Carol Bell, a TGWU member, spoke about the daily resistance at her factory to speedup. "It puts us in the same trench as workers in Cuba, and we can look to and point out to others how they've fought to defend their socialist revolution," she said.

"It was hard to discuss Ireland in the past in the unions," said Ann Fiander, also an engineering worker from Manchester. "This was in part because the union officials stood in the way of simply having the discussion. Now, it's a different world. Workmates coming from Belfast talk about what's happening in the north of Ireland. Even when rightist forces in Britain launched a campaign to free a British soldier imprisoned for murdering a young Irish woman in Belfast, workers debated this and it opened up an opportunity to explain the Irish fight for self-determination."

To carry out the work of the Communist League a fund of £5,000 (US\$1-£1.60) was launched to be completed by July. By the end of the congress, participants had pledged £2,000. Delegates also elected a new central committee to organize the party to carry out the decisions of the congress and lead the work of the league over the coming year.

Stephen Jenner and Ron Poulsen also contributed to this article.

for further reading



Ireland and the Irish Question

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

For workers in Britain, Marx and Engels explain, "the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the first condition of their own social emancipation." Progress Publishers \$19.95 (cloth only)

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New International no.10

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Connecticut desegregation suit dismissed

BY TIM CRAINE

HARTFORD, Connecticut — An important fight for equal rights was set back here April 12 when Judge Harry Hammer ruled against the plaintiffs in *Sheff vs. O'Neill*. This lawsuit, initiated six years ago, charged that the government of Connecticut is responsible for racial imbalance resulting in unequal educational opportunities for Black and Hispanic children in Hartford. The suit demanded that schools in Hartford and the surrounding suburbs be integrated.

Hammer ruled that the state could not be held responsible for its grievously segregated school system since it had not specifically taken actions to set it up that way.

Supporters of equal rights reacted quickly to the judge's verdict. On the morning of April 17, nearly 400 students walked out of the city's three high schools to join a protest and prayer vigil at the capitol organized by the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. That evening, 200 people attended a rally at Saint Monica's Church. Among the speakers were two organizers of the morning walkout, Chris Wyatt, a student at Hartford Public High School, and Milo Sheff, a student at Weaver High School. Sheff was 10 years old when his mother joined other parents in initiating the *Sheff vs. O'Neill* suit.

Wyatt and Sheff told the *Militant* that organizing efforts in the high schools had just begun and next time more students will join the protests. Another rally is planned for April 24.

Long-term struggle

The struggle against segregated schools in Connecticut dates back to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In 1965 the U.S. Civil Rights Commission issued a report calling on the state's department of education to eliminate segregation between urban and suburban school districts. This report, like many subsequent ones, sat on the shelf and gathered dust.

Hartford is one of 12 urban school districts where the majority of Connecticut's Black and Hispanic children attend school. Most of the remaining 154 districts in the state are predominantly white.

In the case before the court, the plaintiffs cited the following statistics: 94 percent of Hartford students are Black or Hispanic, compared with the state average of 27 percent. Two-thirds of the students live below the poverty level in contrast with a state average of 24 percent. Half come from families where English is not spoken at home, compared with 12 percent statewide. And only 11 percent of students in Hartford passed all three parts of the Connecticut Mastery Test, given to fourth, sixth, and eighth graders. The state average is 48 percent.

In 1989 the *Sheff vs. O'Neill* lawsuit was filed. It named then governor William O'Neill as a defendant and cited the Connecticut State Constitution, which states

that "no person shall be denied the equal protection of the law nor be subjected to discrimination or segregation...because of race, color, ancestry or national origin."

In Hartford, many school buildings are in a state of disrepair, textbooks are outdated, libraries understocked, and computers scarce. In contrast, many suburban schools are equipped with more modern facilities and the latest in educational technology. Although the per-pupil expenditure in Hartford, \$8,698, is above the state average of \$7,806, many more Hartford students need special education programs.

'Voluntary' plan put in place

Testimony in the case concluded in 1994, and for months supporters of school desegregation awaited the outcome.

In the meantime, in an attempt to avoid a court-ordered desegregation plan, then

governor Lowell Weicker asked the state legislature in 1993 to promote integration on a "voluntary" basis. Ineffective as these voluntary efforts to promote "diversity" were, in the fall of 1994, they were voted down in 8 of 11 state regions. At present, in all of Connecticut, just 600 students are enrolled in Project Concern, which makes it possible for inner-city school children to attend better suburban schools.

At the same time conditions in the Hartford schools continued to deteriorate. In 1994, the Hartford Board of Education voted to turn the management of the entire school system over to a private company, Educational Alternatives Inc. (EAI). The company promised to provide more computers to the schools and to raise test scores.

Instead, the initial results of their takeover include the elimination of art,

music, and physical education classes for elementary students and the beginning of an attack on the unions of teachers and other school workers.

Republican governor John Rowland was quick to praise Hammer's decision. In language reminiscent of defenders of Jim Crow segregation in the South, he said, "It's a natural occurrence. It's a result of human nature, people's decision to live where they want to live."

Rowland also sent a congratulatory bottle of champagne to Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat, who had directed the state's defense team during the trial. The following day, Blumenthal attempted to distance himself from Rowland. Nevertheless, he said that he is prepared to defend the state when the plaintiffs file an appeal with the state supreme court.

'Solidarity works,' say grocery strikers

BY KATHLEEN DENNY

SAN FRANCISCO — Pending ratification of a tentative agreement, some 32,000 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union returned to work at supermarkets throughout northern California April 15.

The day after the strike ended, Brian Fassler wore a button that read, "Solidarity Works," as he collected grocery carts in the parking lot of the Rockridge Safeway supermarket in Oakland. He and Vi Lieu described the support the strike had received. "Safeway never imagined in a million years that other people would support us like that," said Fassler.

"That's why we're back so soon. This place was empty!" said Lieu. "About the only people who came to shop were from the retirement home across the street. And we had drivers to take them somewhere else. They didn't really want to come here, and we made sure they didn't have to."

According to the *San Francisco Examiner*, the new agreement will provide full health coverage for all employees. Any increases in insurance costs will be deducted from reserves of the employees health and welfare trust fund. The three-year contract is supposed to freeze wages at their present level.

Workers this reporter interviewed did not yet know the details of the proposed contract. The UFCW has not scheduled meetings, and members will vote by mail.

"The benefits were the main thing for us," said Lieu. "And we hung onto those. I don't think that the company is going to forget what other people did for us either."

"If there's still no raise, I might vote against it," said Fassler. "Three years at the same pay doesn't even keep up with the cost of living."

Some 18,000 workers at 208 Safeway supermarkets from Fresno to the Oregon border walked off the job after contract



Some 1,000 striking grocery workers rally in front of Safeway corporate headquarters in Oakland, California, April 13. The union won broad support in the strike.

talks broke down April 5. Within two days, 180 Lucky and 17 Save Mart stores locked out 14,000 UFCW members as part of a bargaining agreement with Safeway.

Once the strike began many supermarkets were deserted as thousands of people showed their solidarity with the workers by refusing to shop at the facilities.

Last year, Safeway alone pocketed \$250 million in profits. In the first quarter of 1995, earnings were up to \$62 million. The supermarket owners wanted major cuts in health benefits for full-time workers, and complete elimination of health benefits for part-time workers and retirees. The majority of the grocery workers are employed on a part-time basis.

"So many other people are facing the same thing now," said striker Sally Lair. "It doesn't matter what industry you work in, they're all trying to make us pay for their problems. That has to stop, and we're doing something."

Workers on the picket lines handed out flyers that explained the issues and asked people not to shop at the stores. The flyers were printed in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. Most workers supported the strikers and vowed not to shop at the struck stores.

Kathleen Denny is a member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 1781 in Oakland.

Iowa officials demand farmer remove protest sign



The Iowa Department of Transportation has given Larry Ginter 30 days to remove this sign from his farm near Rhodes. The sign refers to Iowa governor Terry Branstad in protesting the growth of large-scale factories that produce hogs for the market. State officials claim the sign is a nuisance to motorists passing on a nearby highway.

Philadelphia transit workers win pay hike, better benefits

BY KATHY MICKELLS

PHILADELPHIA — After 14 days on strike Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234 members ratified a contract with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) by a vote of 2,897 to 261. Workers on the suburban carriers Red Arrow and Frontier also ratified pacts. The strike had virtually shut down all mass transit in and out of Philadelphia.

"It's a pretty decent contract. We got a 3 percent wage increase in each of three years and the pension benefits are better," explained Edward Nevins, a bus driver out of the 12th and Luzerne bus barn. Union members will also get increases in sick pay and higher tool and clothing allowances. The union agreed to develop a program jointly with SEPTA to reduce accidents, injuries, and passenger claims.

During the strike the union organized a mass rally, big picket lines at regional rail stops, and a rush hour "drive slow" on one of the major expressways. "Those tactics we used are 20 years old. That's what it takes to get their attention," said Nevins.

The media and government officials worked overtime to discredit the strikers. Day after day workers in Philadelphia were bombarded with stories of how the strike was the cause of all the inconveniences. They were told there was no money to grant the demands of the strikers and the TWU members were portrayed as greedy highly paid workers. "But workers saw beyond what they tried to portray," said Nevins. "A lot of people came by and gave us a thumbs up."

"I know the strike messed people up because my mother couldn't get around," said an X-ray technician at the University of Pennsylvania. "But it was great seeing them take the strike to the suburbs, actually having them fight for a good contract. It was inspiring."

"We showed SEPTA," remarked one operator. "They said they didn't have the money, but they found it when we stood strong."

Kathy Mickells is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-901.

Victory of workers, peasants in Vietnam changed face of U.S.

On April 30, 1975, the last U.S. troops in Vietnam were airlifted from the roof of the U.S. embassy in Saigon. As a component of the renewed debate around the Vietnam War at the 20th anniversary of its culmination, we are printing excerpts from the afterword of *Out Now — A Participant's Account of the Movement in the United States against the Vietnam War*. The book, written by Fred Halstead, was first published by Pathfinder Press in 1978. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder. Subtitles are by the *Militant*.

BY FRED HALSTEAD

The Second Indochina War was the first in the epoch of American imperialism in which the United States went down to defeat. After emerging victorious from the Spanish-American War and two world wars, then encountering a stalemate in Korea, the Pentagon's military machine was ignominiously evicted from Vietnam, thanks to the persevering struggle of the Indochinese plus the antiwar resistance of the American people. This was the most sustained and, except for Russia in 1905 and 1917, the most effective antiwar movement within any big power while the shooting was going on.

The official propagandists cooked up various formulas to justify their military intervention. It was depicted as a crusade for democracy and freedom against the threat of communist totalitarianism and for the defense of the independence of the South against invasion from the North. The U.S. was there, it was said, to fulfill treaty obligations to the client Saigon regime and thwart the expansionism of China and the Soviet Union. Toward the end the excuses became exceedingly thin: to assure the return of the POWs; to prevent a bloodbath in the South if the NLF [National Liberation Front] should take over completely; to protect U.S. troops as they were withdrawn. All this was demagoguery.

In reality, U.S. intervention had a thoroughly imperialistic character. The colossus of world capitalism hurled its military might without provocation against a small and divided colonial nation thousands of miles away struggling for self-determination and unification. A series of American presidents sought to do what King George III's empire failed to do against the rebel patriots of 1776.

Worker-peasant uprising

On one side was a state-armed to the teeth promoting the strategic aims and material interests of the corporate rich on the global arena; on the other was a worker and peasant uprising heading toward the overthrow of capitalist power and property, despite the limited political program of its leadership.

These underlying anticapitalist and antilandlord tendencies were eventually clearly expressed in the reunification of Vietnam in 1976 and the process of eliminating capitalist property relations in the South. The prolonged civil war in South Vietnam thereby proved to be an integral part of the international confrontation between the upholders of capitalism and the forces moving in a socialist direction that has been unfolding since the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

Apart from genocide against the Native Americans, which involved intermittent warfare over four centuries, this was the longest war in America's history. The first U.S. soldier was reported killed in Vietnam in 1959, the last in 1975, a span of sixteen years. (The Revolutionary War lasted eight years and the Spanish-American War only four months.)

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, the total number of American military personnel engaged at one time or another in the Southeast Asian war — including bases in Thailand and elsewhere and on ships at sea — was over eight million. This was more than half the number of Americans engaged in World War II

(8,744,000 compared with 16,112,566). Over three million Americans were sent to Vietnam itself. Sixty thousand were killed, 46,000 of these in combat; and 300,000 were wounded. (The ratio of seriously wounded and permanently disabled to killed, incidentally, was much higher among Americans in Vietnam than in previous wars, owing largely to advanced techniques of removing casualties quickly to hospitals.)

The Indochinese were killed in the hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, and their lands devastated. The Pentagon dropped more bomb tonnage on the relatively small area of Indochina than had been dropped anywhere in the world in all previous wars combined.

The direct dollar cost to the U.S. in South Vietnam alone was \$141 billion. This was more than \$7,000 for each of the area's 20 million inhabitants, whose per capita income was only \$157 per year. The collateral expenditures amounted to far more. Economists correctly link the rapid inflation of the late 1960s to the large federal deficits resulting from U.S. spending for the Vietnam War.

Washington vs. colonial revolution

Most Americans today regard this as a colossal waste of lives and wealth in a shameful war. But the Pentagon strategists make a different assessment. To be sure, they did not cover themselves with glory or succeed in crushing the Vietnamese revolution and retaining a staging area for U.S. operations in the region. But they did hold back the advancement of the colonial revolution in Vietnam for a decade and a half. That was part of their job of policing the world for American big business, its multinational companies, and its clients in Japan and elsewhere.

In the early sixties the vast majority of Americans ignored the war, or accommodated themselves to it, though without much patriotic fervor. It seemed remote from their immediate concerns, something which they knew little or nothing about and left trustingly to their government. That was still a time of confidence in the wisdom and honesty of the top political leaders and above all in the benevolent intentions of the occupants of the White House. The Washington policy makers took cruel advantage of this naiveté.

Without exaggeration, most Americans were hardly aware that Vietnam existed when the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy administrations were stealthily pulling them step by step into the bloody quagmire. The Democrats and Republicans jointly carried out the "bipartisan foreign policy" in Southeast Asia and rubber-stamped it in Congress while the major media that molded public opinion — and kept it uninformed — gave no warning of what was ahead.

The antiwar movement began with people who were already radicalized: pacifists, socialists, communists, rebellious students, and a scattering of morally outraged individuals. At the start these were a small minority, convinced of the justness of their cause and ready to face unpopularity for their stand. The energy, resoluteness, and fortitude of this vanguard brought the movement into being and remained its prime mover....

On closer examination this is not so surprising. For only those who were prepared ideologically to defy pervasive, blind conformity could take the risk of overt opposition. If the number of such Americans was so small in the early sixties, this testified less to the irrelevance of the radicals than to the marginal place that deepgoing criticism occupied under the profound corruption and advanced senility of the two-party system.

The movement later made its impact upon that system, as the proliferation of dove Democrats and Republicans showed. But the dove politicians didn't lead, they followed, far behind, stumbling and mumbling all the way. There has since been some deft distorting of the record on this



Students demonstrate in Saigon, May 1970, against South Vietnamese regime's treatment of political prisoners and collaboration with Cambodia dictatorship.

point, but the attempted rehabilitation is belied by the facts.

Only two senators, Morse and Gruening, voted against the Tonkin Gulf resolution which gave Johnson the green light in 1964. A single member of the House, Adam Clayton Powell, registered some sort of dissent by abstaining. Others knew something was wrong. But they were also aware that to avoid "irrelevance" within the two-party system you don't go around offending the powers-that-be and challenging "reasons of state" on grounds of human decency or anything of that sort. Morse, Gruening, and Powell were all knifed by their national party leadership and never won another election. Even after the dramatic switch in the public attitude made dovishness permissible on Capitol Hill, the vast majority in both parties — doves included — consistently voted for the Vietnam military budget up to 1973....

The issue was not resolved or even ameliorated, through the two-party electoral process. On the contrary, the election periods were used to precisely the opposite effect. They served to hoodwink the antiwar feelings, defuse antiwar protests, and give the war-makers some extra maneuverability in their pernicious and ill-fated plans. That happened with every congressional and presidential election from 1964, when Johnson ran as a "peace" candidate, to 1972, when the Nixon administration announced that "peace is at hand" and then, after the election, went ahead with another "brutalization" of the Vietnamese population.

Those who retain or preach faith in the reformability of the capitalist two-party system must reckon with the fact that the American movement against the Vietnam War — the greatest moral resurgence in the U.S. since the struggle to abolish slavery — had to arise and maintain itself apart from and in defiance of both parties....

It is too early to assess the full consequences of this experience. It is nonetheless clear that the antiwar agitation and mass mobilizations spurred the radicalization of many sectors of the population. "It is no accident," wrote Susan Jacoby for one, "that so many female veterans of the

civil-rights movement and the antiwar movement ultimately became involved in the women's liberation movement."

It changed the political face of the United States and motivated a healthy distrust of the rulers in Washington that bore fruit in the Watergate revelations and their sequels.

It broke the fever of the anticommunist hysteria and weakened the efficacy of the "red scares" that have been used as a weapon against any challenge to the status quo.

It challenged and changed the stereotyped image of GIs as obedient pawns of the brass immunized against dissenting currents within the civilian population.

The abhorrence of any further military ventures abroad has restricted the options available to Washington in its imperial designs, as its dilemma over Angola in 1976 indicated.

The American movement against the Vietnam War broke the pattern of large and successful movements for social reform in the United States confining themselves to domestic matters and accepting uncritically the imperialist foreign policy, aggressive wars, and counterrevolutionary ventures of the American Establishment....

In any case, the veterans of the antiwar movement have every reason to be proud of their record, part of which is set down in this book. We accomplished what we had set out to do. Our protests did win over public opinion and exert enough pressure — along with that of the Vietnamese — to bring the U.S. forces home. That done, the Vietnamese were finally able to take over their own country.

The American movement against the Vietnam War knocked a gaping hole in the theory that because of its control over the military, the police, the economy, and the tremendously effective modern media, the ruling class could get away with anything so long as there was some degree of prosperity. The antiwar movement started with nothing but leaflets. But it proved that people can think for themselves if the issue touches them deeply enough, technology notwithstanding. In human affairs there is still nothing so powerful as an idea and a movement whose time has come.

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NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Caterpillar Strike: The Stakes for Working People. Speaker: Bob Miller, Socialist Workers Party candidate for State Assembly District 29, member of United Auto Workers Local 980. Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey

St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

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20 Years After the Fall of Saigon: The Vietnam War Syndrome and McNamara's Apologies. Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m. 214 Ave. A (between 13th and 14th Sts.). Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 388-9346.

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The Struggle for Self-Determination in Ireland Today. Sat., April 29, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

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The Struggle for Self-Determination in Ireland Today. Speakers: Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Transportation Union Local 1006. Sat., April 29, 7 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

Robert McNamara and the U.S. Government's War Against the Vietnamese People. Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m. 147 E. 900 S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Guatemala: Washington's Decades-Long Aid to Military Repression. Speakers: Representative of Guatemala Human Rights Commission; Dave Byden, Guatemala Committee of the Washington Area; Chester Wilson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m. 1802 Belmont Rd. N.W. (in Adams Morgan near 18th St. and Columbia Road). Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

The Fight for Irish National Unification. Speaker: Ron Poulsen, Communist League and

member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, recently attended the Communist League convention in London. Sat., April 29, 6 p.m. 66 Albion St., Surry Hills. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 281 3297.

BRITAIN

London

'Victory in Europe' Anniversary Celebrations — What's At Stake for Working People? Speaker: Alan Harris, Communist League. Sat., April 29, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: (071) 928 7993.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

The Crisis in the United Kingdom and the Irish Question. Speaker: Eugen Lepou, Communist League. Sat., April 29, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Rallies commemorate Easter Rising in Ireland

Continued from front page

tions. "For 25 years, the British failed to defeat the republican struggle," said Adams. "They are now seeking a victory by subverting the peace process."

Sinn Fein, he said, was willing to discuss disarmament with London, if a governmental minister were assigned to negotiate instead of just lower level officials. "I want to see all of the weapons — the IRA weapons, the British weapons, the unionist weapons, and the loyalist weapons — taken permanently out of commission," he said. There are still more than 17,000 British troops in Northern Ireland and the pro-British Royal Ulster Constabulary, a force of nearly 10,000 with heavy weapons, continues to patrol the streets. Several rightist paramilitary forces also remain armed.

The discovery of a cache of guns belonging to the pro-British Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) April 14 in Belfast highlighted the hypocrisy of the British government's position. In March, London declared that politicians linked to the UVF had given sufficient assurance that the paramilitary group would disarm, while

Sinn Fein had not.

The Easter rallies are part of a step-up in actions in support of Irish self-determination and for democratic rights. Two weeks earlier 5,000 people demonstrated in Crossmaglen in the north of Ireland demanding the release of all political prisoners jailed for their part in the struggle. It was the largest protest ever in that village, known as a center of resistance to the British occupation. Participants came from throughout Ireland, including 26 buses from Belfast.

The action was part of a campaign organized by Saoirse, a new all-Ireland organization demanding the release of all Irish political prisoners held in the jails of Britain, Germany, Ireland, and the United States. The rallying call of the campaign is, "Bring them home."

In an interview with *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, Saoirse spokesperson Raymond McCartney said the prisoner campaign is modeled on the experience of mobilizations to support the Irish political prisoners who carried out hunger strikes and other protests in the early 1980s. McCartney himself was jailed for more than 17 years at Long Kesh and took part in the actions.

The mass mobilizations outside prison walls in support of the hunger strikers "brought the issue to a lot of people, and we must aim to do the same," he said.

Prisoners in Long Kesh are planning to start their own Saoirse group, which will launch a letter-writing campaign, McCartney said.

Mitchel McLaughlin, national chairperson of Sinn Fein, addressed the April 2 demonstration in Crossmaglen. Since the August 1994 cease-fire, "the conditions of

republican prisoners in English jails have actually deteriorated, especially in Belmarsh and Full Sutton," he told the protesters. "Relatives of the prisoners held in the Special Secure Units in both prisons have highlighted the ritual abuse of the human rights of these defenseless men."

"When we talk of demilitarization," McLaughlin continued, "we mean the entire scope of the British army garrison, the massive fortifications such as this monstrosity behind me, the huge spy posts that dot the border landscape and which dominate skylines in nationalist urban communities in Belfast, Derry, Cookstown, and other towns."

The Crossmaglen demonstration was not mentioned in the British press, which is subject to government censorship on all coverage from northern Ireland.

London's position of not holding direct talks with Sinn Fein is becoming more untenable, and is highlighting its weakened position. Cardinal Cahal Daly, the head of the Catholic Church in Ireland, spoke out April 16 in favor of opening negotiations. Daly, who had been vocal in demanding the IRA disarm, said this was necessary to avoid the appearance of a stalemate.

The British government can run from the peace process "but they cannot hide from it," said McLaughlin at the Saoirse rally. "The British empire has gone. Forever! It is kaput."

Days before the Easter Rising anniversary, Patrick Mayhew, Britain's Northern Ireland secretary, announced the withdrawal of another 400 troops from the occupied six counties. Another contingent of 400 soldiers left in March. The latest withdrawal will bring the number of British troops stationed in Northern Ireland to

17,500, down from approximately 30,000 in 1992. Peter Robinson, leader of the Democratic Unionist party in Northern Ireland, griped that these moves represented a "unilateral decommissioning" by the army.

Several permanent vehicle road blocks outside police stations and army installations in northern Ireland were dismantled April 12. In addition, the Dublin government released seven republican prisoners in the week before Easter.

More actions are being planned in Ireland and elsewhere to demand freedom for the prisoners and press London to begin serious talks.

Saoirse is organizing a series of marches, lectures, exhibitions, and fund-raisers in May, beginning with the May 5 anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands during prisoner hunger strikes in 1981. Sands was elected to parliament as a Sinn Fein candidate while in prison, and was the first of the protesters to die. Hunger strike commemorations will take place across Ireland May 5-7, and in New York as well on May 6. A national conference on political prisoners organized by Saoirse is scheduled for June 3 in Dublin.

A commemoration of the 1972 civil rights march in Derry that became known as Bloody Sunday after soldiers gunned down 13 demonstrators is being planned.

Sinn Fein president Adams will be on a speaking tour in the United States May 9-25, traveling from Maine to California to Washington, D.C. In addition, Martin McGuinness will speak at a public meeting in London May 7.

Marcella Fitzgerald and Jonathan Silverman in London contributed to this article.

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams to tour the United States
May 9, Maine May 10, New York
May 11-13 — California
May 15, Kansas City
May 16, Cleveland May 17, Chicago
May 19, Pennsylvania
May 20-21 — Florida
May 22-25 — Washington, D.C.
For more information call the
Friends of Sinn Fein at (212) 290-2353

CALENDAR

IOWA

Ames

'Journey for Justice' Rally at National Agricultural Summit. Tue., April 25. Meet at Bandshell Park (between E. 5th and E. 6th just north of Lincoln Way) at 7 a.m. March to Student Union at Iowa State University, site of president Bill Clinton's National Agricultural Conference, begins at 7:30 a.m. Sponsored by National Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment. For more information, call (515) 244-5671 or (515) 266-5213.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Cuban Reality Program at Roxbury Community College Presents: Talks on Life in Cuba Since the Collapse of the Soviet Union. Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* and *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*; and a representative from the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. Wed., April 26, 6 p.m. Roxbury Community College, Student Center, Room 102, 1234 Columbus Ave. For more information, call: (617) 427-0060 X5151.

BRITAIN

London

Create Peace, Unite Ireland. Speakers: Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein; representative, Saoirse; others. Sun., May 7, 2 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

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

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

And no voting — Despite the "stereotyping" of prisons as "essentially dehumanizing social settings," most wardens are happy in their jobs, a prof reports. "Prison wardens are executives of



Harry Ring

very large enterprises where a lot of people report to them," he explains. "Almost like running a city."

Loud and clear — The Iowa

legislature has been busy passing a spate of "tough on crime" bills, including chain-gang work of at least 40 hours a week for some inmates.

Some sensitive senators wanted to replace "chain gangs" with "highly secured work groups." Snorted a colleague, "It's a chain gang. That's what we want. That's the message we want to send."

A hearty handclasp and a box of oat bran — Discussing the bouncing of 600 employees, the in-house mag at Quaker Oats said: "Some Quaker Oats employees will say the company no longer cares for its own... What's the payoff for the pain?" they want to know." Chief honcho William

Smithburg responded: "They are very valued associates who performed their jobs in a first-class manner. We wish them well in their future endeavors."

Ding dong — Robert Gordon, a racist quack who teaches at Johns Hopkins University, is cited in the *Bell Curve* as a proponent of the thesis that Blacks have a genetically-based lower IQ. Gordon recently confided to a reporter that he's very brainy but, "I learned how to mute it to get along with other people well."

Literary note — In one of Ring Lardner's short stories, there's a bit of dialogue something like this: A: "You know, I'm not as dumb as

I look." B: "I hope not."

Be well — First it was Willie King. He had the wrong foot removed at Tampa's University Community Hospital. Then came Leo Alphonse. He died when he was mistaken for another patient and removed from a breathing machine. This was followed by a partial sterilization of a patient after a Cesarean birth. The procedure was stopped when a nurse noted the patient had not consented.

Nothing's perfect — In an ad, the University Community Hospital expressed regrets for its mistakes, assured improvements are being made, and explained: "Unfortunately, in health care mistakes happen and some of these

have occurred at our hospital."

Crime doesn't pay? — J.P. Bolduc, who was forced out as top dog at the W.R. Grace company amid charges of sexual harassment, will receive lifetime retirement benefits worth some \$43 million.

Socialism, anyone? — California is a highly industrialized state and its huge agribusiness is probably the country's top food producer. Yet, University of California health experts report, 5 million residents suffer hunger. That includes 2 million children and 250,000 seniors. The researchers said this is a conservative estimate.

Union power overtakes Ford 'team' concept

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN

TORONTO — Employee-management "teams" have become a feature of many workplaces. Bosses claim that by developing close collaboration between workers and management, they can improve the work environment, product quality, and be more competitive in the "new global economy."

At the Ford Electronics plant in Markham, Ontario, where I work, the team system is an integral part of how management runs the factory. Banners

UNION TALK

and plaques displaying various business awards won by the company adorn the walls. A company news magazine is widely distributed. "White boards" that lay out monthly goals for each department stand adjacent to each product line.

The 1,600 production workers are required to attend weekly one-hour team meetings to discuss quality, machine efficiency, attendance, and housekeeping, and to collectively "problem-solve." A suggestion program rewards workers with points exchangeable for goods chosen from a catalog. Volunteers are sought to do monthly white board presentations on each product line in front of an audience of co-workers and top management.

Three officers of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge 2113 sit with management representatives on a Plant Joint Steering Committee, which oversees the "teams" program.

Our union contract expired January 13. Within a few weeks negotiations broke off as the company insisted on numerous concessions. Ford wanted a four-year wage



Auto worker in Ontario. Workers at Machinists-organized Ford Electronics plant waged recent struggle against concession demands, giving lie to "team concept."

freeze, reduction in benefits, introduction of part-time nonunion workers, and important changes in work schedules, including "flexible" start times for all shifts.

Unsigned leaflets by workers previously trained in employee "empowerment" began to circulate in the plant, informing everyone that the company was stockpiling, and urging workers to stop working overtime. Up to then, overtime was the norm on many lines. (Because of "just-in-time" inventory and shipping methods, weekend overtime is needed to supply auto assembly plants in Canada and in the United States on six-day production schedules.) Within a few days, workers on the shop floor began to boy-

cott weekend overtime. The boycott soon spread to weekdays as well. The majority of union members are women. Thirty-eight languages are spoken in the plant. The local, which has existed for 30 years, has never taken strike action.

Over the next four weeks, workers united behind a work-to-rule campaign aimed at forcing the corporation to withdraw the concessions and share some of the record \$50 million profit it made at that plant alone in the last year. Most

workers felt that if we didn't take a stand now, we wouldn't get another chance when the economy gets worse.

Negotiations resumed, but as the supply of some products began to run critically low, threatening to shut down assembly plants in the United States, the company unsuccessfully tried to get union officials to call off the boycott. Estimates of the number of workers that stayed home each weekend ranged from 90 percent to 98 percent of the union. At the same time, worker participation in teams fell to an all-time low, as workers began to identify more with the union than with the Ford "family."

Confidence in the effectiveness of union power and solidarity grew. On February 24, now referred to as "Black Friday," hundreds of us on all three shifts filed into the plant dressed in black. In the face of this union solidarity, and just as union negotiators were preparing to walk out again, the company withdrew all its concession demands. A week later, a union contract was ratified by 89 percent of the almost 700 members present. The new contract contained a 13 percent wage increase over the three-year life of the contract. The company nearly doubled its contributions to the pension plan and other benefits were slightly improved.

Our contract fight showed that the only effective tool for defending our interests is to use union power. Out of this fight the union came out stronger.

Sylvie Charbin is a member of IAM Lodge 2113 at Ford Electronics.

Canada cops assault female inmates

BY BRIGITTE GROUX

TORONTO — The Canadian Broadcast Corporation program "The Fifth Estate" aired part of a 90-minute video February 22 that shocked many working people across Canada. It documented a brutal assault and strip search of female inmates at the Kingston Prison for Women in April 1994.

The video shows male members of the riot squad, armed with truncheons, going through the cells of female inmates and rousing them from sleep. The cops then ripped off the women's clothing, searched them, shackled them, and forced them to kneel and parade nude.

A Corrections Canada report released last month cleared the squad of any wrongdoing. "The men did their job the way they were supposed to," said prison warden Therese LeBlanc, who co-authored the report. "The procedures were followed." Prison officials said that the emergency response team was called in after four days of unrest in which inmates yelled obscenities, set fires, threw urine at guards, and stabbed one guard with a needle.

In an interview with the *Toronto Sun*, inmate Brenda Morrison said the emergency response team "treated us horribly. They left us naked and shackled in the cell and opened all the windows, and left us like this for 24 hours."

One inmate reported that the trouble started when a prison guard told a native woman, "Why don't you string yourself up like the rest of them?" The guard was referring to a rash of suicides by native women at the prison several years ago. But by the time the riot squad arrived, Morrison said, "we were singing pow-wow, native spiritual songs, trying to make ourselves happy."

After the riot squad did their dirty work, women had to sign a form consenting to a vaginal and rectal search before being allowed to shower. Six women were sent into isolation for 23 hours a day. All were kept there for at least six months. Others were transferred to the Kingston Penitentiary for men.

A new report authored by Correctional Investigator Ron Steward gave a more accurate view of the actions taken by Canada prison officials. It said, "The video-tape... shows a massive display of force... in the face of no resistance."

Steward added that the excessive force was intended to degrade and dehumanize the prisoners. He accused the Correctional Service of Canada of trying to whitewash the affair, calling its internal investigative report "at best incomplete, inconclusive and self-serving." Steward recommended that the prisoners be compensated. Solicitor-General Herbert Gray has now ordered an independent investigation.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People

May 1, 1970

Price 10¢

In a very dramatic move last week, the U.S. government dropped the charges of draft evasion against Edwin Feliciano Grafals, an activist in the Puerto Rican Federación Universitaria Pro-Independencia (FUPI), an organization of university students fighting for Puerto Rican independence.

It was Feliciano's conviction and sentencing to a one-year prison term on Sept. 26, 1969, that touched off a new stage in the protracted struggle against ROTC at the University of Puerto Rico.

The government's decision to drop the charges against Feliciano represents a significant victory for the pro-independence forces in Puerto Rico because of the implicit recognition that Puerto Ricans cannot be forced to serve in the armed forces of the United States, thus bringing the legal status of Puerto Rico into question.

In fact, the "commonwealth" status of Puerto Rico — which is neither a state nor independent — was the basis upon which Chief U.S. District Judge Hiram Cancio decided on Jan. 23 to reduce Feliciano's one year sentence to a one hour sentence. Cancio was also the judge who originally

handed down the one year sentence.

But Feliciano, who is being represented by the law firm of Rabinowitz, Boudin and Standard, chose to continue the appeal process.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

April 28, 1945

May Day in Europe this year, unlike previous May Days during the present war, has approached to the accompaniment of growing mass rebellion of the war-torn peoples.

In Germany and France, the two leading capitalist countries, the workers are beginning to rise against capitalism and assert once more their determination to end the system which plunged them into the insane holocaust of misery and death.

On April 20, the Luxembourg radio reported that Germany was torn by civil war marked by "gigantic peace demonstrations" in Berlin and Munich. "Berlin is burning with unrest, civil war is rife, on all building in the workers' district red flags have appeared."

Meanwhile, unrest is mounting in France. The General Federation of Labor's call for a general strike on May Day asks the workers to protest against the new increase in the price of bread, the inadequate wages, and the failure of the de Gaulle regime to carry out a real purge of fascist elements.

Capitalism degrades environment

Twenty-five years ago, carried by the momentum of the massive social movements for civil rights, women's rights, and against the Vietnam War, millions of young people and others turned out for the first Earth Day determined to fight against the poisoning and destruction of the world's air, land, and water.

A quarter century later, the problems remain — mountains of nuclear waste cannot be safely dealt with, toxic spills from factories and oil tankers seep into the water and soil, tracts of rainforest as large as England are chopped down in Latin America — the list goes on and on and on.

The U.S. government tries to promote itself as the protector of the environment. The Clinton administration even boasts that it has an "environmental vice president" in Al Gore. In reality, though, every modest gain in regulating pollution and other environmental hazards has been won in struggle. For thousands who will turn out for this year's Earth Day events, their participation will be linked to broader fights against attacks by the government and employers against immigrant workers, women's rights, workers' living standards, and the right to an education.

The bosses and their politicians in the Democratic and Republican parties always try to counterpose jobs to the environment. "We can't afford to run this factory cleanly," the owners complain. "If you insist, we'll close up shop and move where there aren't regulations."

This is coming from the same capitalist class that is driving hard to bring down workers' wages and impose harsher working conditions. The railroad owners, for instance, have pushed through crew size reductions that force two workers to do the job of five. The cost is paid in workers' lives, greater risks of hazardous spills, and thousands of unemployed. The banner of "protecting jobs" is hypocritically flown by those who are trying to gut the totally insufficient protections workers have won from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"We must maintain our nuclear arsenal," Washington insists, "to protect freedom and democracy." This is the argument of U.S. imperialist rulers — who had no hesitation in killing up to 3 million Vietnamese workers and peasants, leaving Indochina poisoned for decades by Agent Orange, napalm, and other horrors; who dropped

the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and considered using them in Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and who knows where else.

Washington also provides the military muscle today to back up the banks that demand governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America sign over oil, virgin forest, minerals, land for toxic waste dumps, and human labor to pay back loans whose purpose was always to transfer wealth from the semi-colonial world to the coffers of the billionaires.

The labor movement needs to wage a fight to halt the destruction of the environment. It is the working class throughout the world that has the biggest stake in protecting the environment, as an integral part of defending its health, safety, and working and living conditions.

One example of how the working class can take up these questions is the role played by the United Mine Workers of America, and other unions, in the fight against nuclear power in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The miners, who were also fighting for better health and safety rights on the job, explained the dangers of nuclear accidents and the radioactive waste generated by the power plants. They advocated the development of renewable energy sources and the use of coal "mined safely and burned cleanly," and they joined in protests with other forces to halt the nuclear power danger.

Industry and technology in and of themselves don't lead to the destruction of the environment, or of the human beings who work in the factories. But as long as they are run for capitalist profits, the bosses will try to get away with as much as they can in their drive for a higher bottom line.

The working class can and must take the lead in fighting to end the destruction of the environment, because unlike the capitalists, we have an interest in doing so. Demands we can put forward include:

- End nuclear power. Dismantle Washington's nuclear weapons arsenal.
- Union control of health and safety, with the employers paying the bill.
- Jobs for all — 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay. Hire enough workers so we can do the job safely and cleanly.
- Cancel the Third World debt to the imperialist banks.

Inequality passes in Connecticut

Connecticut Superior Court judge Harry Hammer recently ruled that the state cannot be held responsible for the severely segregated Hartford public schools, since it had not purposely created the unequal system.

It didn't matter to the good judge that in Hartford 94 percent of the 24,000 students are Black or Latino, or that the city's students ranked last on tests designed and required by the state Department of Education.

It didn't matter to the judge that many of the schools are falling apart, with toilets that don't work, outdated textbooks, and understocked libraries. Meanwhile, in affluent West Hartford, the schools are modern facilities with the latest in educational technology. A *New York Times* editorial noted that the suburban "schools sparkle, the kids ace their tests and go on to Ivy League colleges."

The state of Connecticut is guilty of willfully maintaining a segregated and unequal school system. The

facts have been before its lawmakers for at least 30 years.

In 1965, the United States Civil Rights Commission reported widespread segregation in the Connecticut public school system and urged the state to take action. This was ignored.

Rather than do anything meaningful to correct the inequalities in Hartford and other urban school centers, the government promoted fake "voluntary" programs to avoid court-ordered desegregation.

The Hartford public school system is a travesty that should be corrected, whether or not Black and Hispanic students can prove the state had a hand in setting up the rigid segregation, which assures unequal education. The protests being organized by high school students and other leaders of the Black and Latino communities to demand equal education deserve the full backing of all working people.

Curtis case belongs with fighters

Iowa prison officials are withholding from Mark Curtis a copy of the new Pathfinder pamphlet written about his case, *Why Is Mark Curtis Still In Prison?: The political frame-up of a unionist and socialist and the campaign to free him*. They told Curtis it must first be "reviewed."

This new weapon in Curtis's fight for freedom is not likely to sit well with prison officials because it tells the truth about who Curtis is, how he was framed-up, and why he remains a political person and fighter even behind bars.

As Curtis supporters map out plans to respond to the latest outrage from prison officials in Iowa, all backers of his fight should be campaigning to get this new pamphlet out to co-workers and students. Supporters of Curtis should especially be alert to taking the story to those who are involved in struggles today.

Thousands of supporters of the Irish freedom struggle in the United States, the United Kingdom, and in Ireland are demanding the release of Irish political prisoners.

Among those fighters, supporters of Curtis's parole campaign will get an open hearing.

The activists campaigning for the release of Irish political prisoners know how the bosses use the courts and laws against those pressing for withdrawal of London's troops in Ireland. They will see many parallels with Curtis's fight.

Activists who gathered in Washington, D.C., in support of women's rights, striking transit workers who stood up in Philadelphia, grocery workers in California who walked out to defend their health care, and students in New York state and across the United States who are resisting proposals to raise tuition fees, can understand what is happening to Curtis as cops hover around their protests and the bosses try to distort what they are fighting for.

Now is the best time for Curtis's supporters, with a renewed vigor, to get out the truth on his case by selling the new pamphlet and making his fight part of the resistance taking place today.

Lenin's Final Fight

Continued from Page 6

which Lenin had organized the Bolshevik leadership of the Soviet workers and peasants republic, Communist Party, and Communist International. Joseph Stalin emerged as the despotic arbiter for that petty-bourgeois social layer, and his murderous regime suppressed many of Lenin's writings contained in these pages for more than three decades.

A few years after Stalin's death in 1953 a section of his heirs, for whom Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev was the spokesman, sought to distance themselves from some of the Stalin regime's most infamous crimes. Only then were many of these writings by Lenin acknowledged and published in the Soviet Union. Some had not been available anywhere since the mid-1920s.

As long-suppressed items were finally translated and printed in the fourth English-language edition of Lenin's *Collected Works*, published in Moscow between 1960 and 1970, however, they were broken up and scattered in volumes 33, 36, 42, and 45. Most of the material by Lenin in this collection has been taken from that Moscow edition, but it is presented here chronologically as the fight actually unfolded.

In addition, a few items by Lenin from this period have never before been published in English and appear for the first time in this collection. One item—the March 1923 report prepared for Lenin on the Dzerzhinsky commission investigation into events in the republic of Georgia—was kept secret by Moscow until the collapse of the Stalinist apparatus in the former USSR in 1991. The final section of that report, "On the Conclusions of the Dzerzhinsky Commission," is published in appendix 1 of this volume for the first time in any language.

Footnotes about events referred to in the text have been included. For each item the source and related information appear as the first footnote. A glossary containing names of individuals, organizations, and publications has been compiled. A list of abbreviations and initials used in the book and a chronology of important events are also included.

In items by Lenin taken from the English-language edition of his *Collected Works*, spelling and punctuation have been changed to conform with current U.S. usage. A few translation changes have been made on the basis of a comparison with the fifth Russian-language edition of Lenin's writings.

Translations from Russian for this volume are by Sonja Franeta, Jeff Hamill, Doug Hord, Brian Pearce, John Riddell, and Andrew Rodomar. John Riddell did much of the research and editorial preparation on this book before its final compilation and editing.

Chapter divisions, titles, and footnotes were prepared by the editor.

Bolivia gov't cracks down on unions

Continued from front page

union. Tens of thousands of miners, teachers, and rail, oil, health-care, construction, and factory workers joined in the protests. "In addition to the repression, the government has refused to meet our economic and social demands," reported COB executive secretary Oscar Salas before his arrest.

The constant military repression did not impede thousands of workers who marched almost daily to demand pay raises and an end to government violence. Workers also protested the government's plan to privatize the state petroleum, electric, and telecommunications companies, Bolivia's biggest smelter, its railroad system, and the national airline.

Bolivia is the poorest country in South America, with 6.5 million people and a per capita gross domestic product of less than \$1,000.

"The struggle of the workers is just because what we are asking for is better living conditions for all Bolivians. We repudiate the repressive attitude of the government for its violations of workers' human rights," a COB spokesman said over the radio. "We will reorganize and continue working in hiding." Soldiers patrolled the streets of La Paz and other cities after the state of siege was declared, and troops were mobilized in rural areas where teachers and peasants have organized mass protests.

In addition to the unions, the government's repressive measures drew a rebuke from the Roman Catholic Church. "The state of siege is not good for the people who see their rights restricted or for the country because of the negative image it creates," said the bishop of La Paz, Luis Sainz.

Electrical workers in Georgia fight concessions

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

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

end of the proposed contract.

"We gave and gave over the years," explained Judson Maddox, a forklift driver with 25 years on the job. "You get backed up so far and then you get tired of backing up. Let the company back up a little for a change."

Teamster-organized truckers are honoring Local 613 picket lines at the Conyers plant. Strikers have successfully stopped Lithonia Lighting trucks by picketing

suffered during the long walkout. In spite of this, Brandley said, "Bridgestone/Firestone will never be able to take away our dignity."

Other speakers included Denise O'Brien, an Atlantic, Iowa, farmer and head of the National Family Farm Coalition; Jack Hatch, an aide to U.S. senator Tom Harkin; and Kathleen McQuillen from the American Friends Service Committee.

Several area groups are sponsoring a "Good Friday vigil for Labor Justice" that will include a church service and march to a nearby Firestone tire store.

The company and the union have held periodic bargaining meetings over the past couple months. Following the most recent meeting in Chicago, URW bargaining head John Sellers told the press that little progress toward a settlement was made. Another meeting with the company is scheduled for April 21.

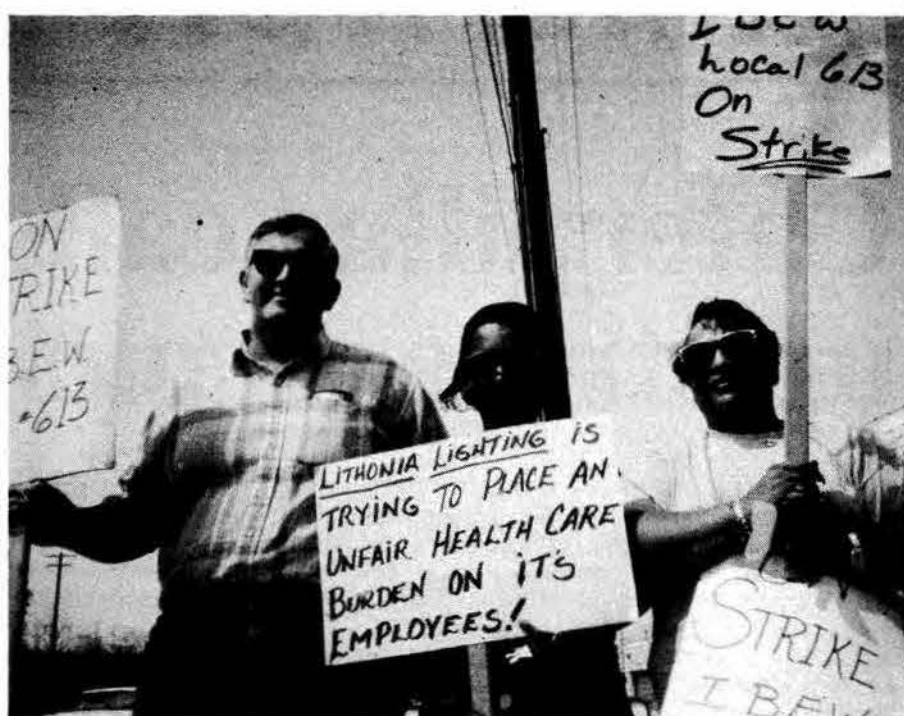
Wood workers strike for pay hike in New Zealand

Sixty wood workers in Rotorua, New Zealand, have been out on strike since mid-March to press demands for a wage increase. Their contract is up for renewal.

The workers report that the struck factory is the only one in the country to make a particular style of prefabricated wooden houses. Both local and export orders have been left unfilled because of the strike.

An attempt to remove finished goods from the site was successfully turned back by the workers' picket line.

Money collections have been organized by the Wood Industries



Militant/Susan LaMont

Electrical workers picket Lithonia Lighting in Conyers, Georgia, April 8. Management wants the 800 workers to pay higher premiums for health insurance.

ON THE PICKET LINE

other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Nearly 800 electrical workers went on strike April 2 at Lithonia Lighting's production plant and distribution center in Conyers, Georgia, after overwhelmingly rejecting the company's final contract offer. Lithonia Lighting, a subsidiary of Atlanta-based National Service Industries, is a major manufacturer of commercial fluorescent lighting fixtures.

The strikers, who are staffing picket lines 24 hours a day, are members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 613. This is the first strike at the plant since 1968.

Lithonia Lighting's proposal to make workers pay drastically increased health insurance costs is one of the central issues in the walkout. The company wants workers to pay both higher weekly premiums and absorb much higher deductibles.

Another take-back proposal strikers reject is a sharp reduction in job classifications, allowing the company to cut the number of workers, while forcing the rest to work harder. Management offered a 40 cent raise over the three-year life of the contract. Union members explain that between this minimal raise and the higher insurance costs, they would be making about \$2 an hour less by the

250 attend rally for rubber workers in Iowa

A crowd of 250 rallied on short notice in Des Moines, Iowa, April 6 in support of striking rubber workers. The event, which featured Jesse Jackson, head of the National Rainbow Coalition, was held at the United Rubber Workers (URW) Local 310 union hall. It followed a well-publicized visit by Jackson to the union's picket lines.

Rubber workers have been walking picket lines since last July at the Bridgestone/Firestone plants in Des Moines, Decatur, Illinois, Oklahoma City, and Noblesville, Indiana.

"It's better to fight in dignity than to go back and duck your head in shame," Jackson told the rally. He explained his view of struggle as being, "good profits for the company, job security for the workers, and a good product for the consumer."

Striker Dave Mendenhall told the crowd the strikers are carrying on the fight to preserve the union for young workers who will come into the plant in the future.

Amy Brandley, the teenage daughter of a union member, described the financial hardship strikers and their families have

rent system, in which private companies are given contracts and hire drivers, mechanics, and escorts from common seniority lists at annual salaries that cannot be cut.

"We agreed to go back to work, because Local 1181 has told us they're going to take this to the wall," said James Tufaro, one of the drivers who was part of the brief walkout.

A citywide strike on April 24 involving 6,000 drivers appears likely, according to union officials who left fruitless negotiations at city hall recently. Many workers spoke angrily of the city administration's union-busting plans and were determined to wage a fight for their jobs. "I think it stinks," said Jerry Petrie on the hard-line stance the city has taken.

Contributors to this week's column include: Susan LaMont, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers in Tucker, Georgia; Norton Sandler from Des Moines; and Colin Parker from Auckland, New Zealand.

LETTERS

Keep our eye on the ball

Your account of the recent regional gathering of SWP members, "How can the labor movement fight for jobs in today's depression conditions?" stresses the importance of not focusing on the maneuvers of the capitalist politicians. Instead, we should keep our eye on positive, working-class demands.

Where I work, at CUNY [City University of New York], there is a lot of worry about the State budget. Administrators encourage students and faculty to lobby Albany, while admonishing us to keep our activities "productive." Recently, a state legislator explicitly told a CUNY professor that their strategy is to float a governor's budget that scares everybody to death. Then after much hand-wringing, they cut us less, and we feel relieved and grateful.

The above shows that it is not possible to build a movement on the basis of fighting the budget cuts. The capitalists are in fact denying working people educational rights, among many others. Working people have to fight for their rights by means of demands that can unite and sustain an effective social movement. A focus on the capitalists' budgetary problems cuts across our ability to build a movement for educational rights. This happens for a number of reasons: It diverts our energies, it keeps our activities too spasmodic, and it puts us in bed with

our enemy.

Lets keep our eye on the ball. Our problem is that human rights are under attack, and we need to build a movement to fight back.

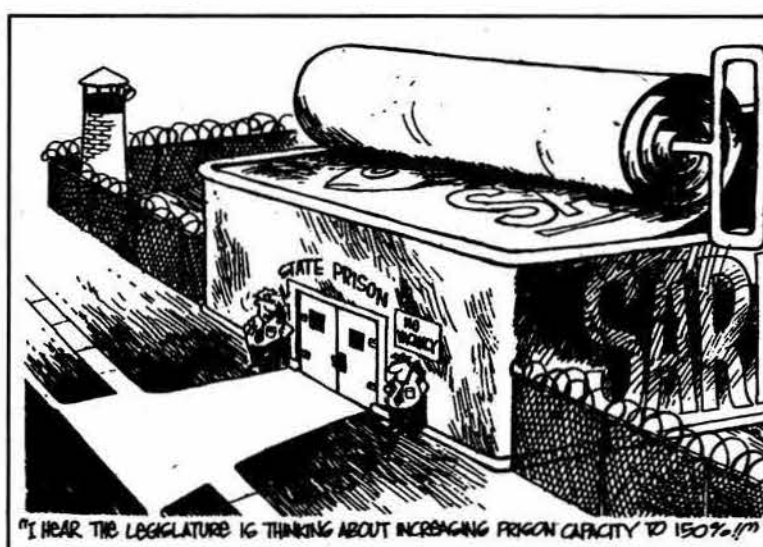
The budget and the chancellor are the capitalists' problem. That's why we should support the students from Medgar Evers, and other CUNY colleges, who chanted "Fight! Fight! Education is our right!" at the March 23 demonstration in New York.

Chuck Cairns
New Hyde Park, New York

Union T-shirt days

I felt that *Militant* readers would be interested in a recent event that happened at my workplace. I live in Peoria, Illinois. Even though my plant is non-union, subcontracted by Caterpillar, many of my co-workers wanted to express solidarity with the strikers of the United Auto Workers by having a "union T-shirt wearing day," where the majority wear solidarity T-shirts and/or buttons.

There is a large majority who can't afford shirts and buttons, so many people will bring extras. The most interesting part is most people acknowledge and support that these days coincide with Caterpillar management's visits to our plant — the days that they come to evaluate our work and try to show how well they get along with their workers.



This day has begun much discussion among my co-workers about the strike, and how it affects us as workers throughout the country and the world. The discussions begin around the strike, and that will inspire people to talk about broader politics — including the attacks on welfare and other social gains made by the working class in the past. Our plant plans to continue the union T-shirt wearing days!
Gloria Del Cid
Peoria, Illinois

Philadelphia cop brutality

On March 13, 125 people demonstrated in front of the offices of Philadelphia district attorney Lynne Abraham to protest her

announcement that police would face no criminal charges in the death of Moises DeJesus.

A 30-year-old Latino, DeJesus died August 24, 1994, three days after police beat arrested him.

The protest was called by the Police-Barrio Relations Project and supported by other community organizations including the National Congress of Puerto Rican Rights. Among the youth at the march was a contingent from Asian Americans United.

The demonstrators chanted, "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!" in both English and Spanish. They spilled into the street, forcing the police to divert traffic for the duration of the march. Will Gonzalez, coordi-

nator of the Police-Barrio Relations Project, said, "the DA's office didn't interview any of the officers involved and did not subpoena documents it says it needed. We want honest and objective investigations."

Last August, neighbors and a family member called the police for assistance. Instead, neighbors and relatives of DeJesus said that several police officers beat him with flashlights. "All the cops hit him," said Edna Leon, a neighbor. "They dragged him. I wanted to help but they wouldn't let me."

District Attorney Abraham claimed that none of DeJesus's wounds appeared to have been inflicted with flashlights and that the autopsy showed that DeJesus died from a coronary arrest brought on by a combination of cocaine and prescription antidepressants.

The DA also said that DeJesus had been struck in the forehead and suffered a two and a half inch laceration on the forehead, but that "he would have recovered fully from the injuries" if drugs had not been involved.

Helen Myers
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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

Caterpillar calls in police to break up strikers' picket lines in Belgium

BY ERIC WILS

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Workers at the Caterpillar assembly plant in Gosselies near Charleroi, Belgium, are locked in a tough contract fight with the U.S.-based multinational company. The unions are demanding six extra days off every year for second- and third-shift workers, and a \$1.4 million investment to improve working conditions.

Workers point to the hefty profits announced by Caterpillar-Belgium for 1994 in putting forward their demands.

After several warning strikes, Caterpillar agreed to negotiate, but then refused to make any concessions and broke off talks April 6. Second-shift workers immediately walked out and a strike was declared for the rest of the week.

Caterpillar obtained an injunction imposing a \$1,700 fine on the pickets for every person prevented from entering the plant. The day after talks broke off, workers set up picket lines, but did not interfere with management and those few employees who chose to go in.

After a picket line of 30 workers turned back several trucks, the company called in the National Guard and the strikers were brutally beaten. The National Guard is the police force in Belgium.

"Management has called in the National Guard to attack Caterpillar workers. So much for the 'Caterpillar mentality' they always talk about," said one indignant worker in a television news interview.

Another picket said, "I never believed they would beat up unarmed workers who simply defend their jobs." After going back to work April 10 as scheduled, workers decided to hold another one-day strike the following day to protest the company and cop brutality.

The strike was successful, with 90 percent of the workers staying out, according to the unions. This time, pickets strictly abided by the terms of the court injunction. Delegations of unionists from glass and steel mills in Charleroi and from the Volkswagen car assembly plant in Brussels joined the picket line in solidarity.

The unions urged some 150 young temporary workers to work normally "in order not to risk their jobs."

As part of a scare campaign, unionists report some managers are circulating rumors that production may be shifted to the Grenoble, France, Caterpillar plant. Some 1,700 jobs have already been axed in Gosselies over the last three years.

An all-night negotiating session April 12 yielded no results.



Militant/John Sarge

United Auto Workers members in the United States, in tenth month of a walkout to win a contract with Caterpillar and defend their union, continue to stand firm. Workers in Peoria, Illinois, rallied last May to pressure the earth-moving equipment manufacturer to negotiate. The company has since begun negotiations with union.

—YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD—

Youth leaders discuss opportunities to build YS

BY MARK GILSDORF

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After participating in the national demonstration for women's rights here April 9, the Young Socialists National Committee met to discuss taking the next steps in strengthening the communist youth organization. The meeting heard progress reports on building the Young Socialists (YS) internationally and in particular, in the United States.

Progress has been registered over the last several months in building Young Socialists groups in several countries, national steering committee member Diana Newberry reported. Newberry participated in recent national congresses of the Communist Leagues in Sweden and the United Kingdom. She also conducted a speaking tour in Iceland and Sweden last fall. On each trip, Newberry met with youth working to construct YS groups.

"Young Socialists in Sweden," Newberry reported, "traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark, to attend the recent United Nations World Summit on Development. Members of the YS and the Communist League worked together to talk to hundreds of youth about socialist ideas and campaigns on the day of a public meeting featuring Cuban president Fidel Castro."

"The opportunities to build the YS in Sweden were demonstrated when thousands of young people came to hear Fidel. Many visited the Young Socialists' literature table and bought books and pamphlets on the Cuban revolution, the *Militant* newspaper, and other literature," Newberry said. The YS in Sweden will be working with other activists there to organize a tour of a member of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) from Cuba. "Building activities in defense of the Cuban revolution will be a big campaign of the YS there," she emphasized.

In the United Kingdom, Newberry reported, the YS is planning teams to travel to Northern Ireland to discuss politics with revolutionary-minded youth and be a part of the new political developments there.



Young Socialists in Reykjavik, Iceland, joined protest to support striking teachers in February. The action took place at the ministry of finances. Demonstrators defended the teachers' right to strike and opposition to pay cuts.

As part of their campaign to defend the Cuban revolution, the young socialists have been speaking to youth and Cuba solidarity groups about their experiences on the International Youth Brigade to Cuba last January. Five YS members and five other young fighters from the UK, Iceland, and Sweden went on the brigade.

Newberry said they are working with solidarity groups in the United Kingdom to organize a brigade to Cuba that will include one week of voluntary labor, then participants will attend the "Cuba Lives" festival, August 1-7. The international youth festival is being organized by the UJC and other youth groups in Cuba.

"The Young Socialists in Britain are really excited about their campaigns and building the group. Working with the

Communist League there will add political experience the YS needs to accomplish these goals," Newberry said.

There are two chapters in the United Kingdom now, in Manchester and in London, with 13 members. There are also seven members in Stockholm, Sweden.

"The YS in both countries see the *Militant* newspaper as important," she said "and they are taking on goals in the international campaign to win new readers to the socialist press."

Both YS groups concluded that in order to strengthen their activities and build the organization they need to collaborate closely with the Communist Leagues in each country. The political leadership and communist heritage that the leagues provide and the new, young forces that the

YS helps bring to the communist movement, make collaboration between the two essential for the advance of the movement internationally, Newberry said.

The second report, "Building the Young Socialists in the United States," was given by national steering committee member Damon Tinnon. The opportunities to link up with other fighters were evident in a number of recent protest actions and other activities, he said.

The April 9 "Rally for Women's Lives," attended by tens of thousands of defenders of women's rights, and the April 7-8 Young Feminist Summit, "showed that the political polarization in the United States is causing thousands of youth to seek out protest activity. Many of them are open to socialist ideas and proposals for action. Young Socialists met many youth who wanted to discuss political developments in the world and how to fight back against the attacks spawned by capitalism," said Tinnon.

The report also cited the response to the tour of Cuban youth leaders Rogelio Polanco and Kenia Serrano. Hundreds have turned out to hear them on college campuses across the country.

The Young Socialists place the defense of the Cuban revolution at the center of their work. "Through the Cuban youth speaking tours we have helped build and publicize other activities in solidarity with Cuba, from the August 'Cuba Lives' festival to the regional demonstrations and teach-ins planned by the National Network on Cuba," Tinnon reported.

"Our goal should be to build a big U.S. delegation and organize for large actions defending Cuba in the United States," he said.

"YS members are involved in and should seek more opportunities to join in abortion clinic defense, fights against rising tuition fees, actions in solidarity with the Irish freedom struggle, and picket lines by striking workers," he said. "At these events, we will meet other young people

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